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Understanding Youth Homelessness in Mexico City



Casa Alianza Mexico Foundation is a private assistance institution that, since 1988, has provided comprehensive care to adolescents aged 12 to 18 who have been exposed to violence, abuse, neglect and invisibility

Jessica Villaseñor is a Doctoral Student in the Department of Sociology here at The University of Chicago. This summer, she was able to conduct field research, supported by a CSRPC Graduate Research-Travel Grant. Below, she reflects on her experiences conducting research among Mexico City's homeless youth population.

I was in Mexico City, Mexico from July 3, 2016 to August 2, 2016 conducting ethnographic fieldwork with children in street situations (mostly homeless children). The purpose of this trip was to conduct exploratory ethnographic fieldwork with homeless children in Mexico City in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon in this particular context and ultimately give me the exposure necessary to develop my dissertation project.

I worked as an un-paid volunteer with an organization called Casa Alianza in Mexico City. Casa Alianza is an organization that works with homeless youth aged 12-18 years of age. The organization has various levels: the street team, the pre-community center, homes where children who choose to leave the street reside, and independent integration that offers apartments to those who have turned 18 and have graduated from their program. I worked as a volunteer street educator with the street team. This job involved traveling between various points where homeless children are known to congregate and getting to know them, playing with them, and talking to them about drug addiction, the dangers of the street, and the various resources that the organization offers.

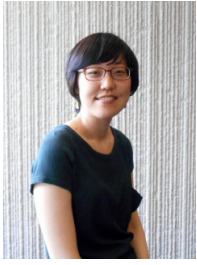
My experience with this organization was invaluable to my exposure to the community of homeless youth

and in my ability to understand the larger phenomenon within Mexico City. These service providers were experts in dealing with their service community and could clarify any questions that would arise. These experts were also able to point my attention to the small nuances and intricacies of the daily life of the children.

Being in Mexico and on the ground with the phenomenon has given me numerous ideas for projects that could help to develop our knowledge of the phenomenon of street children within the field of sociology. Though I'm still in the process of refining my ideas, I believe my dissertation will examine the relationship that these homeless youth (aged 12-18) have with government institutions in the city (the police, the schools, the welfare system, etc). I'm interested in exploring the paradox of visibility and invisibility or interaction and disconnect. Though the youth are extremely visible in the city, they are largely ignored by the state. In a city with a large police force, a country with compulsory education up to 15 years old, and a government agency tasked with protecting children (DIF) how does the interaction between the children and these state institutions create or at least allow for the perpetuation of the phenomenon?

This preliminary research and therefore my current progress in my doctoral program would not have been possible without the CSRPC Graduate Travel-Research Grant. I now have the experience, evidence, and connections necessary to develop a dissertation proposal and apply for the funding necessary to conduct my long-term dissertation research.

CSRPC Residential & Dissertation Fellows



Minyong Lee is a doctoral candidate in History at the University of Chicago.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, she will be working on her dissertation, "Circuits of Empire: The California Gold Rush and the Making of America's Pacific." An attempt to combine two separate historiographical currents in U.S. history, the California Gold Rush and U.S. imperialism, Minyong's dissertation project investigates trans- and circum-pacific circulation of racial ideas following the California Gold Rush. It focuses on the Gold Rush-era maritime transportation routes, examining how the massive human and material movements following the gold discovery transformed not only California, but also places

traversed by traveling gold seekers, such as Hawaii, Central America, and South American port cities. The encounters between white Anglo Americans and the "foreign" people on their way to California, in addition to international migration to California during the Gold Rush, led to the formation and exchanges of the discourses about difference, hierarchy, and entitlement.

Through an analysis of travel writings, scientific treatises, and commercial and diplomatic correspondences, Minyong's thesis presents the California Gold Rush with three distinct manifestations of empire: the establishment of long-distance networks to facilitate commerce and migration in the Pacific, white middle-class travelers' cultural appropriation of the foreign lands, and the creation of racial categories and racial hierarchy to justify conquest and colonization.

Before she joined the University of Chicago, Minyong Lee received a B.A. and an M.A. in Western History from the Seoul National University, South Korea. She has been recipient of the Doctoral Studies Abroad Fellowship from the Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies and the Arthur J. Quinn Memorial Fellowship from the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, CA. Her research and teaching interests encompass the history of the American West, nineteenth-century U.S. social and cultural history, U.S. expansionism and imperialism, race and ethnicity, and the "Pacific world."



Mary Robertson is a Ph.D. Candidate in Anthropology at the University of Chicago.

Her research interests focus on changing intersections between capitalism, politics and the production of racial difference, concentrating on the context of South Africa.

Her dissertation, "Selling Aspiration, Recognizing Difference: Race, Class, and the Politics of Advertising in South Africa", utilized ethnographic and archival research, as well as interviews, to investigate the production of advertising as a way to explore these intersections. It shows how historically in South Africa, entrenching racial hierarchies, configuring differently-valued kinds of consumers, and constituting unequal political subjects have been mutually implicated processes. It provides a fresh perspective on

theorizing the configuration of social difference based on race and class in a global context in which there is an increasing interpenetration between the realms of branding and politics.

During segregationist and apartheid South Africa, racist legislation kept Blacks from participating in the national polity and restricted their access to a consumerist lifestyle - with both being reserved as privileges for Whites only. This served to configure unequal consumer citizens based on race. In post-apartheid South Africa, all have formal citizenship, but not full access to the consumer lifestyle with which it was articulated during apartheid, with many Blacks remaining impoverished and marginalized from the formal economy. The dissertation examines how those who produce advertising - an industry that remains dominated by Whites - engage with these dynamics as they attempt both to recognize difference and offer aspiration in the campaigns they produce. It argues

that evolving tensions inherent to the practice of advertising and branding overlap with those involved in constituting political collectivities, as both must calibrate the relationship between difference and inclusion, presents and futures, the contingencies of desire and stable projects of value. It shows how those who create advertising project these tensions onto a series of consumer 'others' - marked by race, class and gender. These 'others' serve to define a default national self - no longer the explicitly White consumer citizen of apartheid, but now a middle-class self, ostensibly racially unmarked, but shaped by a history in which middle-classness was conflated with whiteness.

The dissertation research has been supported by funding from various sources, including the Wenner Gren Foundation, the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, and the Lichtstern Dissertation Fellowship.

Provost's Career Enhancement Post-Docs



Erin Pineda received her PhD from the Department of Political Science at Yale University in 2015. Her research and teaching agenda investigates broad questions in the history of political thought about collective power, political action, democratic practice, social change, and the relationship

between historical narratives and categories of political thought.

Her dissertation, entitled "The Awful Roar: Civil Disobedience, Civil Rights, and the Politics of Creative Disorder," studies protest and civil disobedience from the perspective of political action, attempting to restore democratic dignity

to forms of strategic action marginalized by contemporary political theory. Arguing that the broad academic and popular consensus over civil disobedience is premised on a narrative of the US Civil Rights Movement in which black civility and white empathy trigger legal redress, the dissertation shows how the strategies activists used, and the responses they provoked, defy this narrative and thus challenge customary understandings of legitimate forms of protest.

Building on archival and historical research, the project contends that Civil Rights activists used mass jailing, civil disruption, and methods of crisis-generation to exercise novel forms of agency, disclose the nature of systemic injustices, dispute settled norms, and destabilize the bases of state legitimacy - engaging in "creative disorder." Understanding these processes is important not only for civil rights history, but for rethinking the boundaries of protest and the place of disruption

in democratic theory - and thus, in democratic societies.

Erin's work has been published in *History of the Present* (Spring 2015) and *The Appendix* (September 2014), a quarterly journal of narrative and experimental history, and has been funded by the Beinecke Rare Books & Manuscripts Library, the George M. Darr Memorial Fellowship, and a Yale University Dissertation Fellowship. Erin holds a Bachelors degree from Barnard College at Columbia University (summa cum laude, 2006), and a Masters degree in Political Science from Yale (2011). During her time as a Provost's Postdoctoral Scholar in the Department of Political Science, Erin will prepare a book manuscript based on her doctoral work and begin a new project that investigates the distinct temporalities of progress, stasis, and change embedded within institutional articulations and normative defenses of democracy.



Cayce Hughes is a doctoral candidate in the department of Sociology with research interests including the sociology of privacy, urban poverty, social inequality, health and well-being, and culture. His dissertation, “Negotiating Privacy

in the Context of Poverty: Poor Mothers and the Social Safety Net,” asks how conditions of material disadvantage and inequality impact poor mother’s capacities to achieve privacy.

Based on in-depth interviews with mothers in a high-poverty predominantly African-American neighborhood in Houston, Texas, the study explores how mothers negotiate the loss of

privacy that can accompany the receipt of public assistance, and examines how privacy concerns affect when, how, and whether they engage with the social safety net.

Widespread concerns about the decline of individual privacy animate public discourse. Yet the perspectives of the poor are notably absent from this conversation, even though they face perhaps the most extensive scrutiny from the state. Further, although we have begun to understand the impact of state surveillance on poor men of color, less is known about how poor women of color navigate threats to privacy endemic to engagement with the welfare system. This dissertation begins to bridge this gap, and in doing so highlights ways in which privacy can be both a good that is inequitably distributed and a pathway through which inequality is perpetuated.

Cayce is concurrently working with Mario Small on a comparative study of social and organizational isolation among low-income mothers in high-poverty neighborhoods in Houston, Chicago, and New York City. In 2016, he designed and taught Gendering Privacy, a course sponsored by the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality.

Cayce’s dissertation research has been funded by the Social Science Division, the Fahs-Beck Fund for Social Research and Experimentation, and the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality. He is currently a Kinder Scholar at the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University. Prior to attending the University of Chicago, Cayce earned a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology from New College of Florida and a Master’s degree in Public Health from Temple University.



Sarah Jones Weicksel is a Ph.D. Candidate in United States History. She recently held a yearlong fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture and the National Museum of American History. Her teaching and research focuses on material

culture, race, gender, and the politics of everyday life.

Weicksel’s dissertation project, “The Fabric of War: Clothing, Culture and Violence in the American Civil War Era,” weaves together material, visual, and textual sources to explore the shifting racial and gendered politics of clothing production,

consumption, theft, and destruction in American society and culture in the 1860s and 1870s. As people confronted the everyday struggles that accompanied war and the process of emancipation, clothing proved a means of reworking boundaries of belonging—of slavery and freedom, race, gender, and citizenship. Weicksel argues that nineteenth century Americans believed that clothing held a transformative power to alter a person’s inner self through the material object—a belief that was critical to processes of inclusion and exclusion.

This research draws on sources in more than twenty-five archives and museums and has been possible through the generous support of the Smithsonian Institution, the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, the American Antiquarian Society, the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Newberry Library, the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan, and the Center for the Study of Gender

and Sexuality, and the Social Sciences Division at the University of Chicago.

Weicksel is currently a Teaching Fellow at the Chicago Center for Teaching. During the 2016-17 academic year she will be offering a CSGS-sponsored course, “Gendered Bodies in the Material World,” and a Von Holst Prize course on “A House Divided: The Civil War in American Culture and Everyday Life.” She will also be serving as a Bessie Pierce Prize Preceptor in the Department of History.

She holds an M.A. in American Material Culture from the Winterthur Program at the University of Delaware, an M.A. in History from the University of Chicago, and a B.A. with Distinction in History from Yale University.



Danielle Marion Roper graduated with a Ph.D from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at New York University in 2015 where she defended her dissertation “Inca Drag Queens and Hemispheric Blackface: Contemporary Blackface and Drag performance from the Andes to Jamaica.”

Upon completing doctoral studies, she taught as a Core Curriculum Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at New York University. Roper is from Kingston, Jamaica and has an M.A in Performance Studies from NYU and B.A in Hispanic Studies (cum laude) from Hamilton College. Her research on Performance Studies, Caribbean Queer and Feminist Studies, Race and Visual Culture in

Latin America and the Caribbean has appeared in e-misférica, as well as in anthologies with University of the West Indies Press and with Palgrave Macmillan Press. In 2006, she was the recipient of the Thomas J. Watson fellow for her project “Political Humor and Social Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean: A study of stand-up comedy, cartoons and popular theatre.”

Roper has published in several national newspapers across the Caribbean about human rights and environmental justice. She has appeared on national and regional television and radio programs in discussions around U.S/Cuba relations, citizenship rights in the Dominican Republic, blackness in Argentina and has done advocacy work on LGBT rights in the region.

Currently, she is preparing her book manuscript by expanding the scope of her dissertation. In her book manuscript she develops the concept of

“hemispheric blackface” to examine the function of parodic performance in relation to nationalist discourses of mestizaje, multiculturalism and non-racialism in Latin America and the Caribbean. Challenging traditional geographic paradigms, it uses Peru, Colombia, and Jamaica as case studies in order to investigate the function of blackface and drag performance in different locales and to argue that these representations of blackness and queerness are not unique; they are part of a regional network embedded in global economies of representation. She attends to the specificity of racial formation in the region by investigating blackface and gender-bending in a cartoon, an Andean fiesta, an ambulatory transvestite museum, and an Afro-Latina art exhibit. Studied together, they reveal how a shared regional history of colonialism, slavery, and imperialism continues to inform contemporary representations of black, queer, and indigenous subjects in the region.

New CSRPC Faculty Affiliates

CSRPC is pleased to announce the faculty members who affiliated with the Center during the Spring and Summer of 2016. Affiliates are faculty whose work engages some aspect of race, politics, and culture. They serve on standing and awards committees, as well as initiate research projects and programming.



Jessica Swanston Baker
Assistant Professor of Music

Swanston Baker is an ethnomusicologist who specializes in contemporary popular music of and in the Circum-Caribbean. Her research and critical interests include tempo and aesthetics, coloniality, decolonization, and race/gender and respectability.



LaToya Baldwin Clark
Earl B. Dickerson Fellow, The Law School

Baldwin Clark's research looks at the role of participation in the enforcement of anti-discrimination law and in the general administration of law. Her current work explores this dynamic in special education law, where all parents are required to participate in ensuring that their child receives the specialized education to which they are entitled.



Brodwyn Fischer
Professor of Latin American History and the College;
Director, Center for Latin American Studies

Fischer is an historian of Brazil and Latin America, especially interested in cities, citizenship, law, migration, race, and social inequality. Her current project, *Understanding Inequality in Post-Abolition Brazil*, Fischer ask when—and if—social inequality came to be defined as Brazil's central sociopolitical problem



Rachel Galvin
Assistant Professor, Department of English

Galvin specializes in 20th- and 21st-century poetry and poetics in English, Spanish, and French. Her research interests include comparative poetics, U.S. Latino/a poetry, poetry of the Americas, Hemispheric Studies, poetics and politics, literature and war, comparative modernism, multilingual poetics, Oulipo and formal constraint, and translation.



Adom Getachew
Neubauer Family Assistant Professor of Political Science and the College

Getachew is the Neubauer Family Assistant Professor of Political Science and the College. Her research interests are situated in the history of political thought, with specialized interests in international law, theories of empire and race, black political thought and post-colonial political theory.



Yanilda María González
Assistant Professor, Social Service Administration

Yanilda María González is an Assistant Professor at the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. Her research explores the consequences of violence and inequality for state capacity, democratic citizenship, and the relationship between citizens and state institutions in the Latin American context.



Kimberly Hoang
Assistant Professor of Sociology and the College

Hoang is the author of, *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work* (2015) published by the University of California Press. This book examines the mutual construction of masculinities, financial deal-making, and transnational political-economic identities. She is currently conducting research for her second book project, *Capital Brokers in Emerging Markets*.



Vu Tran
Assistant Professor of Practice in the Arts, Department of English

Tran is a fiction writer whose work thus far is preoccupied with the legacy of the Vietnam War for the Vietnamese who remained in the homeland, the Vietnamese who immigrated to America, and the Americans whose lives have intersected with both. He writes with an awareness of American postcolonial narratives, particularly in the context of cultural identity.

New Staff Member Profile



Allen Linton II is a doctoral student in political science with a primary focus on American politics and secondary focus on Comparative politics. Specifically he is interested in youth politics; the role of new/digital media in political behavior, participation, and socialization; and local politics. Given the introduction of a new information communication technology, Allen argues that traditional (institutional) conceptions of politics miss meaningful political action and overstate youth apathy. His dissertation explores (1) to what degree new media is changing youth political participation and engage and (2) how marginalized young people participate in election centered and contentious politics at the local level. Additionally, Allen works with the Youth & Participatory Politics Survey Project and coordinates the Black Youth Project New Media Research Team for the Educating for Participatory Politics project working with Chicago Public Schools' Global Citizenship Initiative to combine civics education with digital media.

Born in Chicago, Allen earned an AB with honors in Political Science from the University of Chicago in 2011.