Course Description

Catalogue description: Analysis of changing urban systems, with examples drawn primarily from Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

A bit more detail: Robert W. Lake, Co-Editor of *Urban Geography*, recently offered a frank and sobering assessment of the state of much social science research. Confronted with the horrors of impending war and worsening social exclusion and inequality, he noted that “One would be hard pressed to discern the severity and pervasiveness of these matters in the pages of most academic journals. Faced with inimical problems and hegemonic forces, there appears to be a retreat into safe topics, arcane analysis, and uncontroverisal positions. The force of unyielding structural imperatives has prompted an inward turn and a convenient fascination with the personal narrative and the cultural anecdote.” It seems that we have lost the spirit of Herbert Gans, Michael Harrington, Gunnar Myrdal, and others who were “prompted by a moral repugnance of observable inequalities and an insistent, unquenchable optimism that society could and would do
better if only the facts were placed in evidence.”¹ Lake’s lament is of course one voice among many in the continuing scholarly debate on the purpose, meaning, and relevance of urban research.² Yet his assessment is particularly valuable as a reminder of how much has changed in the last generation, as urban geographers have questioned the meaning, limits, and relevance of structural imperatives, observable inequalities, and the facts.³

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³ Facts? “There are no facts as such. We must always begin by introducing a meaning in order for there to be a fact.” Friederich Nietzsche, cited in Watts, Michael. 1988. “Struggles over Land, Struggles Over Meaning: Some Thoughts on Naming, Peasant Resistance and the Politics of Place.” In Reginald G. Golledge, Helen Couclelis, and Peter Gould, editors, A Ground for Common Search, pp. 31-50. Goleta, CA: The Santa Barbara Geographical Press. This kind of recognition is one of the most valuable insights of poststructuralist thought. But it is vulnerable to abuse and misappropriation, where it can underwrite dangerously creative reconstructions of acts “specifically intended” (the precise objective, not general intent) to cause “severe pain and suffering” (“the level that would ordinarily be associated with a sufficiently serious physical condition or injury such as death, organ failure, or serious impairment of body functions…” p. 6). The meaning being introduced in order for there not to be a (legal) fact is popularly known as torture, without quotes. U.S. Department of Justice (2002). Memorandum for Alberto R. Gonzales, Counsel to the President, Re: Standards of Conduct for Interrogation Under 18 U.S.C. §§ 2340-2340A. Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice. Quotes from p. 3, 6. The careful taxonomic and legal reasoning in the memo came from Jay Bybee, assistant attorney general in charge of the Office of Legal Counsel, a position once held by such luminaries as William H. Rehnquist and Antonin Scalia; Bybee told Meridian, a Mormon magazine, that “I would like my headstone to read, ‘He always tried to do the right thing.’” Liptrap, Adam. 2004. ‘Author of ’02 Memo on Torture: ‘Gentle’ Soul for a Harsh Topic.” The New York Times, June 24, A1. More broadly, “There wasn’t anything. The Americans and British created facts where there were no facts at all.” Hans Blix, interviewed in Bamford, James. 2004. A Pretext for War: 9/11, Iraq, and the Abuse of America’s Intelligence Agencies. New York: Doubleday, p. 360. At the pinnacle of post-poststructuralist constructionism is a senior aide to U.S. President George W. Bush, who referred dismissively to people in “what we call the reality-based community.” The aide interrupted Ron Suskind’s questions about enlightenment principles and empiricism, saying “That’s not the way the world really works anymore … We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality – as you will – we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out. We’re history’s actors … and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.” Suskind, Ron. 2004. “Without a Doubt.” New York Times Magazine, October 17, p. 44. Of more direct interest to urbanists is the concern of Ceri Peach, commenting on urban social research on race and ethnicity. In recognition of the consensus that so many of the categories of inquiry are social constructs, scholars, “when speaking in conferences, often engage in a kind of aerobic exercise in which they raise both arms and use two fingers of each hand to inscribe inverted commas around the terms which they are forced to use but to which they do not subscribe.” Peach, Ceri. 2000. “Discovering White Ethnicity and Parachuted Plurality.” Progress in Human Geography 24, 620-626, quote from p. 621. It is deeply ironic that the rich flowering of scholarship on the social construction of science and identity has coincided with countervailing trends in politics and public policy, as courts, legislatures, and other elements of the state have dismantled some social constructions (e.g., welfare, affirmative action, labor organizing rights) while aggressively building and defending others (prisons and racialized criminality, family values and heteropatriarchal marriage, the American Homeland, a New American Century). Lake’s discussion of facts not “facts” might simply be stylistic, in the spirit of Adam Hochschild’s playful comments in the margin of an early draft of The Commercialization of Intimate Life: “Oh!” “So” “many” “quotation marks” “around” “so” “many” “words” “makes” “the” “essay” “seem” “weird.” Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2003. The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes from Home and Work. Berkeley:
Can we recover any of this unquenchable optimism? What can be done to place the facts in evidence, and to mobilize them to challenge urban inequalities, observed and otherwise? Can society do better? In this seminar, we tackle these questions from initial premises that “critical engagement and scholarly rigor are understood as compatible properties”4 and that for better or worse the links between scientific means (epistemology, methodology, technique) and ends (politics, morality, ethics) are contingent and contextual, not necessary and immutable. Our goal is to marshal a diverse set of theoretical, methodological, and empirical traditions to forge a ‘hybrid’ geography that can serve as an instrument of strategic and tactical maneuvers for social justice and new emancipatory geographies.5 The choices involved in fusing divergent traditions are never free of tightly woven networks, structures, and constructions of socio-cultural meaning and power; yet any decision to abandon methodologies on the basis of their implication in the creation of social inequalities is a risky move of unilateral disarmament. “Genuine refutation must penetrate the power of the opponent and meet him on the ground of his strength; the case is not won by attacking him somewhere else and defeating him where he is not.”6 Insurgent quantitative practices,7 and a strategic positivism chastened by our witness to the reactionary appropriation of the legitimacy claims of objectivity and metaphysical realism, can help the urban geographer committed to social justice to penetrate the power of her opponent and meet him on his own territory, to create new and emancipatory urban systems.8 Accordingly, we will examine a series of research initiatives that fuse quasi-positivist9 empirical analysis of urban inequality with critical

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8 The phrase “urban systems” was coined forty years ago to describe the interconnected, interdependent networks of centralized economic and social processes that were understood to organize the spaces of regions and Nation-states. Berry, Brian J.L. 1964. “Cities as Systems Within Systems of Cities.” Papers of the Regional Science Association 13, 147-163. Viewed from the perspectives of today’s human geographies, the theoretical and methodological lineage of the phrase seems as precarious as that for regional science itself (think of central place theory colliding with general systems theory, as it sideswipes multivariate numerical taxonomy and skids across a thick slab of faith in efficient, self-equilibrating markets). But key assumptions of this heritage resurface in surprising places, and its legacy also includes insurgent moments of radical urban expeditions, welfare geography and policy influence, and many counter-mappings of alternative, just urban landscapes. See Sheppard, “Quantitative Geography...”; Kramsch, Olivier, and Frans Boekema. 2002. “Breaking Out of the ‘Isolated State’: Views on the Status and Future of Regional Science from a European Border Region.” Environment and Planning A 34, 1373-1393; and Smith, David M. 1994. Geography and Social Justice. Oxford: Blackwell.
9 This is a cumbersome and perhaps distasteful term, but hopefully the seeming or root if help to convey some of the more important intended meanings. Our focus is on analytical methods – qualitative and quantitative – that rely on some appeal to hypothesis verification and falsification, cautious generalization, observability (although not infallible), attempted disinterested impartiality, and replication. Following Matthew Hannah’s (2001) reasoning, our approach is
social theory, in a pluralist recognition of “the rich tapestry of the field as it has been woven throughout its recent history, nourished by the quantitative revolution, the rise of Marxism and humanistic geographies, and the effervescence of feminist, postmodern, and post-Colonial thought.” Case studies include the magnification of inequalities in so-called ‘global’ cities; recent trajectories of metropolitan class polarization; feminist perspectives on methodological debates and daily urban life; racial segregation and policy responses to concentrated urban poverty; urban and regional facets of hyper-incarceration; evolving inequalities of gentrification and anti-homeless policies; dilemmas of identity and categorization in data, activism, and regulation; and informational activism in digital cities in the shadow of threats of nascent forms of ‘geo-slavery’. Some of the material involves multivariate quantitative methods, but this seminar is not an uncritical methodological survey. It is also not an extended external critique. We’re aiming for something in between these two extremes, a critical engagement with the value and limits of the methods for understanding and challenging contemporary urban inequalities – sensitized to the need to frame vigorous criticism within a spirit of care of the subject.

Readings

will be made available at the first seminar meeting.

Evaluation

Evaluation is based on two components: seminar participation (25 percent) and a final paper on a topic to be agreed with the instructor (75 percent). Participation includes brief reaction papers and co-leading seminar discussions. The final paper is due April 26.

Schedule

On the following pages is a provisional schedule with corresponding readings and references. For some topics I’ve provided additional recommendations that illustrate alternative perspectives, supplementary case studies, or methodological elaboration. Some of these materials will be made available at the first seminar meeting.


10 Wolch, “Radical Openness...,” p. 645.

11 “...many of the critiques of geographic information systems (GIS) have aimed to demonstrate what is ‘wrong’ with this subdiscipline of geography rather than engaging critically with the technology. ... This follows a pattern of external critique in which the investigator has little stake in the outcome. ... we argue for a form of critique that transcends this binary [between internal and external] by tackling enframing assumptions while remaining invested in the subject. To be constructive, critique must care for the subject.” Schuerman, Nadine, and Geraldine Pratt. 2002. “Care of the Subject: Feminism and Critiques of GIS.” Gender, Place, and Culture 9(3), 291-299.

12 It is not known by whom the passive voice was invented.

No readings are required for the first meeting; this verbose syllabus should be ample scholarly torture. If you want further information on the thinking behind the course, however, you may wish to read contributions to a retrospective panel discussion of a 1970 futurist urban and regional manifesto, “The Geography of the United States in the Year 2000.” An early version of the essay is at http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewly/ewaa02.pdf, and the entire panel of commentary was published in The Professional Geographer 56(1), February 2004. Alternatively, see “The New Spatial Politics of Social Data,” at http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewly/nov2.pdf.

Jan 11  Critical Analytical Urbanism.


quantitative revolution and its prominent advocates, has limited trans-disciplinary engagement with important strategic movements to advance social justice on geographic issues.


Jan 18 A New World Urban Hierarchy?


This week, we tackle two central questions: Have urban systems fundamentally changed amidst the much-hyped process of globalization? Precisely how does the global-financial space of flows impose constraints on individual cities?

1. Is there a world urban system? If so, is it fundamentally different from the urban networks of prior generations? In the 1990s, the work of several prominent theorists seemed to provide positive answers to both questions, and in many quarters today it is taken as axiomatic that globalization has altered the role and position of cities. Yet empirical work has lagged far behind the sweeping interpretations of the global-city theorists, and as Short and his colleagues demonstrate, the absence of relevant relational data is the “dirty little secret” of world-cities research. Given the enormous interest in global-city rankings in the popular and policy arenas, careless methodologies carry enormous risks: the questionable global-city rankings that permeate popular thinking have the effect of erasing cities of millions from the geographical imagination – creating, as Short puts it, “black holes” in the urban network. Fortunately, in the last few years there has been a rigorous and sustained effort to test competing hypotheses on world cities and to make data available to other researchers for independent replication. Much of this effort is underway in the Globalization and World Cities (GAWC) Research Group at Loughborough University, supervised by Peter Taylor and Jonathan Beaverstock, at http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/gy/research/gawc.html. I also recommend Alderson, Arthur S., and Jason Beckfield. 2004. “Power and Position in the World City System.” American Journal of Sociology 109(4), 811-851.

2. Discursive constructions, individual agency, and material structures have mutually reinforced the vulnerability of individual cities to mobile capital, raising the stakes on a broad interdisciplinary debate on local autonomy that has raged since the late 1970s. Unfortunately, many of the contributions to this debate have portrayed a global, mobile capital in highly abstract terms, with only selective and anecdotal evidence of

Jan 25 Urban Systems of Inequality: The ‘Global City’ Inequality Hypothesis.


Depending on how you approach the literature, there is either broad consensus or widespread skepticism in response to Saskia Sassen’s argument that global cities magnify broader polarization processes in the economic transformations of the last generation. There has been an accelerating effort to devise rigorous empirical tests for this proposition, but at this point there is relatively little evidence (particularly in contrast to the number of studies of investment flows, headquarters locations, and producer service networks). The stakes on the global-city inequality thesis are enormous, however: if inequality is especially pronounced in global cities, then it implies some role for regional and local policy interventions (particularly if there is intransigence at the national level). Michael Storper, disputes Sassen’s hypothesis, which he portrays as the “yuppies and servant classes” model of an hourglass-shaped occupational structure; Storper argues that polarization is by no means limited to the highest-order ‘global’ cities, or even to cities in general – implying that responses to polarization must be pursued at the nation-state or transnational scale. Storper, Michael. 1997. The Regional World: Territorial Development in a Global Economy. New York: Guilford, especially pp. 221-259. Two other detailed empirical studies provide valuable yet mixed evidence on the hypothesis for individual cities: Chiu, Stephen W.K., and Tai-Loc Lui. 2004. “Testing the Global City Social Polarisation Thesis: Hong Kong since the 1990s.” Urban Studies 41(10), 1863-1888. Norgaard, Helle. 2003. “The Global City Thesis - Social Polarization and Changes in the Distribution of Wages.” Geografiska Annaler 85B(2), 103-119. Marcuse and Van Kempen summarize a series of case studies of globalizing cities throughout the world, concluding that there is no fundamentally new spatial order, but that there are important changes in the trajectory and character of specific kinds of inequalities. Marcuse, Peter, and Ronald van Kempen. 2001. “Conclusion: A Changed Spatial Order.” In Peter Marcuse and Ronald van Kempen, eds., Globalizing Cities: A New Spatial Order! Oxford: Blackwell, 247-275. Also see Blair Badcock’s valuable review: Badcock, Blair. 1997. “Restructuring and Spatial Polarization in Cities.” Progress in Human Geography 21(2), 251-262. The ‘global city’ research stream in urban geography and sociology is too often unconnected with the urban political science research on the relations between public policy and inequality, which typically takes globalization as a background condition before focusing on domestic political dilemmas of inequality, usually in the U.S. (one of the best contributions in this area is Swanson, Todd, Peter Dreier, and John Mollenkopf. 2002. “Economic Inequality and Public Policy: The Power of Place.” City and Community 1(4), 349-372.) There are, however, several valuable case studies of particular facets of polarization in particular global cities: Cox, Rosie, and Paul Watt. 2002. “Globalization, Polarization, and the Informal Sector: The Case of Paid Domestic Workers in London.” Area 34(1), 39-47 (based on a limited application of survey and sample selection methods and a small number of interviews); Susser, Ida. 1998. “Inequality, Violence, and Gender Relations in a Global City: New York, 1986-1996.” Identities 5(2), 219-247 (a qualitative account based on several years of observation of local social service institutions and in-depth interviews with a small number of mothers); Boschken, Herman L. 2003. “Global Cities, Systemic Power,
and Upper-Middle-Class Influence.” Urban Affairs Review 38(6), 808-830 (a theoretical explication of the institutional and political dynamics of upper-middle-class professionals and the effects on public policy, and preliminary empirical evidence and ranking of U.S. cities); Swyngedouw, Erik, Frank Moulaert, and Arantxa Rodríguez. 2002. “Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large-Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy.” Antipode 34(3), 542-577 (a rare comparative analysis of the context and consequences of large-scale redevelopment projects, emphasizing the increased socioeconomic polarization and the establishment of “exceptionality measures” of less democratic and elite-driven priorities.) One final note: there is almost no empirical analysis of the relationship between hypothesized global-city processes and inequalities as measured by wealth, or alternatively measured by what economists refer to as ‘permanent’ income; this kind of analysis is sorely needed. There is a great deal of economic inquiry on the latter issues but this work has yet to be engaged with urban geographic inquiry on changing urban systems.

Feb 1 Mapping and Mobilizing: Metropolitan Class Polarization.


Issues of difference and the construction of identity have become central to urban social inquiry in the last two decades, replacing what was at times a narrow and determinist focus on class as an analytical category. For some, political economy research in the 1970s and 1980s “produced a discourse of Capitalism” emphasizing unity, singularity, and totality – and thus operated “powerfully to discourage and marginalize projects of class transformation.” Gibson-Graham, J.K. 1993. “Waiting for the Revolution, or How to Smash Capitalism While Working at Home in Your Spare Time.” Rethinking Marxism 6(2), 10-24. Poststructuralist thought offered a possible solution to this paralysis: “It may be necessary...to think within a radically different accounting regime that does not draw on a centered vision of economic totalities, an essentialist understanding of economic dynamics and a conflation of the identity of all enterprises with a singular structure and subjectivity, that of the universal rational calculating subject.” Gibson-Graham, J.K. 1996. The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 138. Unfortunately, such theoretical advances in the 1990s paralleled cultural and economic trends in a “tricky gestalt between a subversive progressivism and reactionary essentialism. Corporate capitalism has caught up with our categories and quite effortlessly leveraged their buyout.” Smith, Neil. 2000. “What Happened to Class?” Environment and Planning A 32, 1011-1032. Amidst the co-optation exemplified by guerrilla marketing, consumer semiotics, and other fusions of capital and hijacked poststructuralist thought, “we find ourselves without a sophisticated language of class precisely at the time when, globally, class is being reasserted with a vengeance.” Smith, p. 1011. And yet on-the-streets organizing and advocacy have given rise to a growing living wage movement that may alter, in some small way, the urban politics of class. The movement’s success may ultimately hinge on a fusion of political appeals based on structuralist and poststructuralist narratives, along with an arsenal of applied econometrics deployed to challenge the dominant “free” market policy bias.
Feb 8  Workfare Cities.


Any contemporary class analysis - whether rooted in dynamic constellations of power relations or in theories of the appropriation and circulation of surplus value - is destabilized by the massive transformation of the state in the last thirty years. In most wealthy economies, the state has abandoned its role in cushioning market-driven social inequalities, and now takes actions that often magnify and reinforce disparities. Labor market institutions are at the heart of these changes, particularly in cities. Federal and state welfare restructuring pushed hundreds of thousands of former welfare recipients into the low-wage workforce; federal and state regulatory changes have magnified macroeconomic trends encouraging the informalization and privatization of the employment relation, creating a vast quasiguerrillas labor market that is vulnerable to particularly severe forms of exploitation. The politics of measurement and modeling have a tortuous history in all of these developments: although the destruction of the welfare social safety net ignored most social science research, there is now a growing body of post-welfare research that (perhaps unavoidably) provides legitimacy to the policy by charting the simplistic metric of the number of former recipients moving into the labor force. Countermappings are thus critically important to a) measure the extent and severity of working poverty (e.g., Hartmann et al.), b) document in a systematic and representative way the individual survival strategies used by former recipients (Edin and Lein, Trudeau and Cope), and c) rigorously document the incidence and functions of labor markets hidden from official statistics (Peck and Theodore). Depending on availability, we may substitute a selection from Rogers-Dillon, Robin H. 2005. The Welfare Experiments: Politics and Policy Evaluation. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

[Reading break, February 14-18]

Feb 22 Feminist Urbanism and the ‘Ground Truth’ Debates.


The contemporary expansion of feminist urban research was necessarily conditioned by the privileged status of positivist inquiry and quantitative methods in the 1970s. Accordingly, much of the early work emphasized

Mar 1 Aftermath of the Underclass Debates: Poverty Deconcentration.


The work of William Julius Wilson from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s was the most prominent stream of an interdisciplinary literature documenting the racial dimensions of concentrated poverty and its consequences. This work involved a synthesis of careful ethnographic field research, individual and household surveys, and quantitative analysis of secondary data – all conceived in an effort to counter the deep influence of ideological commitments to the culture-of-poverty explanation for segregation and racial inequality. Policy efforts to deal with the problem of concentrated (and racialized) poverty date back to the 1970s, but in the late 1980s and early 1990s several trends began to coalesce into what Goetz calls a ‘deconcentration paradigm’: “From the nation’s almost 15-year preoccupation with concentrated urban poverty, a policy approach has gradually emerged. It is, quite simply, to break up concentrations of poverty wherever possible.” Here, we consider Goetz’ critical analysis of this new policy consensus, its expression in a consent decree for a particular housing project on the Near North Side of Minneapolis, and then we examine an alternative interpretation of the functions played by public housing restructuring.

Mar 8

Racialization and Electoral Systems.


Library shelves, video archives, and file servers are overloaded with the accumulated stock of books, scholarly articles, news accounts, think-tank reports, magazine stories, talking-head-talk-show debates, and blogs recounting the history of the U.S. Presidential election in November, 2000. To avoid any appearance of partisanship in assessing the facts of what happened, we will rely on the record reported (although not signed) with the pristine positivist objectivity and neutrality of William Rehnquist, Sandra Day O’Connor, Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, and Clarence Thomas. After the close-fought national election came to hinge on the outcome in Florida, the Florida Division of Elections reported on November 8, 2000 that Bush had received 2,909,135 votes to Gore’s 2,907,351, yielding Bush an apparent margin of victory of less than one half of one percent. The Florida Election Code required an automatic machine recount, which was conducted and narrowed (but did not eliminate) Bush’s lead. Gore then “sought manual recounts in Volusia, Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade Counties” under the state’s election protest provisions. After a series of disputes over the deadline for county canvassing boards to submit returns to the Florida Secretary of State, the U.S. Supreme Court vacated a Florida Supreme Court

13 Web-logs. Envision a personal diary with minimal self-restraint hooked up to a high-speed Internet connection. For a fascinating evaluation of the effects of blogs on the current campaign, see Matthew Klam (2004). “Fear and Laptops on the Campaign Trail.” New York Times Magazine, September 26, 42-49, 115-116, 123 “Left-wing politics are thriving on the blogs the way Limbaugh has dominated talk radio, and the nastier partisan blogs have been growing the fastest.” p. 48. For an especially hilarious instance of culture-jamming, see the discussion of the ‘Sloganator’ on wonkette.com, discussed in Klam’s article on p. 47.
14 Al dente. See note 3, supra.
decision extending the deadline from a statutory November 14 to November 26, only to have the Florida Supreme Court issue a decision on remand, reinstating the date. On November 26 the Florida Elections Canvassing Commission declared Bush the winner of the state’s 25 electoral votes, and the next day Gore availed himself of the state’s contest provisions. The case wound up again in the Florida Supreme Court, which accepted jurisdiction, in part, on the grounds that Miami-Dade County failed to manually recount 9,000 ballots for which machines detected no Presidential selection (“undervotes”). On December 8, the Florida Supreme Court ordered a hand recount of the 9,000 ballots in Miami-Dade. Bush filed an emergency application to the U.S. Supreme Court, asking for a stay of the Florida Supreme Court mandate; on December 9, the U.S. Supreme Court granted the stay, and on December 12, reversed the judgment of the Florida Supreme Court. The December 12 opinion, an unusual, unsigned per curiam, stopped the recount on the grounds of equal protection, leaving Bush the winner of Florida’s popular vote (by an official margin of 537 votes), the loser of the national popular vote (by a margin of about half a million), and the winner of the Electoral College vote.

Bush v. Gore has generated a sizeable legal literature, and it has also catalyzed longstanding debates over racial gerrymandering (particularly since the majority’s decision hinged on the Equal Protection clause). Here, we examine some of the judicial history of race in electoral systems, and a new stream of political science inquiry that has (partially) resolved a longstanding geographical measurement dilemma.

Mar 15 Carceral Urban Systems.


Sociology, the law, and public policy scholarship traces a long and complex history of crime, criminalization, and trends in incarceration. Geographical inquiry into these topics has expanded in recent years, coinciding with a general consensus that we are seeing an era of ‘hyper-incarceration,’ led most starkly by the acceleration in the population behind bars in the United States. Simon, Jonathan. 2000. “The ‘Society of Captives’ in the Era of Hyper-Incarceration.” Theoretical Criminology 4(3), 285-308 (tracing evolving contexts and goals of sociological and political science inquiry on the internal social processes of prisons). Jamie Peck offers the crucial point that the debates over the demise of the nation-state (common in the 1990s) have now been overshadowed by a resurgent interest in the aggressive actions of state institutions – and that these actions cannot simply be viewed as crisis-induced responses. “Distinctively new forms of policy

20 Latin, “by the court.” Per curiam decisions are typically issued for routine, uncontroversial matters, while major decisions carry the name of the judge who authored the decision along with signatures of concurring Justices. There has been considerable speculation on which Justice authored Bush v. Gore.
21 Depending on availability, we may substitute selections from Wacquant, Loic. 2005. Deadly Symbiosis. New York: Polity Press.
reconstruction and regulatory rollout are in evidence...” We are seeing “an emergent process of ‘carceralization,’ suggesting perhaps that the prison system can be understood as one of the epicenters of these neoliberalized times.” (Peck, p. 223, 226). Beyond the obvious connections to American exceptionalist debates, the transnational transfer mechanisms for public policy and political ideology have placed America’s incarceration regime at center stage in debates throughout the world. Writing from the London School of Economics, David Downes offers a striking view of America’s “macho penal economy”: “...the US prison population now amounts some 2 percent of the male labor force. As a result of prisoners being excluded from the labor force count, a convention which merits re-examination, this factor alone has reduced the official figure for male unemployment by some 30-40 percent since the early 1990s. And it is this unemployment figure that is endlessly cited, on both sides of the Atlantic, as a major sign of the superiority of the deregulated economy of the USA compared with the more corporatist economies of Western Europe. ... Making some allowance for the huge job creation aspect of imprisonment for custodial and allied staff, especially in areas of high unemployment, would enhance its significance even further. It is a tragic irony that a major flaw in the political economy of the USA - its grotesquely high prison population - unduly inflates what is taken to signify a major success - its unusually low unemployment rate.” Downes, David. 2001. “The Macho Penal Economy: Mass Incarceration in the United States - a European Perspective.” Punishment & Society 3(1), 61-80, quotes from p. 72. Alternatively, see Worrall, Anne. 2000. “Globalization, the Millennium, and the Prison.” Theoretical Criminology 4(3), 391-397 (a valuable review of several books on prison trends, women in prisons, and comparative analyses in the tradition of ‘international penology’). A valuable, concise historical evaluation is offered in Zimring, Franklin E. 2001. “Imprisonment Rates and the New Politics of Criminal Punishment.” Punishment & Society 3(1), 161-166. Gilmore’s work represents a particularly vivid theory of the roots of America’s recent incarceration boom as one structural solution to the production of surplus, racialized labor. Beckett and Western’s empirical analysis is necessarily much narrower in its substantive focus, but offers strong evidence in support of Gilmore’s arguments. Additional empirically politicized dimensions of the incarceration boom are illustrated in Lawrence, Sarah, and Jeremy Travis. 2004. The New Landscape of Imprisonment: Mapping America’s Prison Expansion. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute; the Prison Policy Initiative (http://www.prisonpolicy.org/atlas); and Peter Wagner’s Prisoners of the Census Project (documenting the mismatch between the origins of a disproportionate number of prisoners from inner-city racially marginalized communities sent to prison facilities in rural, predominantly white areas) (http://www.prisonersofthecensus.org). Finally, there is an expanding and rich source of information from legal scholarship and policy sources, including the Death Penalty Information Center, the Innocence Project at Cardozo Law School, and the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University Law School. For the most comprehensive source of data on exonerations, see Gross, Samuel R., Kristen Jacoby, Daniel J. Matheson, Nicholas Montgomery, and Sujata Patel. 2004. Exonerations in the United States, 1989 Through 2003. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Law School.

Mar 22 Gentrification, Homelessness, and the Right to the City.


As lexicon and theory, ‘gentrification’ is well into middle age. Four decades ago, the geographer Ruth Glass used the term in passing to punctuate a colorful description of changes underway in London’s Covent Gardens neighborhood. Ever since, the word has been at the center of urban

22 The Atkinson and Bridge collection is a bit overdue (it was scheduled for release in November, 2004), but hopefully it will be available by March. We’ll discuss relevant chapter selections.
struggle, from violent street battles to polite-veneer academic debates, from obtuse policy discussions to offbeat pulp fiction, from carefully-calculated land development schemes to colorful urban-boosteryish newspaper spreads. The topic has attracted so much attention that Larry Bourne, one of North America’s most prominent urbanists, was concerned in the early 1990s that “it may appear to some observers that this single subject has dominated academic debate... many students of the city now view the gentrification phenomenon as one of the most pervasive processes of social change operating to restructure the contemporary inner city.”23 More than a decade later the debate rages on, producing a rich and often contradictory literature that seems to promise too much, particularly on the connections between theory, policy, and activism. Liz Bondi, once an eloquent voice on the emancipatory possibilities and polarizing inequalities of the gentrified inner city, is now frustrated and suggests that we abandon the subject “because of its inability to open up new insights,” and she wonders if “it is time to allow it to disintegrate under the weight of these burdens.”24 And yet the debate is anything but academic. A suite of public policies has fostered gentrification for many years, generating enough resistance and backlash among the inner-city poor and working-class that new urbanist architect Andres Duany feels compelled to write in the pages of The American Enterprise to defend middle-class people “accused of committing that newest of social sins: ‘gentrification.” Duany offers “three cheers” for a process that reduces concentrated poverty, brings the political constituency of the middle class back to the inner city, and provides a “rub-off work ethic” for the poor: “It is the rising tide that lifts all boats.”25

Or maybe, as Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge suggest, it is the new urban colonialism. Here, we consider recent contributions to the gentrification literature, and we examine the interrelation of gentrification and changes in the practices, policies, and laws governing public space.

Mar 29 Identity, Categorization, and Statistical Citizenship.


Recent scholarship has unpacked problematic categories of race and ethnicity as part of a sweeping transformation of social inquiry. But what happens when theory is unhinged from a praxis that must engage with the problematic, rigid categorization involved in political and regulatory systems? Here, we consider the American Community Reinvestment Movement as one illustration of these dilemmas: “Sophisticated


qualitative inquiry on racialized identities yields considerable theoretical power, but a corresponding political force requires that critical theory articulate with an existing legal or policy infrastructure or tap into emerging social movements. Housing policy in the USA today is governed by a conservative/neoliberal consensus on the virtues of homeownership, an ideological commitment to market forces, and a blind faith in the synergies of public–private partnerships. Yet this regime is also premised on the strategic essentialism codified in the legislative and judicial victories of the Civil Rights era and the subsequent social movements evolving out of the 1960s. These movements are often embattled and sometimes co-opted by the forces of privatization and devolution, and Civil Rights legislation relies on reified categorizations of racialized identities that are at odds with qualitative research on race in human geography and other fields. But this is an age of eviscerated social welfare commitments, persistent inner-city disinvestment, severe shortages of affordable housing, the emergence of aggressive and abusive predatory lenders, and pervasive racial discrimination that is itself based on problematic categories of race constructed through the processes of American urbanization and suburban development. And so the question of ‘to whom the speech is directed, whether it can be heard’ (Butler 1995: 440) must be answered: activists in the community reinvestment movement, in alliance with progressive, politically engaged scholars, speak out forcefully against racial injustice, and the historical record shows that this speech has often been heard by judges, regulators and financial institutions. CRA activism over the last generation has achieved commitments of more than $1 trillion in loans, services and investments for minority and low income households and neighborhoods, with 99 percent of this figure committed since 1992 (Haag 2000: 38). The cumbersome reifications of complex, interlocking axes of difference signalled by ‘minority’ and ‘low-income’ should not obscure the value of progressive strategic essentialism linked to an infrastructure of quantitative, policy-oriented research.”

Apr 5

The Informational City Revisited: City of Emancipatory Bits or Geoslavery?


At the heart of Hannah’s theory of statistical citizenship is the political management of individual information. This political management has, of course, has been transformed by the accelerated diffusion of information and communications technologies. Nigel Thrift suggests that we are seeing the development of a “track-and-trace spatial imaginary” that is reshaping our visions of cities, our experience of urban life, and the relations between urban space and informational practices. The range of empirical illustrations of the new spatial dynamics of data is virtually without limit. Trademark and copyright law are colliding with the new spatialities of the Internet, raising difficult


27 We may need to arrange an alternative schedule for this week. The 2005 Meeting of the Association of American Geographers is in Denver, April 5-9.

questions about the location of legal jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{29} Satellite remote sensing and other geographical technologies are being used by agribusiness conglomerates to monitor farms and to sue farmers for patent infringement when there is evidence of saving and replanting genetically-modified seeds.\textsuperscript{30} The proliferating legions of private and municipally-managed surveillance cameras are being hooked up to sophisticated facial recognition software and growing databases of ‘known’ or ‘suspected’ criminals and terrorists, while FBI officers are (once again) infiltrating activist organizations to take photographs and build their databases.\textsuperscript{31} Wal-Mart has begun using digital thumbprinting for identification purposes for customers who write checks, and the behemoth retailer’s decision to use radio-frequency identification chips throughout its inventory system has percolated through its supplier networks across the entire wholesale trade sector – creating the theoretical possibility of real-time monitoring of the location of a product from the factory, to the route followed by the truck driver on the way to the local Wal-Mart, to the supply on the shelf, and all the way to the consumer’s home.\textsuperscript{32}

Here, we consider theoretical perspectives on the dangers in such trends – Mitchell’s notion of logic prisons, and Dobson’s concept of geoslavery – as well as the possibility of a more optimistic scenario of agency of the digital individual.

Apr 26 Presentation and Submission of Final Papers.

\textsuperscript{29} Should the legality of certain forms of communication be governed by the ‘prevailing community standards’ of the location of a server? The location of the act of viewing or downloading? The networks connecting origin and destination?

