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 uncontroversial 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.” Lake’s lament is of course one voice among many in the continuing scholarly debate on the purpose, meaning, and relevance of urban research. 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

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

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.’” Liptak, 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 Pretax 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. History’s actors quickly dismissed White House Economic Advisor Lawrence Lindsey in 2003 after he made the mistake of assigning an economic estimate to the cost of one element of this new reality-creation enterprise. Lindsey’s estimate at the time was $200 billion for the Iraq war; three years later, the (now) dissident economist Joseph Stiglitz provides a detailed analysis of direct and indirect costs incurred and expected over the next several years, estimating a total between $1 trillion and $2 trillion. Bilmes, Linda, and Joseph E. Stiglitz. 2006. The Economic Costs of the Iraq War: An Appraisal Three Years after the Beginning of the Conflict. New York: Columbia University; available at http://www.josephstiglitz.com. 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 engaged 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: “Oy!” “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: University of California Press, p. ix. But other unapologetic titles suggest otherwise, especially Lake, Robert W. 2002. “Bring Back Big Government.” International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 26(4), 815-822.


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 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.”10 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; 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.11

---

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 sidesteps 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 not 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 situated somewhere between social constructionism al dente and positivism al dente. Hannah, Matthew G. 2001. “Sampling and the Politics of Representation in U.S. Census 2000.” Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 19, 515-534.
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.” Schuurman, Nadine, and Geraldine Pratt. 2002. “Care of the Subject: Feminism and Critiques of GIS.” Gender, Place, and Culture 9(3), 291-299.
Readings

Several books are available at the UBC Bookstore. I ask that you acquire any two of these books; you will help to lead one or two corresponding seminar meetings, and you will be asked to write a short review of one of the books (your choice). All other readings will be made available at the first seminar meeting.\footnote{It is not known by whom the passive voice was invented.}


Evaluation

Evaluation is based on three components: seminar participation (15 percent), a short review of any one of the books listed above (15 percent), and a final paper on a topic to be agreed with the instructor (70 percent). Participation includes leading seminar discussions. The book review should be prepared as a background document to help lead one of the seminar discussions. A brief paper proposal is due 9:00 AM on January 31. Short oral progress reports will be presented at 9:00 AM on March 14. If you would like feedback on a draft, the deadline is 5:00 PM, April 7. The final paper is due at 5:00 PM on the last day of the April examination period, April 28.
Schedule

On the following pages is a provisional schedule with corresponding readings and references. For each week, we will all read three “core” articles or chapters, marked below with an *asterisk; for the books marked with whatever this symbol is called†, we will have commentary by those colleagues who chose to acquire that particular volume. For the other readings listed below, I ask that you take a very quick skim.


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 2002 retrospective panel discussion of a 1970 futurist urban and regional manifesto, “The Geography of the United States in the Year 2000.” Revisions of panelist remarks were published in 2004 in The Professional Geographer.13

Jan 17 Critical Analytical Urbanism.


The conceptualization of “critical analytical urbanism” is a fusion of Eric Sheppard’s notion of “insurgent quantitative practices,” Dorling and Simpson’s work with the Radical Statistics Group,\textsuperscript{14} Martin Cadwallader’s reference to “analytical urban geography,”\textsuperscript{15} and my own thinking on the possibilities for a strategic positivism. Several years ago, Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift offered the inaugural essay in the ‘Interventions’ section of \textit{Antipode}, under the title, “What Kind of Economic Theory for What Kind of Economic Geography?” Amin and Thrift’s intervention was born of frustration amongst economic geographers trying to engage with the powerful domain of mainstream economics, with its restrictive methodological and theoretical criteria for valid knowledge. Amin and Thrift argued that much of the best current economic thinking is taking place outside the mainstream, led by dissident economists as well as those without disciplinary credentials in economics; as a result, Amin and Thrift suggest, economic geographers no longer need to struggle for a seat at the table with mainstream economics: “...at this point in time, we need to think seriously about whom we as economic geographers want to play out with. We think we would be fooling ourselves if we believe we can lie down with the lion and become anything more than prey.”\textsuperscript{16}

Amin and Thrift’s provocative metaphor (economists as lions, geographers as prey) attracted considerable attention, including the Plummer and Sheppard essay listed above, as well as eight additional responses by prominent geographers. One of the central axes of debate over Amin and Thrift’s intervention involves a presumed dualism between means and ends: quantitative inquiry is associated with orthodox, mainstream, or reactionary status-quo research, while qualitative inquiry is believed to foster greater emancipatory possibilities. The latter side of the dualism is directly contradicted by the rich history of anthropological ethnographies placed in service of colonialism, while the former rests on a caricature of quantitative research that no longer holds. As Poon concludes in a recent review: “Few quantitative human geographers today fully subscribe to the revered modernist principles of certainty and predictability that commonly characterize nomothetic research using the scientific method. ... production of quantitative methods by geographers ... is increasingly shaped by concerns of methodological legislation, where jurors are encouraged to discriminate between wheat and chaff when confronted with evidence that encompasses spatial uncertainty and diversity.”\textsuperscript{17} The continued reproduction of simplified caricatures of quantitative inquiry, although understandable in light of key generational issues bound up with the distinctive disciplinary history of the (erroneously labeled) quantitative revolution and its prominent advocates, has limited trans-disciplinary engagement with important strategic movements to advance social justice on geographic issues.

For two decades beginning in the late 1960s, dissidents in geography labored to produce rich critiques of a quantitative-positivist methodology and epistemology that was understood to be hegemonic in the field.\textsuperscript{18} Urban geography was at the center of this intellectual, political, and methodological turmoil. Thirty years on, however, many geographers have absorbed the most abridged versions of this rich history, perpetuating simplified caricatures of quantification and positivism. A poignant contrast with some of these caricatures (which are premised on an asserted comprehensive understanding of, and transcendence of, positivist epistemology) comes from legal scholarship, which has only recently undertaken comprehensive efforts to infuse social-scientific epistemologies and methodologies into judicial reasoning. For a lengthy yet accessible analysis of the current effort to infuse contemporary positivist social science into the law, see the work of Lee Epstein and Gary King.\textsuperscript{19} Within geography, one of the most systematic attempts to fuse a more productive


\textsuperscript{18} This contemporary historical critique and re-evaluation continues, exemplified by Trevor Barnes’ wonderful histories of taken-for-granted statistical techniques. See Barnes, Trevor J. 1998. “A History of Regression: Actors, Networks, Machines, and Numbers.” \textit{Environment and Planning D: Society and Space} 30, 203-223.

methodological and epistemological agenda comes from John Paul Jones’ effort to engage a realist perspective with Emilio Casetti’s expansion method.20

Jan 24 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

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 global-local relations. Here, we examine one recent effort to shed light on the anatomy of a particular institutional ensemble – a set of specific actors embedded in the national and transnational structural spaces of capital flows – and the role of this infrastructure in disciplining local urban policy choices.21

Jan 31 Urban Systems of Inequality: Neoliberal Urbanization and the ‘Global City’ Polarization 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.22 Two other detailed empirical studies provide valuable yet mixed evidence on the hypothesis for Hong Kong and New York.23

Peter Marcuse and Ronald 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. 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. There are, however, several valuable case studies of specific transnational facets of polarization in particular global cities, including Cox and Watt’s limited application of survey and sample selection methods and a small number of interviews with domestic workers in London; Susser’s qualitative account based on several years of observation of local social service institutions and in-depth interviews with a small number of mothers in New York City; Boschken’s theoretical explication of the institutional and political dynamics of upper-middle class professionals and the effects on public policy, along with rankings of U.S. cities; and Swyngedouw’s comparative analysis of the context and consequences of large-scale redevelopment projects, emphasizing the increased socioeconomic polarization and the establishment of “exceptionality measures” in elite-driven, anti-democratic local governance. 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 7  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.” 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.” 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.” 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.” 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 14 Reading break; no seminar meeting.

Feb 21 Transnationalizing 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 quasi-underground labor market that is vulnerable to particularly severe forms of exploitation. Expanded immigration has transnationalized many aspects of these local, state, and federal policy frameworks of inequality, with sweeping consequences for native-born racialized minorities as well as new working-class immigrants. The politics of measurement and modeling have a tortured 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 by working-class immigrants (Massey and Durand), and c) rigorously document the incidence and functions of labor markets hidden from official statistics (Peck and Theodore).

Feb 28 Feminist Urbanism and the ‘Ground Truth’ Debates.


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 quasi-underground labor market that is vulnerable to particularly severe forms of exploitation. Expanded immigration has transnationalized many aspects of these local, state, and federal policy frameworks of inequality, with sweeping consequences for native-born racialized minorities as well as new working-class immigrants. The politics of measurement and modeling have a tortured 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 by working-class immigrants (Massey and Durand), and c) rigorously document the incidence and functions of labor markets hidden from official statistics (Peck and Theodore).

Feb 28 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 application of many of the standard techniques and modes of analysis, but explicitly focusing on women (and in some cases with more nuanced treatment of gender relations). Among the foundational statements of contemporary feminist perspectives on the city include landmark articles and books in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including pieces by Dolores Hayden, Catharine Stimpson and several coauthors, and Ann
Markusen.\textsuperscript{34} An updated, poignant, and well-crafted dispatch from the irrational exuberance of the 1990s was published in the ‘Millennial’ issue of The New Yorker, which included a series of essays on what seemed to be ‘Next’ in a variety of realms of culture, politics, and economics.\textsuperscript{35} The Worcester Expeditions led by Susan Hanson and Gerry Pratt in the 1990s took the comparatively narrow second-wave feminist and socialist-feminist perspectives of the 1970s into valuable new terrain on difference, identity, and their relations to socially-produced urban space.\textsuperscript{36} My own primitive attempts to understand the evolving relations between gender and class relations and suburban spatial structure are deeply indebted to the work of Hanson and Pratt, Markusen, Hayden, and Melissa Gilbert; the ‘public household’ is an attempt to conceptualize the interdependencies between households and the degree to which social and familial activities are commodified.\textsuperscript{37} As an alternative to the quantitative approach adopted there, see the extended case study of overworked upper-middle class professionals presented by Arlie Russel Hochschild, in “Emotional Geography and the Flight Plan of Capitalism.”\textsuperscript{38} In the last decade, however, feminist urban inquiry that attempts to maintain a dialogue with positivism or quantification seems to have undergone a decisive shift in tandem with methodological changes in the discipline which reached a crescendo in the debates surrounding John Pickles’ Ground Truth, an engagement with the social enterprise of geographic information systems; most but not all of the contributors to this collection wrote from a critical social theoretical perspective in a spirit of external critique.\textsuperscript{39} The feminist dimensions of the shift from quantification to geo-visualization debates is best exemplified by considering the special issue of the Professional Geographer, “Should Women Count?” in 1995, alongside the 2002 forum in Gender, Place and Culture, “Is GIS For Women?” Within this context, Mei-Po Kwan’s work on feminist visualization, feminist reconstructions of the behavioral geographic tradition of the 1970s, and feminist dimensions of public-participation GIS stands as some of the most innovative and critically important. I also strongly recommend Marie Cieri’s innovative disruption of taken-for-granted ways of visualizing geographical information.\textsuperscript{40}

Mar 7  No Seminar meeting: Association of American Geographers conference, Chicago, IL.

Mar 14 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 (Hackworth), along with an examination of distinctive features of the Canadian urban context (Smith).


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’ 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. The cumbersome reifications of complex, interlocking axes of difference signaled by ‘minority’ and ‘low-income’ should not obscure the value of progressive strategic essentialism linked to an infrastructure of quantitative, policy-oriented research.”

Mar 28 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 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-boosterish 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.”

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.” 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.” Or maybe, as Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge suggest in a recent book, it is The New Urban Colonialism. Here, we consider recent contributions to the gentrification literature, focusing on the emergence of a ‘globalizing imagination’ amongst gentrifiers, ongoing debates over the extent of displacement, and the interrelation of gentrification and changes in the practices, policies, and laws governing public space.

Apr 4 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, 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 questions about the location of legal jurisdiction. 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. 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. 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. 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. Unfortunately, the digital individual envisioned in theory in the mid-1990s has now been entirely transformed in the national security state created in the New American Century since late 2001.

---


48 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?


Additional Resources

Previous drafts of this syllabus included sections for two additional topics that, unfortunately, cannot be fit into the confines of our short semester. I can’t bring myself to delete these notes, in light of the critical importance of the subject matter, and so these suggestions are submitted for your ‘recreational’ reading list.

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 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 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.

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, 52

52 Blogs. Envision a personal diary with minimal self-restraint plugged 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.

53 Al dente. See note 3, supra.


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.

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 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 epicentral institutions 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 superiori 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

---

93 Latin, “by the court.” *Per curiam* decisions are typically issued for routine, uncontroersial 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.*
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.”

Ruthie Gilmore’s work represents a particularly vivid theory of the roots of America’s recent incarceration boom as a 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 rigorous yet critical engagements with policy by researchers at the Urban Institute and a Soros-supported effort to document the links between incarceration, the Census, and political representation. 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.

