

SJSU College of Social Sciences Dean's Symposium

“Mitigating Inequities Faced by Minority Communities: Challenges, Opportunities, and Solutions”

Wednesday October 26, 2016, 4:30–6:30 pm, MLK 225

By studying a wide range of marginalized, minority and often low-income communities, presentations in this symposium identify the inequalities faced by such communities, suggest opportunities to address the inequities, and research real-world mitigation measures. The research methods employed are as diverse as the communities studied – ethnographic research by Prof. Wilson to study Somalis in Silicon Valley, mixed methods and economic analysis by Prof. Troncoso on the state and future of on-demand/platform work, mixed methods (spatial analysis, community mapping, and interviews) by Prof. Douglas to examine unequal access to green space in South Los Angeles, and meta-analysis by Prof. Salazar to showcase effectiveness of several community-based projects that serve Latino/a communities around SJSU campus.



Title: The Somalis of Silicon Valley: Stories of Migration, Sense of Community, and Survival Capacities

Ruth Wilson, Professor of African-American Studies

Title: The Uber-izing of America: Selection and the Future of On-demand Work

Joshua Troncoso, Assistant Professor of Mexican-American Studies



Title: It Takes a Village: An Innovative Community-based Participatory Approach to Investigating the Nexus of Crime, Nuisance Businesses, and Access to Community Greenspace in South Los Angeles

Jason Douglas, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies



Title: A Community Engagement Across the Disciplines: CommUniverCity San José

Dayana Salazar, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning



Ruth Wilson: The Somalis of Silicon Valley: Stories of Migration, Sense of Community, and Survival Capacities

This presentation summarizes preliminary results from my ethnographic research among Somalis living and working in the Silicon Valley. My research activities include in-depth interviews of adult men and women, participant observation of community events, the collection of field notes, structured interviews documenting their challenges, as well as their opportunities and strategies for success while living in the fast paced, high tech, information-based Silicon Valley. I discuss how the *intersectionality* of race, religion, gender, language, and social status converge to support and deter Somalis seeking to re-establish their sense of community in the post 9/11 era.

Joshua Troncoso: The Uber-izing of America: Adverse Selection and the Future of On-demand Work

As part of a federal lawsuit over employee classification, Uber commissioned two studies demonstrating that its drivers are too socioeconomically diverse to be a legal “class”. Studies found no evidence Uber is depressing wages nor are they exploiting vulnerable populations. Fears that platforming represented a version of 19th century subcontracting seem overblown. However, the economic principles underpinning their argument—informational asymmetry/adverse selection—forecast a grim future. Drivers will become poorer, more uniformly desperate as educated and skilled workers stop driving when compensation falls. This paper is a qualitative re-consideration of Uber’s data and 19th century work models.

Jason Douglas: It Takes a Village: An Innovative Community-based Participatory Approach to Investigating the Nexus of Crime, Nuisance Businesses, and Access to Community Greenspace in South Los Angeles

Community greenspaces (e.g., parks and community gardens) provide health-supporting spaces for recreation and socialization and are important for promoting healthy lifestyles in urban, low-income communities of color. Yet, in Los Angeles, greenspace is unequally distributed by neighborhood racial characteristics. Furthermore, in South Los Angeles (SLA), a predominantly Black and Latino/a community with scarce greenspace, crime is a significant barrier to greenspace access. This paper explicates the processes and outcomes of an SLA community-based organization in addressing greenspace accessibility.

Dayana Salazar: A Model of Community Engagement Across the Disciplines: CommUniverCity San José

This presentation focuses on CommUniverCity San José, a place-based initiative that organizes community engaged learning projects fueled by San José State University faculty and students. CommUniverCity creates and supports community action projects that are embedded in the curriculum and address the development goals set by underserved, largely Latino neighborhoods surrounding the SJSU campus. Each academic year this multi-sector (community-university-city) partnership engages 8,000 downtown San José residents of all ages and 1,200 students from every college at SJSU who contribute on average 20,000 hours of work resulting in nearly \$500,000 of in-kind benefits to the neighborhoods.

Questions? Contact shishir.mathur@sjsu.edu

This event is open to the campus community

Light refreshments will be served