



Eastern Sociological Society 2014 Annual Meeting
Development Sociology Mini-Conference

**The Cost of Development:
Work, Gender, Ethnicity and Environment**

Organized by

F. Sonia Arellano-López (Binghamton-State University of New York)

Dimitri della Faille (Université du Québec en Outaouais)



PROGRAM / BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Baltimore Hilton

February 22nd, 2014

Baltimore, MD

PROGRAM

Eastern Sociological Society 2014 Annual Meeting Development Sociology Mini-Conference February 22nd Baltimore

Development I: Environment, Food, and Social Justice

10:15AM-11:45AM / Panel 215

- “Informal Work and the Costs of Urban Development: The Impact of Growth and Governance on Traders in the Global South” – ROEVER, Sally / *WIEGO*
- “‘Sustenance Out of Refuse’: Detroit, Invisible Capital, and the Search for Food Justice” – SNEEGAS, Gretchen / *Chatham University*
- “Labor dimensions in biodiversity conservation programs: the Dominican Republic case” – ARELLANO-LOPEZ, Sonia / *Binghamton University*

Development II: Communities and Global Dimensions

12:00AM-1:30PM / Panel 244

- “Migrant Domestic Labor Vulnerability: The Roles of Global and Governmental Systems” – KOLKER, Abigail / *CUNY Graduate Center*
- “The ‘Promises’ of Tourism Development: Race and work at the Colombian tri-border ” – CRAVEN, Caitlin / *McMaster University*
- “Gender mainstreaming and National Community Recovery in Afghanistan” QUIE, Marissa – *Cambridge University*
- “Organizing through Digital Communication: Community IT Centers for Rural Villages in India” – BOERI, Natascia / *CUNY Graduate Center*

Development III: Identities, Struggles, and Emancipation

1:45PM-3:15PM / Panel 274

- “Disrupted Lives, Lost History: Cultural Cost of Economic Development in China” – LI, Rebecca / *The College of New Jersey*
- “Bitter Sweet: Sugarcane Development and the Struggle for Social Reproduction in Coastal Tanzania” – CHUNG, Youjin / *Cornell University*
- “Work, Gender, Ethnicity, and Environment : a Counter-Hegemonic and Anti-Domination Reading” – DELLA FAILLE, Dimitri / *Université du Québec en Outaouais*

ABSTRACTS

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10:15AM-11:45AM

Panel 215 - Development I: Environment, Food, and Social Justice

“Informal Work and the Costs of Urban Development: The Impact of Growth and Governance on Traders in the Global South” – ROEVER, Sally / *WIEGO*

Current debates over urban development focus primarily on the visible challenges that cities face as their populations continue to grow: severe housing shortages, inadequate infrastructure, skyrocketing land values, and uneven service delivery, for example. As is well documented in the literature, prevailing urban development paradigms to address these challenges reflect similar principles of growth and governance on which mainstream development paradigms rest: the economic growth of cities depends on their ability to create a favourable investment climate and secure public spaces, which in turn depend on a managerial approach to city governance. Though informal employment accounts for a higher share of jobs than does formal employment in most cities of the global South, it rarely features in theory or practice as a generator of growth 'from below'. One reason is that there is little documentation of the costs and risks that more powerful actors download onto informal workers and that intervene in their day-to-day labour processes. This paper fills the gap by analyzing one dimension of the relationship between urban development and informal employment in the global South: the costs of growth and governance for informal own-account traders. It compares two urban development contexts—one (Accra, Ghana) characterized by rapid economic growth, rising land values and an exclusive approach to informal workers—and another (Lima, Peru) where growth is more moderate and governance more inclusive. Focusing on gender, product category and place of work as sources of segmentation in the informal trade sector, the paper draws on qualitative and quantitative data to show how the prioritization of public space as a source of exchange value facilitates informal governance practices that limit growth and democracy from below. The research findings have implications for theories of formalization that obscure the role of the state in creating and perpetuating informality.

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“‘Sustenance Out of Refuse’: Detroit, Invisible Capital, and the Search for Food Justice” – SNEEGAS, Gretchen / *Chatham University*

Detroit is frequently portrayed by mass media as a site of desolation, illustrated by stories of fiscal insolvency, statistics documenting population decline, and a recent trend of "ruin porn," or pictures of abandoned spaces taken by tourists and trespassers. Such representations

correspond with the well-documented observation that people of color in America are unevenly affected by the negative effects of capitalism and urban decay. Detroit's citizens, however, have another story to tell. This paper examines the Detroit Food Justice Task Force (DFJTF), a social justice organization designed to improve food security within the city. DFJTF seeks to empower native Detroiters by helping them to discover their own "invisible capital," or existing resources hidden from view. Using qualitative discourse analysis to examine DFJTF's website and social media content, this paper analyzes the overlapping categories of race, space, and capital as they intersect with food justice work in Detroit. This paper argues that DFJTF uses these categories to challenge mainstream, racialized depictions of Detroit as a barren landscape, instead describing the city as rich in invisible human and spatial capital.

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“Labor dimensions in biodiversity conservation programs: the Dominican Republic case” – ARELLANO-LOPEZ, Sonia / *Binghamton University*

The Dominican Republic supports a broad array of Caribbean ecosystems, ranging from montane cloud forest to coastal lagoons and reef systems, which are home to some 5,600 species of plants and about 300 species of birds. Because of its ecosystem and species diversity, the country is a critical part of the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot. However, rapid economic growth is threatening biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, prompting international donor organizations and non-governmental organization (NGOs) to support initiatives that seek to promote development that improves the living standards of local people, based on principles of conservation and sustainable use of renewable resources. These efforts have varied in the degree to which they have achieved stated conservation and development objectives, and the long-term sustainability of some may be undermined by projected changes in temperature and precipitation patterns associated with climate change. However, regardless of how successful they are ultimately judged to be, all of the projects sought to build on, and change, existing patterns of local labor organization. The present paper assesses the impacts of a suite of conservation and development projects that are currently concluding on how labor is mobilized, and how productive activities are valued and organized, and the implications of these impacts for the quality of life of the people who were the intended beneficiaries. It does not consider the success of the projects in terms of meeting their stated objectives. However, it does argue that the impacts on local labor patterns do have important implications for biodiversity, ecosystem integrity and future development options.

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12:00AM-1:30PM

Panel 244 - Development II: Communities and Global Dimensions

“Migrant Domestic Labor Vulnerability: The Roles of Global and Governmental Systems” – KOLKER, Abigail / *CUNY Graduate Center*

This paper provides a broad overview, examining the labor market forces as well government state policies to understand how they function in tandem to produce the current situation of rampant abuse and exploitation of migrant domestic workers worldwide. More specifically, I shall begin with a discussion of the market forces—the pull factors contributing the demand for foreign domestics in developed countries and the push factors that promote female out-migration in developing countries. I will go on to explain how the policies and practices of both sending and receiving countries produce and sustain the mass migration of female domestic workers. Finally, I discuss the political relationships between sending and receiving countries, and point to various mechanisms that can be cultivated to better ensure migrant domestic workers' safety and wellbeing. It is, I should note, a preliminary effort to bring together and analyze a large literature on a topic that I intend to focus on in my future work. It deliberately draws on examples from a broad range of countries as a way to highlight common issues that arise and which warrant discussion on an international level. Further, this broad approach underscores the similarities among the policies of Western, Middle Eastern, and Asian receiving countries, which might be shocking to some.

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“The ‘Promises’ of Tourism Development: Race and work at the Colombian tri-border” – CRAVEN, Caitlin / *McMaster University*

Tourism has long been promoted as a strategy for development in the Global South. Most recently as a manifestation of community-based, participatory, or alternative development, tourism promoters would have us believe in the more ethical or empowering possibilities of this process. Alongside these shifts, recent interest in tourism as work within tourism studies, sociology, and international political economy has sparked renewed attention to the livelihoods and changing practices of work of the 'toured', particularly how these are embedded within neoliberal frameworks of increased flexibility, individualization, and self-actualization. In this paper I examine how these dynamics of neoliberalising work and development are currently intersecting with race and displacement at the Colombian tri-border region where tourism has in the past decade surged as the dominant means of livelihood for both indigenous and non-indigenous residents and migrants. Based on my field work in this region, my paper specifically explores how ongoing colonial power relations are replicated and entrenched in the racialization of work in everyday tourism practice. This dynamic is particularly strong in the tri-border region where the majority of tourism

'entrepreneurs' are migrants from Andean Colombia, while indigenous residents find themselves encouraged to be entrepreneurs at the same time they work in less prominent positions and have their own systems or forms of work and life devalued or aestheticized. Not only does this reveal the hierarchies of work within touristic sites, as a real cost of alternative development in a context of neoliberalism, it also challenges the notion that tourism produces 'cultural understanding' if we look at the relationships between differently toured subjects. More broadly, this paper is situated within a study of the contentious politics and everyday work involved in producing sites as 'tourable' as a condition of possibility of global touristic movement.

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“Gender mainstreaming and National Community Recovery in Afghanistan” QUIE, Marissa – *Cambridge University*

Gender Mainstreaming and National Community Recovery in Afghanistan The plight of women in Afghanistan is often cited as a partial reason for Western intervention first through the war and then through peace and reconstruction initiatives. Since 2001 there have been real transformations in women's access to work, education, health and political participation. Yet, despite international intervention aimed at attaining gender equality, progress has been uneven. This paper questions whether the promotion of women's empowerment through development programs that mandate women's community participation can change the position of women within a society so deeply marked by gender segregation. Afghanistan's flagship initiative for community development is The National Solidarity Program (NSP) largely funded by the World Bank. It aims to strengthen mechanisms of deliberative democracy through the creation of Community Development Councils where participation for women is mandated. Communities then become the locus of decision-making for their own development projects. Since 2010, the NSP has been linked with the peace initiative to assimilate former Taliban combatants back into their communities. The combined phase is called National Community Recovery. What is the impact of this intervention in contexts which have long-standing practices which exclude women? How does the heightened insecurity and instability connected with the imminent drawdown of international troops, upcoming elections affect women's work and wider roles in their communities? To what extent does the inclusion of women through National Community Recovery become an exercise of form over function where international and domestic actors essentially collude to depict gender mainstreaming as a "progressive" process?

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“Organizing through Digital Communication: Community IT Centers for Rural Villages in India” – BOERI, Natascia / *CUNY Graduate Center*

This paper examines how community IT centers in rural villages of Gujarat, India are able to expand the reach of a member-based organization to isolated communities. The Indian Academy for Self-Employed Women (IASEW) established community IT centers in 2010 to provide innovative communication means to organize women across rural villages. The centers allow IASEW and village women to create a community beyond the restrictive

boundaries of their villages. IASEW is a branch of the Self-Employed Women's Association, a labor union for female informal workers. SEWA's approach is to offer programs and services that address the multiple sites of inequality experienced by women, beyond that of the labor market. IASEW's community IT centers contribute to this goal in two ways. First, it creates a place for women to organize despite cultural, economic, and geographic barriers. Second, it provides members with a venue to educate themselves and other members of their community. IASEW streams live programs through the community IT centers that address persistent or current problems experienced by rural women; these programs cover topics such as gender equality, agriculture, health, and education. This paper will discuss how innovative digital communications can organize women to address gender inequality in a rural, developing country context. It will discuss the specific programs and training tasks that SEWA undertakes to organize women, as well as the feasibility and sustainability of such centers.

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1:45PM-3:15PM

Panel 274 - Development III: Identities, Struggles, and Emancipation

“Disrupted Lives, Lost History: Cultural Cost of Economic Development in China” – LI, Rebecca / *The College of New Jersey*

As China pursues economic development by pushing for ever more urbanization, there is a danger of Chinese people losing touch with their cultural heritage as a result. In this paper, I examine three ways China's time-compressed economic development brings about an abrupt break with the past, thus depriving this and future generations of Chinese an opportunity to preserve the positive aspects of Chinese cultural heritage passed down through the generations. First, seizure of farm land from farmers to urbanize former agricultural communities pushes farmers off the land on which they have subsisted for generations. Subsistence farming is a cultural practice that, in addition to preserving one's connection to the land and the deep knowledge of high yield farming necessitated by the ownership of small plots, is also an expression of a set of values associated with non-urban, non-capitalist way of life. Being pushed off their land does not only mean economic insecurity, it also means that Chinese people lose connection to an alternative way of life with its accompanying worldview. This reduces the diversity of worldviews in the cultural repertoire of Chinese society. Second, rapid urbanization has also brought about redevelopment of old city centers. Historical buildings and neighborhoods are torn down without meaningful effort to preserve these historical places that provide connection to the past. Without these reminders of the past to help preserve collective memory of historical events and old ways of life, current and future generations of Chinese will no longer have access to cultural relics that help them understand their ancestors' and their own past, thus losing contact with their cultural heritage. Third, where historical sites are not torn down, they have been turned into tourist attractions for commercial gain, essentially commodifying the cultural heritage of Chinese people. As commercial enterprises, these historical sites are not set up to provide a way for people to understand the worldview and values held by those who created and occupied these historical sites in order to yield useful lessons to enrich their lives. Visiting these sites becomes no different from other forms of consumption.

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“Bitter Sweet: Sugarcane Development and the Struggle for Social Reproduction in Coastal Tanzania” – CHUNG, Youjin / *Cornell University*

In the wake of the 2007/2008 food and fuel crisis, the Tanzanian government entered into a joint venture with a Swedish biofuel company to transform 22,000 hectares of land into a monoculture sugarcane plantation. While international activists refer to this as a case of a "land grab", the Tanzanian government rejects such notion, and considers it as a sustainable

development project, which will contribute to agricultural modernization, and national self-sufficiency in sugar, electricity, and ethanol. In the dominant development paradigm, land is considered as a commodity that can be bought, sold, leased, transferred, and put into "productive" use. Similarly, labour is treated as a commodity, and often equated with waged labour. However, such capitalist ontology of land and labour masks the complex, unpaid, and gendered processes of social reproduction that occurs on land – i.e. the maintenance and reproduction of people and their capacities to sustain themselves on a daily and generational basis. This paper critically examines the processes of the aforementioned large-scale land acquisition for sugarcane production in coastal Tanzania through the lens of social reproduction. Specifically focusing on the involuntary resettlement resulting from the acquisition, this paper uncovers the ways in which different social groups – along the lines of gender, class, and ethnicity – struggle for their land-based lives and livelihoods.

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“Work, Gender, Ethnicity, and Environment : a Counter-Hegemonic and Anti-Domination Reading” – DELLA FAILLE, Dimitri / *Université du Québec en Outaouais*

In this paper, I will examine various dimensions of domination related to work, labour and development. Adopting a counter-hegemonic stance I will discuss some of the costs induced by major development ideologies. This paper examines the cost of development by reflecting on three elements of domination: gender, ethnicity and nature. This paper will show that the insistence of poverty alleviation to create salaried labour and strategies to transform social relations into economic relations have various costs. Such strategies are in fact attempts to limit definitions of social realizations to money-based accomplishments and have reinforced or created patterns of gender and ethnic domination. Criticism will also include an examination of the understanding of nature as environment and therefore its perpetration of domination by humankind on nature.

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