

Global Raciality: Empire, PostColoniality, and DeColoniality

UC San Diego, Faculty Club

May 15, 2015

10am-5pm



University of California

Center for New Racial Studies

A MULTI-CAMPUS RESEARCH PROGRAM

The University of California Center for New Racial Studies (UCCNRS) is a UC MultiCampus Research Program Initiative. This MRPI supports collaborative research by UC faculty, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and their colleagues at other institutions. Based at UC Santa Barbara, the UCCNRS is governed by a Steering Committee of faculty representing all UC campuses. Welcome to the Fifth Annual Conference of the UCCNRS!

What is New Racial Studies?

What is the significance of race in the post-Civil Rights era, the post-colonial era, the post-apartheid era, the era of Obama? Enormous transformations are occurring in racial dynamics: racial identities and racial attributions are becoming more complex and problematic. Demographic shifts are producing national and regional populations that are more racially heterogeneous and difficult to classify: greater numbers of middle eastern, African, Asian, and Latin American descent now reside in Europe and North America, and indeed a transition to a US “majority-minority” demographic is now underway in the US. “New social movements” shaped by race continue to exercise influence throughout the world, both in ongoing endeavors to deepen democracy and in contrary efforts to curtail it. Racial domination and repression continue as well.

To research the broader meaning of these contradictions in regard to race and racism is the core mission of the UCCNRS. What are the implications of these transformations for social policy, political processes, and cultural life? How has the complex racial transition of the 20th century (and beyond) affected patterns of social organization and control, legal regulation, employment and residence, and the representation and performance of social identities? What effects will the shifting meaning of race have, in the US and elsewhere, on international relations, global and local inequalities, war and peace, gender dynamics, and movements of capital and labor?

That there is or could be “New Racial Studies” suggests that a great transformation is underway in the meaning and social structure of race. Politicians, educators, voters, young people, journalists, and many others are all struggling to make sense of a racial system that both changes and remains entrenched.

As scholars, we too are seeking to understand the contradictions and dilemmas that arise from the evolving racial order. Such themes as the changing demographics of race, the racial state and the law, the racialized body, racial dimensions of North-South (and West-East) global dynamics and the afterlife of empire, whiteness as a racial category, ethnic cleansing/genocide as racial policy, racial “disaccumulation” and continuing racial inequality, and the reclassification of racial identities, exemplify (but hardly exhaust) the range of creative research being produced across the UC system in this huge area.

Indeed UC is uniquely situated to play an important role in this process, because of the many scholars based here who are *already* engaged in new racial studies.

2014-2015 Research Theme

Global Raciality: Empire, PostColoniality, and DeColoniality

In our final grant-making year, the UC Center for New Racial Studies requested research proposals that were about race and racialization from comparative and global perspectives. We wished to fund projects that examined how states and institutions created and constructed racial meanings and practices across different regimes, periods, and contexts. We were also interested in projects that captured resistance against these practices across the world—that is, how people in various places resisted empire, colonialism, and other forms of domination.

The term, “global raciality,” sought to capture how states and organizations constructed racist and oppressive practices that were mindful of one another. When they weren’t collaborating directly with one another, for example, states in one continent were learning how to use, and to adapt, and then to implement oppressive practices developed in another. In time, gender discrimination, homophobia and queer phobia, class-based discrimination, and racial categories became widespread, and all manifested in similar kinds of state formations and market economies.

In the 21st century, in addition to direct forms of imperialism, opportunistic coalitions and perpetual military occupations—combined with unceasing and vague wars, such as the war on terror—constitute new practices of empire, through which democratic states control people and territories far from their own boundaries. These new imperial practices also include low level warfare and surveillance: against immigrants, radicals, and others who purportedly threaten the homeland. These targets of state violence are often labeled “terrorists.” Many of the studies we have funded examine these phenomena as they have appeared throughout the world.

We also funded studies that examined multiple forms of resistance to both older and contemporary forms of oppression. These scholars, working across the disciplines, have offered compelling accounts of how activists, intellectuals, and people on the bottom have challenged the intellectual justifications for what amounts to racism at the global level. They’ve also written about how the subaltern subject or the post-colonial subject or the decolonized subject have all presented new forms of knowing and seeing, in their efforts to overcome attempts to reduce entire categories of people to non-persons, losers in the market, or social and political pariahs.

In this fifth grant-making year, we were so pleased to receive so many outstanding proposals, and we are now very pleased to present some of the finest work at this, our last annual conference.

Conference Schedule

- 9:00-10:00am** Conference Registration & Continental Breakfast
Interior Courtyard
- 10:00-10:20am** Welcome with Luis Alvarez, UCCNRS Steering Committee Member,
Associate Professor of History, UCSD
- Welcome with Natalia Molina, Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Diversity
and Equity, Associate Professor of History, UCSD
- Welcome with Howard Winant, UCCNRS Director, Professor of Sociology, UCSB
Atkinson Pavilion
- 10:30-12:00pm** Faculty & Graduate Student Research Grant Recipient Panel Discussions
Rooms 1-3 (combined), Seuss Library, Lounge
- 12:00-1:45pm** Lunch & Keynote Address: “*Race and Empire Today*”,
Vijay Prashad, Trinity College
Atkinson Pavilion
- 2:00-3:30pm** Faculty & Graduate Student Research Grant Recipient Panel Discussions
Rooms 1-3 (combined), Seuss Library, Lounge
- 3:45-4:00pm** Closing Remarks
Atkinson Pavilion
- 4:00-5:00pm** Reception
Atkinson Pavilion

Morning Session

10:30am-12:00pm

Panel 1: Transnational Spaces of Racial Formation

Nadeen Kharputly, UC San Diego, “Institutional Representations of Islam in American Discourses”

David Baillargeon, UC Santa Barbara, “‘A Burmese Wonderland’: The Burma Corporation, Humanitarianism, and Race in British Burma, 1906-1935”

Xiaojian Zhao, UC Santa Barbara, “Yellow Perils in Italy and the United States”

Bettina Ng’weno, UC Davis, and **Lok Siu**, UC Berkeley, “Comparative Raciality of Afro and Asian Latin Americans”

Chair/Discussant: Natalia Molina, UC San Diego

Panel 2: Colonialism, Empire, and Their Afterlives

Emiko Saldivar, UC Santa Barbara, “Racial Formations at the End of the Multicultural Turn: The Case of Mexico”

Winter Schneider, UC Los Angeles, “Black Liberty: Race Making in 19th Century Haiti”

Caroline Ritter, UC Berkeley, “The Cultural Project of the Late British Empire in Africa”

Kimberle McKinson, UC Irvine, “Dwelling with the Afterlife of Slavery: Crime, Materiality, and the Aesthetics of Security in Jamaica”

Chair/Discussant: Paola Bacchetta, UC Berkeley

Panel 3: Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Occupation

Maryam Griffin, UC Santa Barbara, “Bus Stations and State Formations: The Politics of Public Transportation in Israel/Palestine”

Devin Beaulieu, UC San Diego, “Savages” in an Indigenous State: Internal Colonialism, Race, and Indigenous Territory in the Bolivian Amazon”

Mishuana Goeman, UC Los Angeles, “Mapping Indigenous LA: Place Making Through Digital Storytelling”

Chair/Discussant: Sunaina Maira, UC Davis



Keynote Speaker

Vijay Prashad

Trinity College

12:00pm-1:45pm

Race and Empire Today

Vijay Prashad is the George and Martha Kellner Chair in South Asian History and Professor of International Studies at Trinity College in Hartford, CT. Prashad is the author of *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (644¹), and the editor (with Paul Amar) of *Dispatches from the Arab Spring* (6457). His work includes numerous books, articles, dispatches, and edited collections on South Asia, the Middle East, and the United States; of particular interest is his writing -- steadily produced for more than two decades now -- on the subjects of neoliberalism, race and racism, the "war on terror," and the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and India-Pakistan, and Israel-Palestine, among others. He is also a regular columnist in various Indian, Pakistani, Turkish, and US newspapers and web publications.

Afternoon Session

2:00pm-3:30pm

Panel 1: Trajectories of Racial Science

Catherine Bliss, UC San Francisco, “Postcolonial Idioms of Race and Identity in the Genomic Age”

Victoria Massie, UC Berkeley, “Reconceptualizing Race through the Transnational Circulation of Genetic Ancestry Testing Information”

Hareem Khan, UC Santa Barbara, “Modern Skins: South Asian American Racialized Subjectivities in Los Angeles”

Mitchell J. Chang, Mike Hoa Nguyen, Kapua L. Chandler, UC Los Angeles, “Can Data Disaggregation Resolve Blind Spots in Policy-Making?: Examining a Case for Native Hawaiians”

Chair/Discussant: Osagie K. Obasogie, UC Hastings, UC San Francisco

Panel 2: Racialized Militarization and Security States

Stefan Bargheer, UC Los Angeles, “Race into Culture: Military Intelligence and the Remaking of the Social Sciences during World War II”

Kyung Hee Ha, UC San Diego, “Zainichi Koreans in the Era of Global(ized) ‘War on Terror’”

Alfred Flores, UC Los Angeles, “‘No Walk in the Park’: U.S. Empire and the Racialization of Civilian Military Labor in Guam, 1944-1962”

Chandra Russo, UC Santa Barbara, “Witness Against Torture, Guantánamo, and the Prospects for Solidarity as Resistance”

Chair/Discussant: Paul Amar, UC Santa Barbara

Panel 3: Decoloniality, Solidarities and Resistance

Padma Maitland, UC Berkeley, “Black Buddhist: The Visual and Material Cultures of the Dalit Movement and Black Panther Party”

Gregory Burris, UC Santa Barbara, “Palestine in Black and White: White Settler-Colonialism and the Specter of Transnational Black Power ”

Mhoze Chikowero, UC Santa Barbara, “Tool of Empire, Technology of Self-Liberation: Colonial Radio Broadcasting to Africans in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi, 1920s-1980”

Grace Kyungwon Hong, UC Los Angeles, “Against Domestication: Audre Lorde’s Anti-Imperialist Vision”

Chair/Discussant: Danny Widener, UC San Diego

Abstracts

Morning Sessions

Panel 1: Transnational Spaces of Racial Formation

David Baillargeon, Graduate Student, History, UC Santa Barbara

“A Burmese Wonderland’: The Burma Corporation, Humanitarianism, and Race in British Burma, 1906-1935”

This essay explores the impact of the Burma Corporation on colonial life in Burma between 1906 and 1935. In particular, this project examines how western businessmen and colonial officials from Britain, the United States, and Australia – including future US President Herbert Hoover – were bound together in a common cultural, linguistic, and racial network that inspired the development of one of the largest mining operations in the world during the early twentieth century. This essay argues that a discourse of western humanitarianism, wedded to theories about corporate paternalism and racialized labor systems, allowed these heterogeneous western agents to legitimize the development and expansion of operations at the mines in Bawdwin and to create a labor hierarchy that positioned white, Anglophone capitalists and government officials against contracted laborers from India, China, and Nepal. In doing so, this project problematizes the notion that the British Empire in Burma was a uniform entity, controlled and expanded by British officials at the expense of the colonized Burmese. Instead, this essay de-centers the imperial frame to demonstrate how global capitalism, race, and labor converged in the jungles of the Northern Shan States, and how a supposedly British-operated mine in Bawdwin became the symbol of imperial progressive civilization, despite the diverse racial, ethnic, and national actors who made the mine such a success.

Nadeen Kharputly, Graduate Student, Literature, UC San Diego

“Institutional Representations of Islam in American Discourses”

This talk offers a brief overview of my dissertation, which examines institutional representations of Islam in American discourses. I look at various sites of cultural representation (literature, museums, hip hop, and cultural diplomacy) to determine the kinds of rhetoric that have emerged in the attempt to include work centered around Islam, and the transnational networks centered around Muslim American identity, notably marginalized French Muslim youth who identify with Islam in the United States. I argue that American representations of Islamic culture is a paradoxical endeavor: the attempt to include Islamic culture into dominant American discourses (on art, on culture, and on identity) through "humanizing" discourses widens the cultural gap, because it presumes an understanding of humanity that excludes non-Western Others. As such, my work interrogates the different notions of humanity that emerge from discussions of Islamic culture in the U.S.

Bettina Ng'weno, Associate Professor of African American and African Studies, UC Davis

Lok Siu, Associate Professor of Asian American and Diaspora Studies, UC Berkeley

“Comparative Raciality of Afro and Asian Latin Americans”

Afro and Asian Latin Americans, while occupying vastly different social positions, have historically shared similar experiences of invisibility and exclusion from narratives of Latin American national identities. In the past twenty years, however, they have entered discussions of national belonging, as their places and roles are debated and reconfigured. How are racial constructions of blackness and Asianness being rearticulated vis-à-vis imaginaries of national pasts and futures? To what extent do these racial re-articulations depart from or reaffirm longstanding logics of black and Asian raciality in Latin America? Our project seeks to develop an analytical framework that can address these broad questions in a comparative manner and, for the first time, it will bring into conversation the differentiated processes of racialization that shaped and shapes the divergent as well as convergent ways in which these two groups experience contingent and partial incorporation in Latin America. Through a year-long historical-ethnographic research we will examine the various racializing processes and techniques that construct notions of blackness and Asianness in the postcolonial period in three national contexts: Mexico, Peru, and Brazil. We aim to provide insight into the workings of Latin American raciality and its connection to other regions of the world for those striving to gain equal status and/or recognition. In comparing Afro and Asian Latin Americans and the distinct way global raciality has affected them we can gain a broader understanding of the ideologies of belonging and nationalism that has so far been studied from a limited perspective centered in Indigeneity.

Xiaojian Zhao, Professor of Asian American Studies, UC Santa Barbara

“Yellow Perils in Italy and the United States”

This project traces the conditions that gave rise to the anti-Chinese hostility in Prato, the historical capital of Italy's textile industry. In the early 1990s, when thousands of Chinese migrated to Prato, they were welcomed by the locals as a valuable resource. Textile industry was declining at the time, due largely to the lack of interest from the younger generation. The Chinese arrived at an opportune time. They sub-contracted work from the sewing and knitwear factories and bought equipment and properties from discontinued enterprises. Utilizing a network of friends and relatives among their fellow migrants as well as those stayed in China (most of them came from Wenzhou in China's Zhejiang province) and taking advantage of China's participation in the global economy, Chinese entrepreneurship grew rapidly, as many self-employed subcontractors eventually became competitive independent producers. Although the growth of Chinese enterprises revitalized Prato's economy, anti-Chinese sentiment also emerged, as a so-called Chinese “emergency” soon became the focus of media and local politics. This project shows how racial tensions against Chinese migrants in Italy resemble those in the United States in the late 19th century, and how, after one hundred years, fear of Chinese and Chinese Americans would surface again in the United States. Focusing on yellow peril narratives in Italy and the United States, this research explores issues concerning global racial formation.

Panel 2: Colonialism, Empire, and Their Afterlives

Kimberle McKinson, Graduate Student, Anthropology, UC Irvine,

“Dwelling with the Afterlife of Slavery: Crime, Materiality, and the Aesthetics of Security in Jamaica”

This project investigates how Jamaican residents, metal artisans and electronic security companies materially, aesthetically and technologically create and engage with notions of security through the domestic space in order to understand emerging notions about safety, the home and spatial governance in postcolonial urban Kingston. This project asks: 1) How do everyday practices of making and using artifacts of security such as domestic metal grills and electronic security systems shape Kingstonian’s ideas about a sense of safety and a sense of home in the postcolonial city? 2) How are developments in electronic security and community watch practices structuring and re-structuring Kingston’s ecology of security as well as the political, social and racial geography of neighborhoods and the city? 3) How is the erasure or replacement of one security aesthetic linked to metal bars with another linked to electronic surveillance erasing or replacing security practices, aesthetics, artifacts and technologies linked to slavery legacies of security and discipline? When, where and in what circumstances does the past impinge upon the present? This project explores how Kingston’s residents as historically racialized subjects discipline and are disciplined by the production of space, technologies and practices within a contemporary ecology of security, one that performatively re-members disciplinary, racial and material narratives of colonial slavery. By contributing to scholarship on domestic security, postcolonial urbanity, material culture and memory this project seeks to understand the ways in which particular aspects of Jamaica’s slavery past are evoked in everyday domestic security practices in the postcolonial present.

Caroline Ritter, Graduate Student, History, UC Berkeley,

“The Cultural Project of the Late British Empire in Africa”

In the 1930s British colonial officials introduced broadcasting services, publication bureaus, and film units into Africa under the rubric of colonial development. Radio, film, and mass-produced print represent a cultural project of empire because they shared the ability to spread language and British traditions of expression across a vast space cheaply. Over the following decades, a wide range of British actors became involved in producing and distributing British culture through these media. This dissertation will argue that the British cultural work in African envisaged itself as providing an imperial public sphere. At its inception the cultural project of the late empire centered on British culture and the British expertise necessary to deliver it, and therefore represented a version of empire that could outlast political control. However, with the approach of decolonization many organizations recognized that their success hinged on incorporating Africans and African culture into their work. British cultural work was able to persist through a broad distribution of agency among both British and African actors, but it was this flexibility that ultimately created the conditions for its own critique. This study explores the racial and national identities that British broadcasters, publishers, and filmmakers assigned to the African artists they worked with and the audiences they were imagining their work to serve. The project contributes new thinking about the cultural legacy of British imperialism in Africa by revealing the racial dimensions of the production and distribution of culture in the late colonial and early postcolonial regimes.

Emiko Saldivar, Associate Project Scientist and Lecturer in Anthropology, UC Santa Barbara

“Racial Formations at the End of the Multicultural Turn: The Case of Mexico”

This proposal is to carry a research project, focused on the contemporary conditions of indigenous and afro-descendant peoples, as they confront substantively new challenges rooted in ongoing social inequality, racial discrimination and limits to effective participation in Mexico. In Mexico (as well as in the rest of the Hemisphere) we are witnessing a marked end to the two decade expansion of Afro-indigenous collective rights. The steady expansion of collective rights, which has characterized Latin American societies since the early 1990s, coincided with the wave of neoliberal economic reforms in the region, and some have argued that this combination— “neoliberal multiculturalism”—came to constitute an unlikely but effective regime of governance. But even these critics readily acknowledge that the multicultural turn coincided with a substantive rise in Afro-indigenous political mobilization, and a wide range of reforms that enabled substantial recognition of these peoples’ basic demands. These new rights, in turn, made for stark points of contrast with an overtly—if often disguised—racist past, and offered essential political tools for ongoing anti-racist struggle.

Winter Schneider, Graduate Student, History, UC Los Angeles

“Black Liberty: Race Making in 19th Century Haiti”

In the decades immediately following Haiti’s independence in 1804, racial arguments were made by the Haitian and French governments to argue for the country’s inherent qualities of either liberty or slavery. Debates waged inside and outside of the country struggled to place the anomaly of black political sovereignty into the legal and social nexus of the French empire, which was predicated on the dehumanization of enslaved black men and women. Colonial fantasies of taking Haiti back eventually gave over to the recognition of the country’s independence in exchange for a staggering indemnity and national debt. While French legislators were deciding the place of free men of color within their political institutions, international discourses on race and rights looked to Haiti to define what liberty could look like. Within Haiti, too, debates waged between the country’s would-be leaders and its citizenry over land reform, ownership of property and civic enfranchisement. My project focuses on how the majority of Haiti’s population crafted a national project and identity out of their experiences of racial slavery and their participation in trans-Atlantic discourses on race and civic enfranchisement. Tagged by outside observers of Haiti’s revolution and early state building with the epithet of “Black Republic,” for the men and women of Haiti—and for enslaved and free men and women of color throughout the Atlantic world—Haiti did represent a radical reformulation of colonial concepts of race and citizenship.

Panel 3: Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Occupation

Devin Beaulieu, Graduate Student, Anthropology, UC San Diego

“Savages” in an Indigenous State: Internal Colonialism, Race, and Indigenous Territory in the Bolivian Amazon”

Since the election of the country’s first indigenous President Evo Morales, Bolivia has become internationally recognized as an inspiring experiment for decolonization and antiimperialism. The new 2009 “plurinational” constitution extensively expands indigenous rights and makes decolonization an explicit aim of the state. However, since, Morales’ government has come into increasing conflict with indigenous organizations over territorial rights and national development plans. In particular, the government split with lowland indigenous organizations over plans to construct a highway through the Indigenous Territory and National Park Isiboro Secure (TIPNIS). Alarmingly, this conflict is saturated with racial tropes about indigeneity. Why, even in plurinational Bolivia, do indigenous visions and claims continue to be excluded? How do conflicts over land and territory continue to reproduce racism? This research will investigate these questions by examining how land is treated as a racial fetish. I will illuminate the link between territory, race, and internal colonialism by investigating how different actors relate conceptions of land and territory to discourses and practices of liberal rights, as citizens and subjects of human rights. Illuminating how the politics of decolonization are tied to liberalism through the racial fetish of land will make an important contribution to contemporary literature on indigeneity and postcolonial studies.

Mishuana Goeman, Associate Professor of Gender Studies, UC Los Angeles

“Mapping Indigenous LA: Place Making Through Digital Storytelling”

A map of Los Angeles does not tell the story of its people. In a megalopolis like Los Angeles, this is a story that is often invisible to policy makers and even the city’s notion of itself as a global crossroads. This story includes a layered, sedimented cultural geographies of indigenous Los Angeles that includes Tongva and Tataviam who struggle for recognition of their sacred spaces, American Indians who were removed from their lands and displaced through governmental policies of settler colonialism, and indigenous diasporas from Latin America and Oceania which have been displaced by militarism, neoliberal economic policies, and overlapping colonial histories. Angeles has the largest indigenous population of any city in the US. While many would argue that there is not one Los Angeles but multiple LAs, what is less known is that there are multiple indigenous LAs, whose histories are layered into the fabric of the city. Indigenous LA is about how the original peoples of the Los Angeles- basin (and islands) relate specifically to this land and how subsequent relocations and migrations of indigenous peoples have reworked space, place and the meaning of these new racialities. Our project will uncover the multiple layers of indigenous Los Angeles through a digital storytelling/oral history project with community leaders, youth and elders from indigenous communities throughout the city. With this knowledge we will develop an Indigenous LA interactive app for iOS devices. With this grant we will develop a modular in working collaboration with indigenous communities to gather oral histories and compile visual maps of digital stories that tell of these emerging and connecting identities too often ignored.

Maryam Griffin, Graduate Student, Sociology, UC Santa Barbara

“Bus Stations and State Formations: The Politics of Public Transportation in Israel/Palestine”

In this interdisciplinary study, I investigate public transportation as a terrain of racialized political struggle across key episodes in the history of Israel/Palestine, bringing together critical race studies and social movements scholarship with political sociology, critical geography, international legal studies. While scholars have written about the structural impediments to Palestinian movement and the social fractures that result, they have not focused specifically on transit as a racialized instrument for state-building, colonial domination, and grassroots resistance. I contribute such a focus through a mixed-methods analysis of the racialized dimensions of public transportation control and usage in British Mandate Palestine, the first and second Palestinian intifadas, and the contemporary period (2008-present). My findings indicate that transit has been central to the racial projects that enabled colonial domination and anti-colonial resistance and as crucial to racialized state-building projects on both sides of the Green Line. Consequently, I intervene in academic and political debates about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that focus on official declarations of states without attending to the racially differentiated effects of state formation on everyday life or the influence of the quotidian on the political. These debates are stuck in place; movement—physical, social, political, intellectual—is needed.

Abstracts

Afternoon Sessions

Panel 1: Trajectories of Racial Science

Catherine Bliss, Assistant Professor of Sociology, UC San Francisco

“Postcolonial Idioms of Race and Identity in the Genomic Age”

This pilot study seeks to ascertain how genomics is changing the global landscape of racialization through one of its forefront subfields: social science genetics. Social science genetics pairs genomewide-association and structural DNA analysis with social research to find genomic causes for social phenomena such as educational attainment, promiscuity, and gang membership. Such research is being led by scientists in former colonial metropolises where demand for characterizing innate antisocial tendencies in minority populations is rife, but also by anticolonial scientists in the Global South where DNA has become a central stake in the fight for decolonizing counternarratives. This research asks: Is race molecularizing in a standard way globally, or is it being refracted by local political contexts? Furthermore, how are genomics’ newest frontiers in the study of social traits and behaviors implicated in epistemic transformations? Is transnational behavior genomics the new Empire?

Mitchell J. Chang, Professor of Higher Education and Organizational Change, UC Los Angeles

Mike Hoa Nguyen, Graduate Student, Higher Education and Organizational Change, UC Los Angeles

Kapua L. Chandler, Graduate Student, Higher Education and Organizational Change, UC Los Angeles

“Can Data Disaggregation Resolve Blind Spots in Policy-Making?: Examining a Case for Native Hawaiians”

This study addressed whether or not the increasing reliance on data-driven decision-making stands to improve policy efforts to address challenges faced by Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. In doing this, this study examined those who identified as Native Hawaiian in the U.S. Census data and further disaggregated this sample by ancestry and geographic location to test whether there are variations within this population across socioeconomic indicators. The findings suggest that while further data disaggregation can sharpen policy-making to address patterns of socioeconomic inequalities, disaggregation alone is still insufficient for fully capturing the complexity of human experiences that reinforce those disparities.

Hareem Khan, Graduate Student, Anthropology, UC Santa Barbara

“Modern Skins: South Asian American Racialized Subjectivities in Los Angeles”

This project examines women’s efforts to negotiate modern subjectivities that are simultaneously racialized and transnational. Particularly, I am interested in how this negotiation process of South Asian immigrants in Artesia, California, is enacted in the marketing, circulation and consumption of skin-lightening products and services in the diaspora. While the desire for light skin is deeply entrenched in the history of South Asia and other global contexts (Blay 2011; Burke 1996; Dewey 2008; Glenn 2008; Runkle 2004) presently, these desires are satisfied in commodities that travel transnationally to reach the diasporic consumer base that has broadened, spanning generational, ethnic, religious, and class lines. I am interested in how the affinity for light skin translates into new, complex meanings of race and the nation(s) in the American landscape. In the advertisements for skin-lightening products ubiquitous in South Asian media, these commodities are sold as a means to achieve “modernity” through the lightness they guarantee. The modern subject as presented in these ads is not depicted as a manifestation and acculturation of Western values and ideals, but instead is viewed as being concurrently Indian and global, transgressing and deconstructing the bounded categories of the traditional and modern (Kaiwar and Mazumdar 2003; Rajan 1996; Mankekar 1999; Hancock 2008). I am interested in the translation process that occurs when these values linking light skin with modernity, success, and status flow transnationally and become rearticulated and re-produced in the American socio-political landscape. I am also interested in how skin color shapes discourse around gender, class, and race in the diverse everyday spaces of consumption where South Asian American women enact multiple subjectivities. In addition to my engagement with processes of identity construction common to diasporic studies (Khandelwal 2002; Maira 2002; Maira and Srikanth 1996; Shankar and Srikanth 1998) my research is concerned with how South Asian immigrants, cutting across class, regional, ethnic, and religious lines, live transnationalism and modernity through their embodied and aesthetic practices of skin lightening, and how these practices shape the ways in which they articulate notions of citizenship and the nation.

Victoria Massie, Graduate Student, Anthropology, UC Berkeley

“Reconceptualizing Race through the Transnational Circulation of Genetic Ancestry Testing Information”

I examine genetic ancestry testing as a technology through which processes of racialization are potentially being codified in the genome. My project follows the activities of African-American test takers within the United States, and in West Africa, specifically Cameroon and Sierra Leone. As genetic ancestry testing information circulates transnationally, differing social, political, economic, and historical contexts are becoming linked in new ways, shifting the strategies individuals, groups and nations enact to imagine themselves, in specifically genetic terms. I will engage in multi-sited fieldwork in the U.S. and West Africa—competing genetic ancestry testing laboratories, roots tourism programs in Sierra Leone and Cameroon, and ethnographic interviews with test-takers—to highlight the antagonisms embedded in claims to kinship through racial identities. Colonial and slave histories are strategically manipulated in ways that can at once support and confound genetic markers, proposing new conceptualizations of race and its reification in genetic terms.

Panel 2: Racialized Militarization and Security States

Stefan Bargheer, Assistant Professor of Sociology, UC Los Angeles

“Race into Culture: Military Intelligence and the Remaking of the Social Sciences during World War II”

The project investigates the translation of the concept of race into the concept of culture during World War II social science research on national character. The focus is on the conceptual distinction between guilt cultures and shame cultures that was coined by the anthropologist Ruth Benedict in order to contrast the American people with their Japanese enemy. Based on archival sources, this collaborative project looks at the work of the Foreign Morale Analysis Division at the Office of War Information to trace the development of this binary distinction. This research is compared with archival sources on Japanese military intelligence. The project investigates how in the situation of war racist assumptions about the enemy produced on both sides were translated into notions of culture. While studies of culture at a distance such as Benedict’s became discredited after the war for their lack of first hand empirical evidence, the concept of shame and guilt cultures continues to be used in contemporary discussions on the dissemination of human rights across the globe. The guilt culture of the West is associated with human rights, the shame culture of the East with codes of honor that undermine notions of intrinsic human dignity. The project analyses the development of this binary conceptual distinction that continues to inform the contemporary global war on terror.

Alfred Flores, Graduate Student, History, UC Los Angeles

“No Walk in the Park’: U.S. Empire and the Racialization of Civilian Military Labor in Guam, 1944-1962”

This essay examines the recruitment, work, and social experiences of civilian military laborers in post-World War II Guam. Drawing from military memos, government correspondences, Philippines newspapers, labor organization correspondences, and oral history interviews, this article demonstrates that the post-WWII militarization of the island resulted in the creation of a Filipino labor class that became synonymous with military employment. The making of this labor class stemmed from the military’s racialization of Chamorro, Filipino, and white Americans during World War II. But because the military and its contractors primarily perceived Filipinos as being amenable to labor discipline, they hired Filipinos in larger numbers than Chamorros and white Americans. Ultimately, this essay underscores the connection between empire, labor, and race amongst racialized and ethnically separated people in postwar Guam.

Kyung Hee Ha, Graduate Student, Ethnic Studies, UC San Diego

“Zainichi Koreans in the Era of Global(ized) ‘War on Terror’”

On September 17, 2002, the late North Korean leader Kim Jong Il admitted to the abduction of Japanese civilians in the 1970s and 1980s by North Korean agents. Skepticism, punishment and discipline targeting anything and anyone associated with North Korea has been justified and even desired under the name of “national security” ever since. I argue that the post-9/17 anti-North Korean hysteria is strongly influenced by the U.S.-led global “war on terror,” which unilaterally designates North Korea as a part of “axis of evil.” Seemingly distant and unrelated, the global “war on terror” has actually made tangible impacts on lived experiences of Koreans in Japan, or “Zainichi Koreans,” through its mutually reinforcing relationship with Japan’s imperial ideology and various sanctions against North Korea.

Through ethnographic observation and in-depth interviews, as well as analysis on government documents, court transcripts, films and poetry, my dissertation investigates how Zainichi Koreans are affected by the global and national “anti-terrorists” campaigns on a daily basis. In doing so, I focus my analysis on the Korean schools in Japan that have been particularly vulnerable to racist hate crimes, media misrepresentation and discriminatory laws due to their visibility and connection with the pro-North Korea organization. The dissertation examines contradictory strategies and competing discourses that Zainichi Koreans employ to navigate, defy and challenge the stigma and negative consequences of being labeled as “bad Koreans” in the era of global(ized) “war on terror.”

Chandra Russo, Graduate Student, Sociology, UC Santa Barbara

“Witness Against Torture, Guantánamo, and the Prospects for Solidarity as Resistance”

Scholars have well demonstrated that the military prison at Guantánamo Bay exemplifies the racial logics of the US National Security State and contemporary Empire (Kaplan 2005, Daulatzai 2007, Paik 2010). For such imperial formations to proceed as if “normal” requires solidarity from various publics, who become complexly implicated in condemning the victims of state violence to social death (Patterson 1982, Gordon 2010). This paper explores what it means to refuse such solidarity with the US National Security State through an examination of Witness Against Torture, a majority white group of US citizens that seeks to place their alliance with the men detained at Guantánamo. Based on participant observation, surveys, interviews and archival research conducted over the past two years, I analyze WAT’s range of embodied and symbolic modes of solidarity with the prisoners. In doing so, we learn important lessons about the nature of contemporary Empire and the prospects for solidarity as resistance.

Panel 3: Decoloniality, Solidarities and Resistance

Gregory Burris, Graduate Student, Film and Media Studies, UC Santa Barbara

“Palestine in Black and White: White Settler-Colonialism and the Specter of Transnational Black Power ”

I am examining the role of film, media, and culture in turning the Palestinian struggle against occupation and colonization into a global cause. I am also interested in the resulting effects of this global activism on Palestinian identity.

Mhoze Chikowero, Assistant Professor of History, UC Santa Barbara

“Tool of Empire, Technology of Self-Liberation: Colonial Radio Broadcasting to Africans in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi, 1920s-1980”

British pioneers of radio broadcasting to Africans imagined the medium educating masses of illiterate Africans into useful and loyal modern subjects of empire. They pictured it revolutionizing African social life, “educating the natives on the right lines in proper hygiene, agriculture, housing and sanitation,” and depoliticizing them from the “popular influence of their intelligentsia class” (Harry Franklin 1950: 13). I argue that rather than represent the insuperable power of western science, technology and expertise or symbolize the onset of “modernity,” the introduction of radio broadcasting to Africans in these countries heralded an unparalleled crisis in imperial European efforts to construct racialized African subjectivities. In the hands of African organic intellectuals hired to run WWII and “anti-communist” broadcasts after the failure of European-run war propaganda, radio cracked European imperial certitudes and exposed the nervous condition of colonial authority. The technology demonstrated the capacity of Africans to subvert and repurpose instruments of colonial power. Taking advantage of their linguistic skills and cultural capital, the Africans ran broadcasts that cunningly countered official ideology, turning the technology into a weapon of self-liberation. A transterritorial, unitary history of broadcasting in these three countries not only sheds light into the critical historical role of radio in imperial statemaking and unmaking, it also illustrates both the psychology of colonialism and the ways in which Africans contested, subverted and repurposed the tools of imperial and colonial statecrafting.

Grace Kyungwon Hong, Associate Professor of Women's Studies, UC Los Angeles

“Against Domestication: Audre Lorde’s Anti-Imperialist Vision”

This project proposes to highlight a heretofore unstudied aspect of noted poet, essayist, and activist Audre Lorde’s work: her cogent critique of U.S. empire. I am requesting funds to travel to the Audre Lorde Papers Collection in the Women's Research and Resource Center at Spelman College, as well as to hire a graduate research assistant to process and organize archival materials, create bibliographies of secondary sources, and provide editing and formatting assistance in preparing my article manuscript for publication.

Padma Maitland, Graduate Student, South and Southeast Asian Studies, UC Berkeley

“Black Buddhist: The Visual and Material Cultures of the Dalit Movement and Black Panther Party”

If parallels are drawn between Mahatma Gandhi and the civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., then Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the great Dalit leader of India, is most often compared to Malcom X. Like Malcom X, Ambedkar advocated for a radical process of self-emancipation that required a total reinvention of social, religious, and political systems as the basis for genuine equality. Often at odds with the rhetoric of social leaders like Mahatma Gandhi who sought social reform through the reformation of Hinduism, Ambedkar rejected Hinduism altogether. In April 1956, Ambedkar along with several hundred thousand of his followers, converted to Buddhism. It was a bold move that sought to define a social space for the Dalit community in India by affirming a new religious basis for their collective identity. Ambedkar’s conversion inspired a new branch of Buddhism referred to as neo-Buddhism. This project seeks to explore the way Dalit neo-Buddhist have visually and rhetorically aligned themselves with other struggles over race, to inquire into how notions of race and raciality relate to issues of caste and religion. As a primary point for research, it explores the connections between the Dalit neo-Buddhists and the Black Panther Party. Formalized in the 1970s through the formation of the Dalit Panthers in Maharashtra India, the relationship continues to color works of the Dalit community today, especially in the Dalit’s efforts to align themselves with global issues of inequality. A focus on the claims to public space by both parties offers a way to compare the visual and material cultures of each in relationship to local and international struggles for equal rights.

From the Director

As you may already know, our proposal for the 2015 MultiCampus Research Program Initiative (MRPI) funding round was not accepted. This was a great disappointment.

Despite the outcome of the 2015 MRPI funding round, our 2014-2015 activities have continued unchanged. Our 5th Annual Conference, on the theme "Race and Empire, PostColoniality, and DeColoniality," will be held on schedule at UCSD on May 15, 2015. Vijay Prashad will keynote.

The UCCNRS, however, is ending its run. We have accomplished a great deal, or rather those who have taken part in this effort have accomplished a great deal. A lot of research has been carried out and published; there has been extensive training. Perhaps most important, there has been a scholarly re-imagining of the dynamics of race and racism: global and local, historical and contemporary, this vision of racial studies crosses the disciplines. It begins to reframe our understanding of race and racism as fundamental features of the modern world and core themes in human emancipation. We are not the first to do this, and we will not be the last.

Thanks again. We extend our solidarity. And we offer you our best wishes for the future.



Howard Winant
Director

Special Thanks

Luis Alvarez, Associate Professor of History, UC San Diego

Cutler Edwards, Instructor, UC San Diego

Jorge Leal, Graduate Student, UC San Diego

Alexis Meza, Graduate Student, UC San Diego

Jorge Ramirez, Graduate Student, UC San Diego

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School of Law
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Department of Law
UC Hastings

Howard Winant, Director

Department of Sociology
UC Santa Barbara

Mailing Address:

UC Center for New Racial Studies
Institute for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research
University of California
North Hall 2201
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2150

Office: 805-893-4882**Fax:** 805-893-7996cnrsp@newracialstudies.ucsb.edu<http://www.uccnrs.ucsb.edu>