

Call for Abstracts:

Interdisciplinary Conference at York University, Toronto, Canada

March 12-13, 2009

www.lumpencity.com

Lumpen-City:

Discourses of Marginality | Marginalizing Discourses

Research on marginalized urban residents has been an academic cottage industry throughout the history of the social sciences – addressing social problems related to issues such as poverty, crime, youth, race, ethnicity, gender, health, and employment. To apprehend these notions of difference, conceptualizations of the poor, the underclass, the outcast, the ghetto, exclusion, marginality and others have been developed and applied. Inevitably, research defines and represents a group and, as such, influences everyday preconceptions and politico-administrative strategies, including policies, regulations and laws.

Contextualizing cultural and behavioural patterns of marginalized populations, academic and activist research commonly seeks to humanize an excluded group and/ or suggest alternative strategies of intervention and modes of engagement by which to remedy the inequities of a particular situation. However, by virtue of representation, fixity is imposed upon the identified population. Marginalized and excluded groups are often rendered vulnerable and passive through the circumscribed dictates of representational inscription. How can innovative and creative discourses break with this pattern of subjection?

This conference challenges academics and activist-scholars alike to reflect upon the realities and potentialities of research on marginalized urban populations in the context of their struggles. We invite scholarly contributions which illuminate issues of representation by exploring multiple axes of identity such as class, race, gender, ethnicity, age, ability / disability, and sexuality.

The York University Sociology Graduate Students' Association (YSGA), in conjunction with the City Institute at York University and the Collaborative Urban Research Laboratory (CURL) invite academics and activist-scholars to participate in the interdisciplinary debates of this conference on Thursday, March 12th and Friday, March 13th 2009 in Toronto, Canada.

We accept proposals for:

- Academic papers (Presentation of 20 minutes)
- Short films, art, poetry or other forms of creative dialogue.

The deadline for proposals / abstracts (approx. 250 words) is January 5th, 2009.

Submission materials and general inquiries should be addressed to:

LumpenCity2009@gmail.com

Selected papers will be considered for publication.

For updates, please see

www.lumpencity.com

Possible areas of engagement include, but are not limited to:

1. Methodological engagements:
 - The poetics and politics of representation
 - Comparing marginality across borders & boundaries
 - The description, inscription, and circumscription of research design
 - Ethnographic immersions
 - Activist alliances
 - Methodological alterities: Narratives of inversion/subversion
2. Institutional interrogations:
 - Local, extra-local, regional, national, international contextualizations
 - Welfare state retrenchment and visions of poverty
 - The funding and financing of research
 - Fashions, fads and foibles of urban research
 - Re-structuring the university
 - University-community collaborations
3. Controversies and Contestations:
 - Spectacularization of the urban outcast
 - Spaces of Struggle: Neoliberal citizenship and representations of urban marginality
 - Post/Colonialism and the metropolis
 - The Unrepresentable Multitude in the Lumpen-City
 - Public sociology / sociologies
 - The marginalized and media discourse
4. Challenges and Change:
 - The role of activism in academia
 - Critique and the public sphere
 - Research, resistance and revolution
 - Envisioning the just city: claiming the right to the city
 - Social movements, citizenship and critical urban praxis
 - Progressive visual and aesthetic engagements

Conference Keynote Panel:

Ashanti Alston

Activist / Researcher, National Jericho Movement, Estación Libre, Inst. for Anarchist Studies

Viviane Saleh-Hanna

Professor of Sociology, Anthropology and Crime and Justice Studies, UMass Dartmouth

Rinaldo Walcott

Associate Professor, OISE University of Toronto

David Wilson

Professor of Geography, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign