



METROPOLITAN POLICY CENTER

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT



SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC AFFAIRS

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY ★ WASHINGTON, D.C.



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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



In a short three-year period, MPC has established itself as a reputable place for sound, relevant, interdisciplinary scholarship. Our staff and Faculty Fellows have produced high-quality research that influenced policy debates on topics including housing, gentrification, segregation, and early-child education.

We are proud of our contribution in advancing a “DC School” of knowledge. Our DC-related work includes three important books on Washington DC: *Race, Class, and Politics in the Cappuccino City* (University of Chicago Press, 2017), *Capital Dilemma: Growth and Inequality in Washington, DC* (Routledge, 2016), and *The Politics of Staying Put: Condo Conversion and Tenant Right-to-Buy in Washington, DC* (Temple University Press, 2016). These books have contributed to policy conversations on equitable development, affordable housing, and neighborhood change in our nation’s capital. Furthermore, our DC-Area Survey, led by Faculty Fellow Michael Bader, has started an important discussion on the meaning and impact of racially and ethnically diverse communities in the Washington region.

MPC-affiliated research has received much recognition. Locally, our scholars have discussed their work at important venues including the Annual Conference on DC History, the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers, the Woodrow Wilson Center, the Brookings Institution, the DC Ideas Festival, the Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers, and the DC Housing Authority. We have also published our research in top domestic and international journals including *Cityscape*, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *Urban Geography*, and *Urban Studies*. Lastly, we have been awarded over \$444,000 in external research funding.

MPC enriches the DC-area not only with innovative research findings but by showcasing some of the country’s top urban scholars. We bring new ideas to the nation’s capital and have featured 37 nationally-recognized scholars and practitioners on American University’s campus. Moreover, our signature Annual Spring Lecture has hosted academic luminaries such as William Julius Wilson, Edward Glaeser, and Mindy Fullilove. Be on the lookout for our next Annual Spring Lecture by Jonathan Holloway, a standout urban historian and Provost at Northwestern University.

Over the next three years, MPC will continue to investigate core 21st century metropolitan challenges. We will pursue research related to urban unrest, politics, health, diversity, and neighborhood change. Join us in our quest to cultivate cutting-edge knowledge that informs policy reforms to make America more equitable and just.

Sincerely,

Derek Hyra

WHO WE ARE



James Wright, Liz Mariapen, Danielle Krachie, Carley Weted, and Will Perkins

STAFF

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Brenda Smith, WCL

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOLS/UNITS

CAS College of Arts and Sciences

KSB Kogod School of Business

SIS School of International Service

SOC School of Communications

SPA School of Public Affairs

WCL Washington College of Law

AFFILIATED & VISITING SCHOLARS

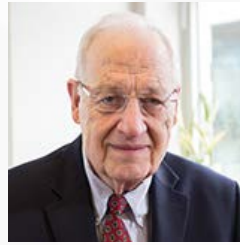
Constance Lindsay, School of Public Affairs

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WHAT WE DO

MISSION

MPC's mission is to understand the intersections among various social, economic, and political processes, at multiple levels, that influence metropolitan and urban landscapes. MPC utilizes mixed methods to uncover, explain, and recommend solutions to important 21st century metropolitan and urban issues including affordable housing, economic and neighborhood development, racial and ethnic diversity, urban politics, and nonprofit service provision.



The School of Public Affairs at American University

OBJECTIVES

MPC has three important objectives: To cultivate innovative cross-disciplinary metropolitan and urban research that helps to improve public policy and people's lives; to garner sufficient external university grants from governments, private foundations, and corporate institutions to support collaborative research projects; and to increase American University's engagement with the Washington, DC metro area and beyond.

STRATEGIES

MPC achieves its mission and objectives through three strategies. First, we conduct and support complex, innovative metropolitan and urban scholarly work across disciplines and research methods. Second, we present such research through campus-wide events on important metropolitan and urban topics. Third, we promote community engagement and cultivate strategic partnerships with nonprofits, community groups, and other research centers both locally and abroad.



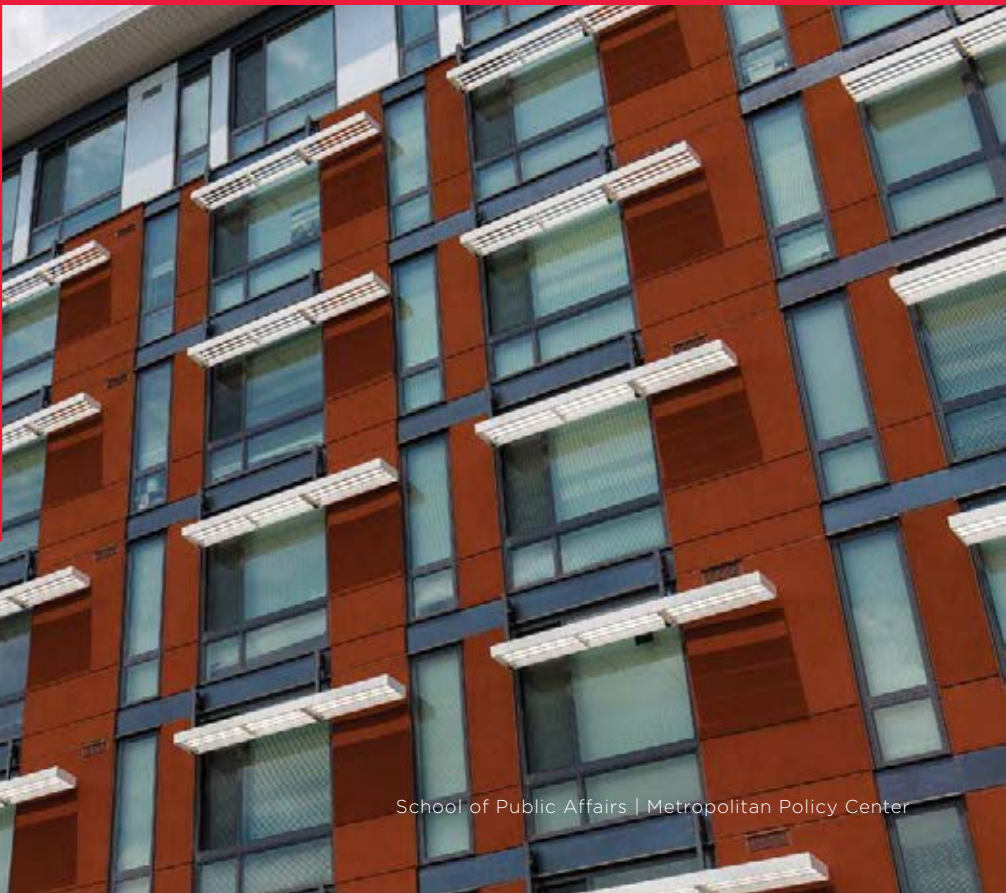
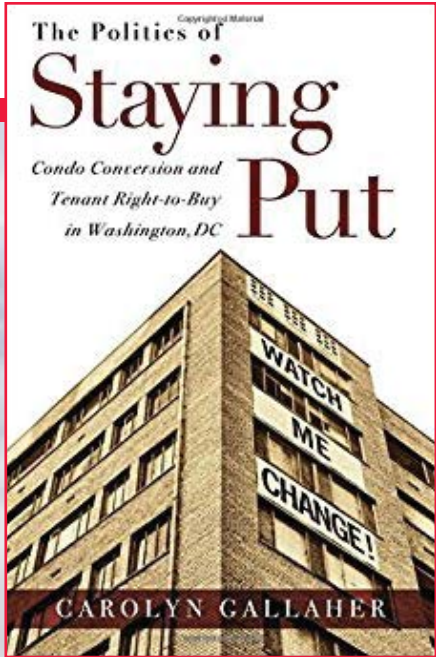
ADVANCING THE DC SCHOOL

THE POLITICS OF STAYING PUT

In September of 2016, MPC hosted the release of Faculty Fellow Carolyn Gallaher’s new book *The Politics of Staying Put: Condo Conversion and Tenant Right-to-Buy in Washington, DC*. The book focuses on DC’s Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), a unique local law that allows residents of apartment buildings to refuse sale of the property and purchase it themselves. Amidst rapid gentrification, TOPA aims to provide some stability for residents who might otherwise be displaced. The book event featured discussants Derek Musgrove, Associate Professor of History at the University of Maryland Baltimore Campus, and Blake Biles, Partner (ret.) of Arnold & Porter and board member of the Neighborhood Legal Services Program. Since the book’s release, Professor Gallaher has testified before the DC city council about her findings and her work received coverage in *Greater Greater Washington*, *Washingtonian Magazine*, and *The Kojo Nnamdi Show* on WAMU public radio. This book has sparked an important policy conversation about gentrification and affordable housing in DC.



Carolyn Gallaher



THE DC AREA SURVEY

METROPOLITAN NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

DC AREA SURVEY [↓](#)

In October of 2016, MPC released the findings of the DC Area Survey (DCAS), an investigation of racially and ethnically diverse communities in DC and its surrounding counties. Led by Faculty Fellow Michael Bader and Professor Lynn Addington, the DCAS included 1,200 households with a special focus on their attachment to place, health, safety, trust in local organizations, and governance. The survey centered on two relatively new types of neighborhoods: Latino neighborhoods and “quadrivial neighborhoods.” Latino neighborhoods exist all over the DC metropolitan area, but mostly in the immediate Maryland and Northern Virginia suburbs. “Quadrivial neighborhoods,” with populations of at least 10 percent White, Asian, African-American, and Latino, appeared in the past 20 years, reflecting the increased racial integration of the DC area. This survey is the first of its kind and it provides a detailed snapshot of the social realities and inequalities that exist within the DC region’s most diverse communities. Major findings from the survey revealed large racial and economic variations in the concerns that residents expressed about their daily lives, including greater fear of the police for black and Latino residents, a greater fear of crime for Latino residents, a perceived lack of adequate nonprofit services for low-income residents with children, and general distrust of local governments compared to businesses or nonprofits. Congressman Don Beyer, Jr. of Virginia’s 8th Congressional District, Urban Institute’s Peter Tatian, and Georgetown University’s Brian McCabe spoke at the launch event, which was attended by over 80 individuals. The DCAS was a collaborative effort among several centers and units at American University including the Metropolitan Policy Center, the Center for Latin American and Latino Studies, the Center for Health, Risk and Society, the Office of the Provost, the School of Public Affairs, and the Kogod School of Business.



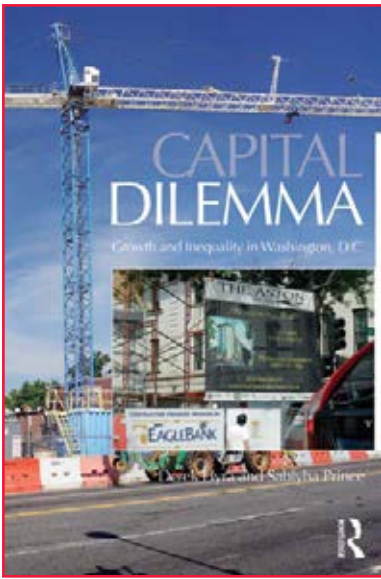
Derek Hyra, Lynn Addington, Michael Bader, Barbara Romzek, Peter Tatian, Brian McCabe, and Don Beyer, Jr.



Don Beyer, Jr.

RACE, CLASS, AND POLITICS IN THE CAPPUCCINO CITY

DEREK HYRA

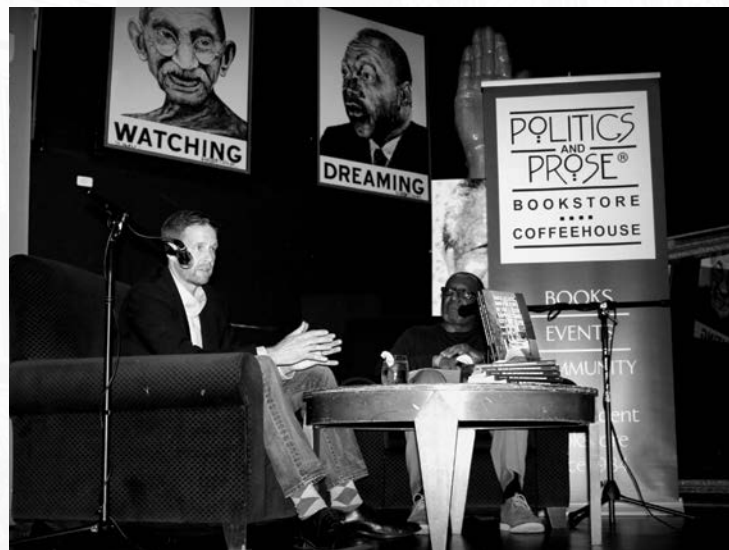


CAPITAL DILEMMA: GROWTH AND INEQUALITY IN WASHINGTON, DC [↓](#)

In November of 2016, contributing *Capital Dilemma* authors Michele Chatman, Bell Clement, Amanda Huron, Derek Hyra, Sabiyha Prince, and Brett Williams, made a presentation at the 43rd Annual DC Historical Society Conference. This book has become a vital resource for policy makers and scholars who are interested in understanding how and why DC's recent economic boom led to widening disparities along racial lines. This volume is distinct in that it applies a unique interdisciplinary approach, incorporating historical, sociological, anthropological, economic, geographic, political, and linguistic frameworks, to comprehensively explain the monumental changes taking place in one of the world's most important cities. The book has been incorporated in urban courses taught at American University, George Washington University, Georgetown University, and the University of Maryland.

THE CAPPUCCINO CITY [↓](#)

MPC director Derek Hyra published *Race, Class and Politics in the Cappuccino City* in April of 2017. The book focuses on the drivers and consequences of gentrification in Washington, DC's Shaw/U Street neighborhood. The sold-out book launch, hosted by Busboys & Poets, Politics & Prose, and WAMU, featured an insightful discussion on the implications of gentrification with local DC public radio personality Kojo Nnamdi. Since its publication the book has received much media attention and has been showcased in the New York Times, Washington Post, Washingtonian Magazine, NextCity, and the Atlantic's Citylab. Moreover, Professor Hyra has been invited to speak about the book's findings at numerous venues including the Brookings Institution, the Woodrow Wilson Center, Columbia University, Georgetown University, the University of Chicago, the University of North Carolina, the District of Columbia's Housing Authority, the National Association of County Community and Economic Development, the National Association of Nonprofit Developers, the Portland Housing Bureau, and the Washington Association of Regional Grantmakers. This book has changed the way people in DC, and across the nation, understand, discuss, and address gentrification.



Cappuccino City book launch



ONGOING RESEARCH

MAKING THE JUST CITY



The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, under its Interdisciplinary Research Leaders program, supports MPC's gentrification research. MPC director Derek Hyra leads a three-person project team with Mindy Fullilove, a professor at The New School, and Dominic Moulden, the resource organizer for Organizing Neighborhood Equity – ONE DC. Their project entitled, "[Making the Just City: An Examination of Organizing for Equity and Health](#)," investigates, over a three-year period, different processes designed to reduce health disparities in two communities currently experiencing gentrification: Orange, NJ and Shaw, DC. The research team's objective is to discover, document, and assess community-level mechanisms in different contexts that help make mixed-income communities more vibrant engines of healthy living, particularly for low-income people. [See an overview of this project.](#)

ROOTS OF THE RIOTS



In the 1960s many American cities burned as social unrest was ignited by urban renewal, police brutality, and an economy that expanded but failed to sufficiently reach vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. While we have experienced much stability in urban America since the riots of the 1960s, in 2014, 2015, and 2016, three major riots occurred in Ferguson, Missouri; Baltimore, Maryland; and Charlotte, North Carolina, all triggered by aggressive police actions. Since these more recent riots, we have witnessed urban protests around the country and calls for an end to police brutality targeting African Americans. This research seeks to understand how 21st century dynamics, beyond police action, undergird today's riots, protests, and political instability. This research will contribute to our understanding of the linkages among urban policy, race, and democracy in the United States. This project is supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.



POLITICAL DISPLACEMENT PROJECT

In many neighborhoods, gentrification — defined as neighborhood change in a low-income community associated with an influx of middle-class residents — does not result in residential displacement, but rather political displacement. A sizable proportion of long-term, low-income residents are able to stay in place because of policies that promote greater affordable housing. These new mixed-income neighborhoods, however, often lead to a loss of political voice for long-time residents. Minority groups who were well-represented at the local levels might find themselves losing seats on city councils, county commissions, and community boards as new constituencies and coalitions form among the newcomers. This study analyzes the relationship between newcomer influx and political loss in 100 US cities that contain some of the country's fastest gentrifying neighborhoods. Using 20 years of local election data, we identify and measure the extent to which political displacement has occurred alongside inner-city neighborhood redevelopment. This study will help determine how the contemporary wave of gentrification relates to changing urban political shifts.





SELECT BOOKS, ARTICLES, AND REPORTS

NEIGHBORHOODS AND GENTRIFICATION

Hyra, D. (2016)

[“Commentary: Causes and Consequences of Gentrification and the Future of Equitable Development Policy.” *Cityscape* 18\(3\): 169-177.](#)

ABSTRACT: In American cities, gentrification—that is, an influx of upper-income people to low-income areas became much more pervasive in the 2000s compared with the 1990s. This article focuses on the causes, consequences, and needed policy responses associated with the contemporary community change wave sweeping over urban America. I argue that gentrification’s causes and consequences are complex and multilayered. I conclude with research puzzles and policy proscriptions to facilitate equitable gentrification, ensuring low- and moderate-income people receive maximum benefit from the revitalization of their neighborhoods.

Bader, M. et al. (2017)

[“The Promise, Practicalities, and Perils of Virtually Auditing Neighborhoods Using Google Street View.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 669\(1\): 18-40.](#)

ABSTRACT: In-person audits to collect data on neighborhood characteristics offer opportunities to study the mechanisms that link neighborhood conditions to unequal outcomes for individuals and communities, but the expense and logistical difficulties associated with conducting neighborhood audits have limited their use. The images collected by Google Street View provide a promising alternative for researchers to measure neighborhood environments across cities and to examine how neighborhood conditions vary across a wider geographic scope. We describe the benefits of using “virtual” neighborhood audits and discuss the practicalities of collecting data from virtual audits. We provide an example of individual and neighborhood-level inequality in the distribution of disorder for older adults across four cities: New York, San Jose, Philadelphia, and Detroit. Despite the promise of virtual audits, they also introduce perils that must be addressed as research progresses; we introduce and discuss those perils here.



Hyra D. (2017)

[Race, Class, and Politics in the Cappuccino City. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.](#)

ABSTRACT: For long-time residents of Washington, DC’s Shaw/U Street, the neighborhood has become almost unrecognizable in recent years. Where the city’s most infamous open-air drug market once stood, a farmers’ market now sells grass-fed beef and homemade duck egg ravioli. On the corner where AM.PM carryout used to dish out soul food, a new establishment markets its \$28 foie gras burger. Shaw is experiencing a dramatic transformation, from “ghetto” to “gilded ghetto,” where white newcomers are rehabbing homes, developing dog parks, and paving the way for a third wave coffee shop on nearly every block. *Race, Class, and Politics in the Cappuccino City* is an in-depth ethnography of the transformation of this gilded ghetto. The book concludes with policy recommendations to stimulate more equitable development in America’s mixed-income, mixed race neighborhoods.

RACE AND DIVERSITY

Chuang, A., and Ngene, A. (2016)

[“Mediating the President’s American Otherness from ‘Birthers’ to bin Laden: Television-news Representations of Barack Obama, False Balance, and Power.” Paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Conference: Minneapolis, MN.](#)

ABSTRACT: Studies on the racial and religious identity of President Barack Obama, and news media coverage related to the topic, have revealed complex, but consistent, patterns of Othering amid complex news-media messages. While some of these messages, including those from Obama himself, appear to subvert blackness, consistent news-media-fueled attacks on his religion, patriotism, and his citizenship by U.S. birth have driven a dominant culture vs. outsider binary consistent with Stuart Hall’s theories of representation. In one extraordinary week in 2011, these cultural codes were tested in the news media as billionaire Donald Trump publicly demanded Obama’s original birth certificate, fueling an existing “birther” controversy. Later the same week, Obama announced that Osama bin Laden had been killed in a U.S.-led raid, and in this act of reauthorizing his Americanness, effectively silenced Trump and news-media coverage of “birthers.” This study of U.S. television-news coverage during and around that time period finds that journalists contextualized the foreign vs. American aspects of Obama’s identity to construct a mediated form of Americanness afforded to Other out-groups in previous studies. Furthermore, television news networks displayed false balance in positioning Trump’s claims as more or less equal to Obama’s assertion that he was born in the United States.

Andrews, R., Casey, M., Hardy, B.L., and Logan, T.D. (2017)

[“Location Matters: Historical Racial Segregation and Intergenerational Mobility.” *Economics Letters* 158: 67-72.](#)

ABSTRACT: This paper explores historical patterns of racial segregation and its relationship with the observed spatial variation in contemporaneous economic mobility established in Chetty et al. (2014). We combined data from the Equality of Opportunity Project with a novel measure of racial segregation developed in Logan and Parman (forthcoming) and find that past racial segregation explains a significant portion of the spatial variation in intergenerational mobility. These findings are consistent with models showing that persistent institutional factors may drive long-term outcomes across areas. Racial segregation and the environment that fosters it may diminish upward economic mobility by reducing access to networks, labor and capital markets, and political institutions. If so, then reducing the impact of these persistent processes may be key to mitigating current-day gaps in wealth, income, and overall well-being.

Lung-Amam, W. (2017)

[*Trespassers?: Asian Americans and the Battle for Suburbia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.](#)

ABSTRACT: Beyond the gilded gates of Google, little has been written about the suburban communities of Silicon Valley. Over the past several decades, the region's booming tech economy spurred rapid population growth, increased racial diversity, and prompted an influx of immigration, especially among highly skilled and educated migrants from China, Taiwan, and India. At the same time, the response to these newcomers among long-time neighbors and city officials revealed complex attitudes in even the most well-heeled and diverse communities. *Trespassers?* takes an intimate look at the everyday life and politics inside Silicon Valley against a backdrop of these dramatic demographic shifts. At the broadest level, it raises questions about the rights of diverse populations to their own piece of the suburban American Dream. It follows one community over several decades as it transforms from a sleepy rural town to a global gateway and one of the nation's largest Asian American-majority cities. There, it highlights the passionate efforts of Asian Americans to make Silicon Valley their home by investing in local schools, neighborhoods, and shopping centers. It also provides a textured tale of the tensions that emerge over this suburb's changing environment. With vivid storytelling, *Trespassers?* uncovers suburbia as an increasingly important place for immigrants and minorities to register their claims for equality and inclusion.



INEQUALITY AND THE SAFETY NET

Morrissey, T.W. et al. (2016)

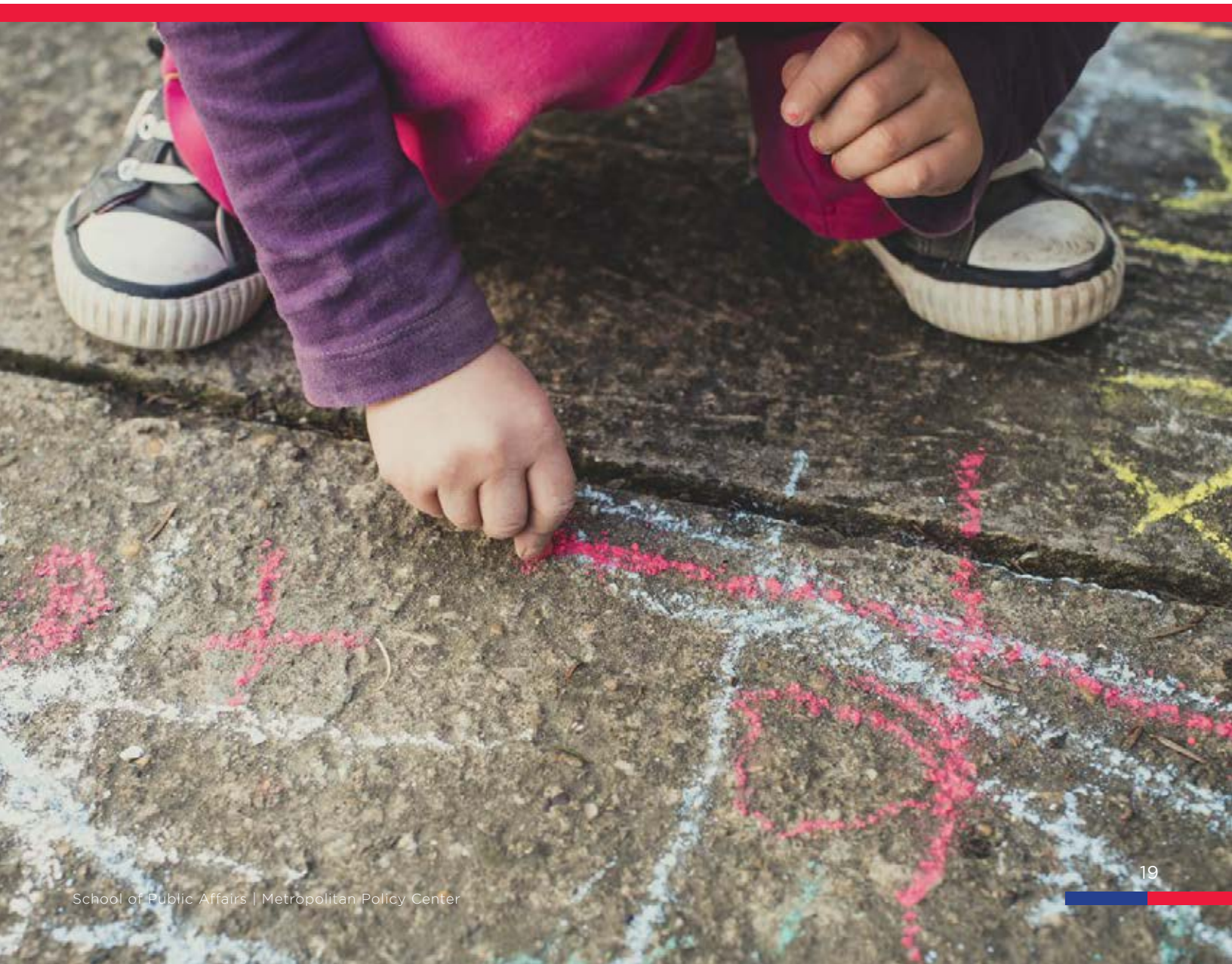
[“Child Care Deserts.” Center for American Progress, Washington, DC.](#)

ABSTRACT: For working parents with young children, the task of finding child care can be daunting. Across the country, parents report frustration when trying to find affordable, high-quality child care. While the cost of child care is certainly a barrier to child care access, less understood are the roles of supply and location. This report examines the location of child care centers across eight states, comprising 20 percent of the U.S. population younger than the age of 5, and uncovers a childcare crisis: 42 percent of children under 5 years of age live in child care deserts. For the purpose of this study, a child care desert is defined as a ZIP code with at least 30 children under the age of 5 and either no child care centers or so few centers that there are more than three times as many children under age 5 as there are spaces in centers.

Chaudry, A., Morrissey, T.W., Weiland, C., and Yoshikawa, H. (2017)

[*Cradle to Kindergarten: A New Plan to Combat Inequality*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.](#)

ABSTRACT: Early care and education for many children in the U.S. is in crisis. The period between birth and kindergarten is a critical time for child development, and socioeconomic disparities that begin early in children's lives contribute to starkly different long-term outcomes for adults. Yet, compared to other advanced economies, high-quality childcare and preschool in the U.S. are scarce and prohibitively expensive for many middle class and most disadvantaged families. To what extent can early-life interventions provide these children with the opportunities that their affluent peers enjoy and contribute to reduced social inequality in the long term? *Cradle to Kindergarten* offers a comprehensive, evidence-based strategy that diagnoses the obstacles to accessible early education and charts a path to opportunity for all children.



Wolf, S., and Morrissey, T.W. (2017)

[“Economic Instability, Food Insecurity, and Child Health During and After the Great Recession.” *Social Service Review* 91\(3\): 534-570.](#)

ABSTRACT: Although there is a wealth of research on the relationship between income level and employment status and child well-being, the relationship between economic instability and health during early childhood is understudied. We examine the associations between the incidence, accumulation, and timing of intrayear employment and income instability with household and child food insecurity and child health using a nationally representative sample of households. The sample includes children age 3–5 from households in the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (N=5,056). We find that young children’s households experience high levels of both income and employment instability. Both the incidence and the accumulation of instability predict poorer child outcomes, more recent instability is more strongly associated with child outcomes, and these relations are stronger for children with less educated parents. Employment and income changes have separate, unique associations with each outcome and operate in somewhat different ways.

Hipp, L., Morrissey, T.W., and Warner, M.E. (2017)

[“Employer-Supported Child Care: Who Participates, and Who Benefits?” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 79\(3\): 614-635.](#)

ABSTRACT: Support from employers to help parents balance work and family responsibilities has become an increasingly important issue, particularly in the United States, where public support for families is scarce. Little is known about the effectiveness of employer-provided child-care support. Who participates in these programs, and what are their benefits? This study is among the first to address these questions using a dataset that combines administrative with survey data from employees at a large organization. Findings indicate that employer financial support for child care can be structured so that employees with the greatest need benefit and employee participation is not associated with stigma. Results suggest the employer benefits from increased employee commitment and reduced employee stress, but employees do not report increased parent or child satisfaction with care. Although employer financial support alone cannot compensate for structural problems with regard to child care, it may reduce stress and increase employee commitment in the workplace.



Morrissey, T.W. (2017)

[“Child Care and Parental Labor Force Participation: A Review of the Research Literature.” *Review of Economics of the Household* 15\(1\): 1-24.](#)

ABSTRACT: Early care and education (ECE) enables parental employment and provides a context for child development. Theory suggests that lower child care costs, through subsidized care or the provision of free or low-cost arrangements, would increase the use of ECE and parents’ employment and work hours. This paper reviews the research literature examining the effects of child care costs and availability on parental employment. In general, research suggests that reduced out-of-pocket costs for ECE and increased availability of public ECE increases ECE attendance among young children, and has positive impacts on mothers’ labor force participation and work hours. However, there is considerable heterogeneity in findings. Among U.S. studies that report the elasticity of employment to ECE price, estimates range from -0.025 to -1.1 , with estimates clustering near 0.05 – 0.25 . This indicates that a 10 percent reduction in the price of child care would lead to a 0.25 – 11 percent increase in maternal employment, likely near 0.5 – 2.5 percent. In general, studies using more recent data or data from non-U.S. countries find smaller elasticities than those using U.S. data from the 1990s. These differences may be due to historical and cross-national differences in ECE attendance, labor force attachment, and educational attainment among mothers with young children, as well as heterogeneity in the methodological approaches and data used across studies. More research in the U.S. using contemporary data is needed, particularly given recent changes in U.S. ECE policy.

Hardy, B.L., Smeeding, T., and Ziliak, J.P. (2017)

[“The Changing Safety Net for Low Income Parents and Their Children: Structural or Cyclical Changes in Income Support Policy?” *Forthcoming in Demography*.](#)

ABSTRACT: SNAP and the EITC/CTC are the largest income transfer programs available to able-bodied working poor and near-poor families, and joint participation over time in the programs has more than doubled in the past decade. We examine whether this growth in longer-term program reliance is a result of the cyclical downturn from the Great Recession, from more secular changes in employment and wages for low-skilled families, from policy changes that affected the programs generosity and access, or from the changing structure of the American family. To do so, we construct a series of two-year panels from the 1981–2013 waves of the March Current Population Survey to estimate models of two-year participation in SNAP and the EITC/CTC, and then use the parameter estimates to conduct a series of counterfactual simulations to determine how much of the growth in participation stems from cyclical, structural, policy, or demographic forces. Our estimates suggest that joint use of SNAP and the EITC/CTC is countercyclical with respect to state unemployment rates, and thus some of the growth in recent years stems from higher unemployment. However, the secular decline in full-time work and concomitant rise in part-time work and out-of-the labor force status have had offsetting effects on joint participation in SNAP and the EITC/CTC, and as a result the growth in more “permanent” attachment to the programs stems mainly from changing policy. Longer-term SNAP participation without the EITC, on the other hand, is driven by both structural and cyclical factors.

HEALTH

Bradford, T.W., Grier, S.A., and Henderson, G.R. (2017)

[“Weight Loss through Virtual Support Communities: A Role for Identity-Based Motivation in Public Commitment.”](#) *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 40: 9-23.

ABSTRACT: Individuals increasingly participate in virtual support communities (VSCs) where they conduct numerous aspects of their lives with others whom they may never encounter in person, and they interact within these communities to attain various goals. Research finds that individuals are more likely to achieve success with such goals when they make a public commitment to achieving them. Through our netnographic inquiry, we extend prior theorizing of VSC with an explanation of how public commitment manifests in VSC in support of goal attainment. More specifically, we find these online communities make salient a context relevant social identity which motivates behaviors that facilitate compliance to the public commitment, and hence, more effective goal pursuit. In addition, we create a typology of member roles within these VSC that further influence public commitment. Our findings contribute to theories of VSC and public commitment.

Ranganathan, M. (2016)

[“Thinking with Flint: Racial Liberalism and the Roots of an American Water Tragedy.”](#) *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 27(3): 17-33.

ABSTRACT: The lead poisoning of Flint, Michigan’s water is popularly framed as a case of “environmental racism” given that Flint’s population is mostly black and lower income. In this essay I argue that we see the environmental racism that underlies Flint’s water poisoning not as incidental to our political-economic order, nor even as stemming from racist intent, but as inseparable from liberalism, an organizing logic we take for granted in our modern age. I expand on the idea of “racial liberalism” here. While upholding the promise of individual freedoms and equality for all, racial liberalism—particularly as it was translated into urban renewal and property making in mid-20th-century urban America—drove dispossession. In Flint racialized property dispossession has been one major factor underlying the city’s financial duress, abandonment, and poisoned infrastructure. Yet, through austerity discourse, Flint is disciplined as if it were a financially reckless individual while the structural and historical causes of its duress are masked. Tracing the history of property making and taking in Flint and the effects of austerity urbanism on its water infrastructure, my central argument is that our understanding of Flint’s predicament—the disproportionate poisoning of young African-Americans—can be deepened if we read it as a case of racial liberalism’s illiberal legacies.



Morrissey, T.W. (2017)

[“Active Shooter Incidents and Gun Ownership and Storage Among Families with Young Children in the United States.” *Preventive Medicine* 100: 50-55.](#)

ABSTRACT: The presence of firearms and their unsafe storage in the home can increase risk of firearm-related death and injury, but public opinion suggests that firearm ownership is a protective factor against gun violence. This study examined the effects of a recent nearby active shooter incident on gun ownership and storage practices among families with young children. A series of regression models, with data from the nationally representative Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort merged with the FBI’s Active Shooter Incidents data collected in 2003–2006, were used to examine whether household gun ownership and storage practices differed in the months prior to and following an active shooter incident that occurred anywhere in the United States or within the same state. Approximately one-fifth of young children lived in households with one or more guns; of these children, only two-thirds lived in homes that stored all guns in locked cabinets. Results suggest that the experience of a recent active shooter incident was associated with an increased likelihood of storing all guns locked, with the magnitude dependent on the temporal and geographic proximity of the incident. The severity of the incident, defined as the number of fatalities, predicted an increase in storing guns locked. Findings suggest that public shootings change behaviors related to firearm storage among families with young children.



Bahl, S., Milne, G.R., Ross, S.M., Mick, D.G., Grier, S.A., Chugani, S.K., Chan, S., Gould, S.J., Cho, Y., Dorsey, J.D., Schindler, R.M., Murdock, M.R., and Mariani, S.B. (2016)

[“Mindfulness: The Transformative Potential for Consumer, Societal and Environmental Well-Being.” *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 35\(2\): 198-210.](#)

ABSTRACT: The authors propose that mindfulness is an antidote to mindless consumption, which adversely affects individual and collective well-being. The concept of mindfulness is explained and applied to the consumption context. More specifically, the authors examine mindful consumption as an ongoing practice of bringing attention, with acceptance, to inner and outer stimuli, and the effects of this practice on the consumption process. The transformative potential of mindful consumption is reviewed across domains of consumer, societal, and environmental well-being, with suggestions for future research. The article highlights some of the challenges to realizing the transformative potential of mindful consumption and concludes with suggestions for the actions that consumers, institutions, and policy makers could take to promote mindful consumption.

EDUCATION

Lindsay, C.A., and Hart, C.M.D. (2017)

[“Exposure to Same-Race Teachers and Student Disciplinary Outcomes for Black Students in North Carolina.”](#) Forthcoming in *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*.

ABSTRACT: Using student-level administrative data from North Carolina, we explore whether exposure to same-race teachers affects the rate at which Black students receive exclusionary discipline, such as out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, and expulsion. We find consistent evidence that exposure to same-race teachers is associated with reduced rates of exclusionary discipline for Black students. This relationship holds for elementary, middle, and high school grade ranges for male and female students, and for students who do and do not use free and reduced-price lunch. Although we find reductions in referrals for a number of different types of offenses, we find particularly consistent evidence that exposure to same-race teachers lowers office referrals for willful defiance across all grade levels, suggesting that teacher discretion plays a role in driving our results.

Lindsay, C.A., and Hart, C.M.D. (2017)

[“Teacher Race and School Discipline.”](#) *Education Next*, 17(1).

ABSTRACT: Does having a teacher of the same race make it more or less likely that students are subject to exclusionary school discipline? In this study, the authors analyze a unique set of student and teacher demographic and discipline data from North Carolina elementary schools to examine whether being matched to a same-race teacher affects the rate at which students receive detentions, are suspended, or are expelled. The data follow individual students over several years, enabling us to compare the disciplinary outcomes of students in years when they had a same-race teacher and in years when they did not. They find consistent evidence that North Carolina students are less likely to be removed from school as punishment when they and their teachers are the same race. This effect is driven almost entirely by black students, especially black boys, who are markedly less likely to be subjected to exclusionary discipline when taught by black teachers. There is little evidence of any benefit for white students of being matched with white teachers. Although these results are based on a single state, they should encourage efforts to promote greater diversity in the teaching workforce, which remains overwhelmingly white. In addition to offering more diverse role models at the front of the class, the study’s findings suggest that employing more teachers of color could help minimize the chances that students of color, who trail their white peers in academic achievement, are also subjected to discipline that removes them from school.



IN THE MEDIA

MPC contributes to urban policy debates by having our research featured in media outlets that shift national dialogue. Our staff and Faculty Fellows were repeatedly quoted in well-regarded news publications and blogs throughout the year. The following are some of our notable media hits.

NEIGHBORHOODS AND GENTRIFICATION

[“Why Gentrifiers Shouldn’t Feel Guilty”](#)

by Paul O’Donnell

on April 28, 2016 in *Washingtonian Magazine*



Carolyn Gallaber: “You don’t have to un-gentrify DC. It’s a lot of little things. When people fell behind on their property taxes, their tax liens were sold to a collection agency. A law was passed [TOPA] to rein that in, but only very recently. DC could have worked on payment plans and tax rebates based on income. Things like that impact who lives in the city.”

[“Black Branding’ – How a D.C. Neighborhood was Marketed to White Millennials”](#)

by Robert McCartney

on May 3, 2017 in *Washington Post*



Derek Hyra: “Not long ago, an urban community’s association with blackness was mostly perceived as detrimental.” “But nowadays ... neighborhood-based organizations, real estate developers, restaurant owners and urban planners commodify and appropriate aspects of blackness to promote tourism, homeownership, and community redevelopment.”

[“Selling a Black D.C. Neighborhood to White Millennials”](#)

by Derek Hyra

on June 12, 2017 in *NextCity*



Excerpt: “Black culture has been used to sell music for years, but only recently has it been commoditized to market neighborhood redevelopment. In the past decade or so, inner-city real estate developers have begun to name their new luxury buildings after celebrated African-Americans, such as Langston Hughes and Duke Ellington.”

[“How Gentrification Is Undermining the Notion of Black Community and Destroying Black Businesses”](#)

by Frederick Reese

on June 20, 2017 in *Atlanta Black Star*

Excerpt: “Gentrification is not necessarily a bad thing, but the way in which it often occurs is, because it typically leads to displacement,” Derek Hyra, professor at American University and author of “Race, Class and Politics in Cappuccino City,” said. “In America, we are really good at developing places instead of people in places. When investments come in to benefit areas of concentrated poverty where the people can stay in place, then the investments are a good thing. However, gentrification as a means to poverty displacement, instead of poverty relief, is destructive.”



[“Derek Hyra and the Trouble With the Trouble With Gentrification”](#)

by Benjamin Freed

on June 28, 2017 in *Washingtonian Magazine*

Excerpt: “Hyra believes that one of the reasons so many millennials are moving to previously distressed neighborhoods is because they want to “live The Wire”—as in the acclaimed HBO drama about crime, addiction, poverty, and corruption in Baltimore.”



[“SoHa in Harlem? The Misguided Madness of Neighborhood Rebranding”](#)

by Ginia Bellafante

on July 6, 2017 on *The New York Times*

Excerpt: “The developer’s practice of using black history to attract young, affluent renters who want to think of themselves as living a groovier, grittier existence than fate has allotted them. Over the years, the neighborhood went from one that held a black majority to one that didn’t.”



[“The Neighborhood University”](#)

by Derek Hyra

on July 30, 2017 in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

Excerpt: “Universities should also deploy their endowments in creative and socially responsible ways. Urban institutions should devote a percentage of their investments to local challenges, such as shortages in affordable housing.”



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

[“DC’s TOPA law lets tenants buy their buildings before anyone else can, but it also helps renters stay put”](#)

by Carolyn Gallaher

on September 15, 2016 in *Greater Greater Washington*



Excerpt: “DC has a law that lets tenants buy their building if their landlord wants to sell it. Under the law, the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), tenants can work out a deal directly with their landlord, or more commonly, they can refuse a contracted sale the landlord arranges with a third party and purchase the building instead for the same price. Although TOPA is a right to buy statute, the right to collectively decide what happens with their building gives tenants a very powerful seat at the table.”

[“Life Is Hell for Tenants of Giant D.C. Slumlord Sanford Capital”](#)

by Alexa Mills and Andrew Giambrone

on February 2, 2017 in *Washington City Paper*



Derek Hyra: “The price for the asset is higher when there are fewer tenants in there... When there becomes more of a population demand for the area, the landlords and the owners are going to look to get out the low-income population that are living in these buildings.”

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND DIVERSITY

[“Residents in most diverse areas say their neighborhoods are better than others”](#)

by Perry Stein

on October 3, 2016 in *Washington Post*



Michael Bader: “Even when we are living in the same neighborhoods, the type of concerns that neighbors share can sometimes be very different, especially given the political climate.”

[“Trump and the Rise of the Extreme Right”](#)

by Patrick Jonsson

on February 27, 2017 in *The Christian Science Monitor*



Carolyn Gallaher: “What is novel about the current moment is that these groups ... see Trump as someone giving them hope that the state will act on their interests.”

[“How Asian Americans Remade Suburbia”](#)

by Tanvi Misra

on June 14, 2017 on *CityLab*

Willow Lung-Amam: “Suburbia is actually pretty inflexible, and planners and policymakers reinforce that sense of conformity. That forbids suburban neighborhoods from changing in ways that they need to change in order to become more diverse. When Asian Americans don’t assimilate quietly, the markers of their non-assimilation are heavily critiqued and regulated. And I think that speaks to the larger ways in which suburbia and American society is still uneasy with the notion of difference.”



[“This region has one of the nation’s largest Salvadoran communities. A federal program puts that in jeopardy.”](#)

by Carolyn Gallaher

on August 23, 2017 in *Greater Greater Washington*

Excerpt: “Immigrants from El Salvador are one of the DC area’s largest foreign-born populations. Many Salvadorans arrived here decades ago under a federal program that allowed them to flee a civil war and, later, two devastating earthquakes. But the program could soon end, which could have major impacts on our region’s neighborhoods.”



[“The Color of Corruption: Whiteness and Populist Narratives”](#)

by Malini Ranganathan and Sapana Doshi

on February 7, 2017 in *Society and Space*

Excerpt: “Our research shows that corruption narratives powerfully harness different worldviews, including those deriving from political and economic ideologies, as well as those based—however subtly—on bigotry, patriarchy, and xenophobia. In particular, what is imagined as corruption is inextricably tied to race, class, gender, and other relations of power.”



SEGREGATION

[“For middle-class blacks, success can be a double-edged sword”](#)

by Amanda E. Lewis and Kasey Henricks
on May 29, 2017 in *The Chicago Reporter*



Excerpt: “In Chicago, affluent black households are just as likely to be segregated from their white peers as are poor black households. Black households earning over \$120,000 per year are more likely to live among black households earning less than \$25,000 than they are to live among whites of any income level. As scholars Esther Havekes, Michael Bader, and Maria Krysan have shown, these patterns of segregation persist even as black Chicagoans say their ideal neighborhood consists of about one-third black residents.”

[“The Invisible Segregation of Diverse Neighborhoods”](#)

by Jake Blumgart
on July 24, 2017 in *Slate*



Excerpt: “[Derek] Hyra writes that his work in the Shaw/U Street area of Washington, D.C., shows most social institutions, churches, recreations centers, restaurants, barbershops and hair shops, schools, and civic associations remain segregated.”



HEALTH

[“New Research Provides Ways To Reduce Holiday Excess Through Mindfulness”](#)

on December 13, 2016 in *Science Blog*

Excerpt: “New research co-authored by Kogod School of Business Marketing Professor Sonya A. Grier titled, Mindfulness: Its Transformative Potential for Consumer, Societal, and Environmental Well Being, proposes that mindfulness is an antidote to the adverse impacts of mindless consumption done out of automatic thoughts, habits, and unhealthy behavior patterns.”



[“Your Kids are Fat Because You Work Too Much, New Study Says”](#)

by Alessandra Malito

on May 9, 2017 in *New York Post*

Excerpt: “Taryn Morrissey, associate professor of the department of public administration and policy at American University in Washington, D.C. and one of the researchers behind the report, said it was not meant to alarm nor shame working moms but rather suggests a work-family issue for all working families.”



[“Rich or Poor, People Still Eat Fast Food”](#)

by Roberta Alexander

on May 17, 2017 in *Healthline*

Michael Bader: “My research has found banning fast food misses the root cause of unhealthy communities.”



[“The Environment as Freedom: A Decolonial Reimagining”](#)

by Malini Ranganathan

on June 13, 2017 in *The Social Science Research Council*

Excerpt: “Though not always framed explicitly in terms of ‘the environment’, radical understandings of freedom brought into focus some of the most challenging environmental injustices of the contemporary period: worker health, transit equity, urban segregation, rural and agrarian impoverishment, and land degradation, to name a few. Struggles for freedom also connected the dots between local struggles—which themselves were interlinked—and global formations of economic power, racism, and militarism.”



CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION

[“Here’s who gets punished in Trump’s child care plan”](#)

by Taryn Morrissey

on March 6, 2017 in CNBC.com



Excerpt: “Too many children lack educational opportunity when their growth and learning is most rapid: between birth and kindergarten entry. Early learning opportunities – from bonding time with parents to high-quality childcare and preschool – lay the foundation for healthy development, lifelong learning, and economic success. Unfortunately, there are huge inequalities in who has access to high-quality early learning experiences, and this further cements the stark economic inequalities across generations.”

[“Study: Black students from poor families are more likely to graduate from high school if they have at least one black teacher”](#)

by Valerie Strauss

on April 9, 2017 in *Washington Post*



Excerpt: “A new study [by Constance Lindsay] says that assigning black students from low-income black families to at least one black teacher in the third, fourth or fifth grades reduces the probability that they drop out of high school by 29 percent. The results are even larger for male African American students from persistently low-income families: Their chance of dropping out of high school falls 39 percent.”

[“Want To Make America Great Again? Make Our Kids Globally Competitive”](#)

by Ajay Chaudray and Hirokazu Yoshikawa

on April 21, 2017 in *Huffington Post*

Excerpt: “In our newly published book, Cradle to Kindergarten, [co-authored with Taryn Morrissey] we assemble an evidence-based strategy that analyzes the challenges to accessible and high quality early education and offers a plan for all children to have the chance to succeed. We propose a comprehensive overhaul with several coordinated investments to build an infrastructure of support for children birth to five to create a shared, common framework that meets the needs of U.S. children, and can address economic inequality.”

HUFFPOST

[“Rural children need quality preschool, too”](#)

by Taryn Morrissey

on May 19, 2017 in *Cincinnati.com*

Excerpt: “While urban areas expand preschool, rural families, even those with the means to pay out of pocket, too often have nowhere to go.”

CINCINNATI.com

EVENTS

During the 2016-2017 academic year, MPC hosted many local and national urban scholars and practitioners through our Urban and Public Engagement Speaker Series, as well as our Annual Spring Lecture. By hosting these events, MPC advances American University's reputation as a leader in the field of urban studies.

URBAN SPEAKER SERIES

The Urban Speaker Series features cutting-edge urban research from scholars across the country.

September 13th – Michael Musheno
Professor of Law, University of Oregon
“Youth Conflict: Trust and Control in a High-Poverty School”

October 11th – Brian Williams
Associate Professor of Public Administration & Policy,
University of Georgia
“Police-Community Dialogues Around Use of Force Policy and Practices: Opportunities Lost and Opportunity Costs”

November 3rd – Michael Leo Owens
Associate Professor of Political Science,
Emory University
“Let’s Get Ready to Crumble: Black Municipal Empowerment and the Demolition and Disposition of Public Housing in the United States”

November 15th – James Wright II
Doctoral Student, Department of Public
Administration & Policy, American University
“Perceptions or Reality: Exploring the Impact of Body Worn Camera Technology on Citizens and Police Officers”

January 24th – Andrea Headley
Doctoral Student, Department of Public
Administration, Florida International University
“Police-Community Relations, Organizational Practices, and Body Cameras”

February 7th – Charles Menifield
Professor, Truman School of Public Affairs,
University of Missouri-Columbia
“What Do the Data Show? Law Enforcement Killings in the U.S. in 2014”

February 27th – Willow Lung-Amam
Assistant Professor, School of Architecture, Planning
and Preservation, University of Maryland
“Somos Langley Park: Equitable Development along Maryland’s Purple Line”

April 18th – Dwayne Baker
Doctoral Candidate, Department of Urban and Regional
Planning, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
“Building Inclusive Neighborhoods: Assessing Socio-Spatial Implications of Transit-Oriented Development”





AU students with Adrienne Todman

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SERIES

Don Beyer, Jr., US Congressman

Adrienne Todman, Executive Director of DC Housing Authority

Rashad Young, City Administrator of the District of Columbia



Don Beyer, Jr.



Adrienne Todman



Rashad Young

CO-SPONSORED EVENTS

This year MPC co-sponsored a number of events in the Washington area, including the following:



With AU's School of International Service: *"The Politics of Staying Put: Condo Conversion and Tenant Right-to-Buy in Washington DC"* book panel

With AU's Department of Literature: *"Migration & the City: Politics, Poetry, and Music in Washington, DC"* symposium



With George Mason University: *"Global Cities, Local Neighborhoods in Displacement, Migration, and Promise"* seminar



With George Washington University: *"A Moment or a Movement? 3rd Annual Equitable Development Conference"*



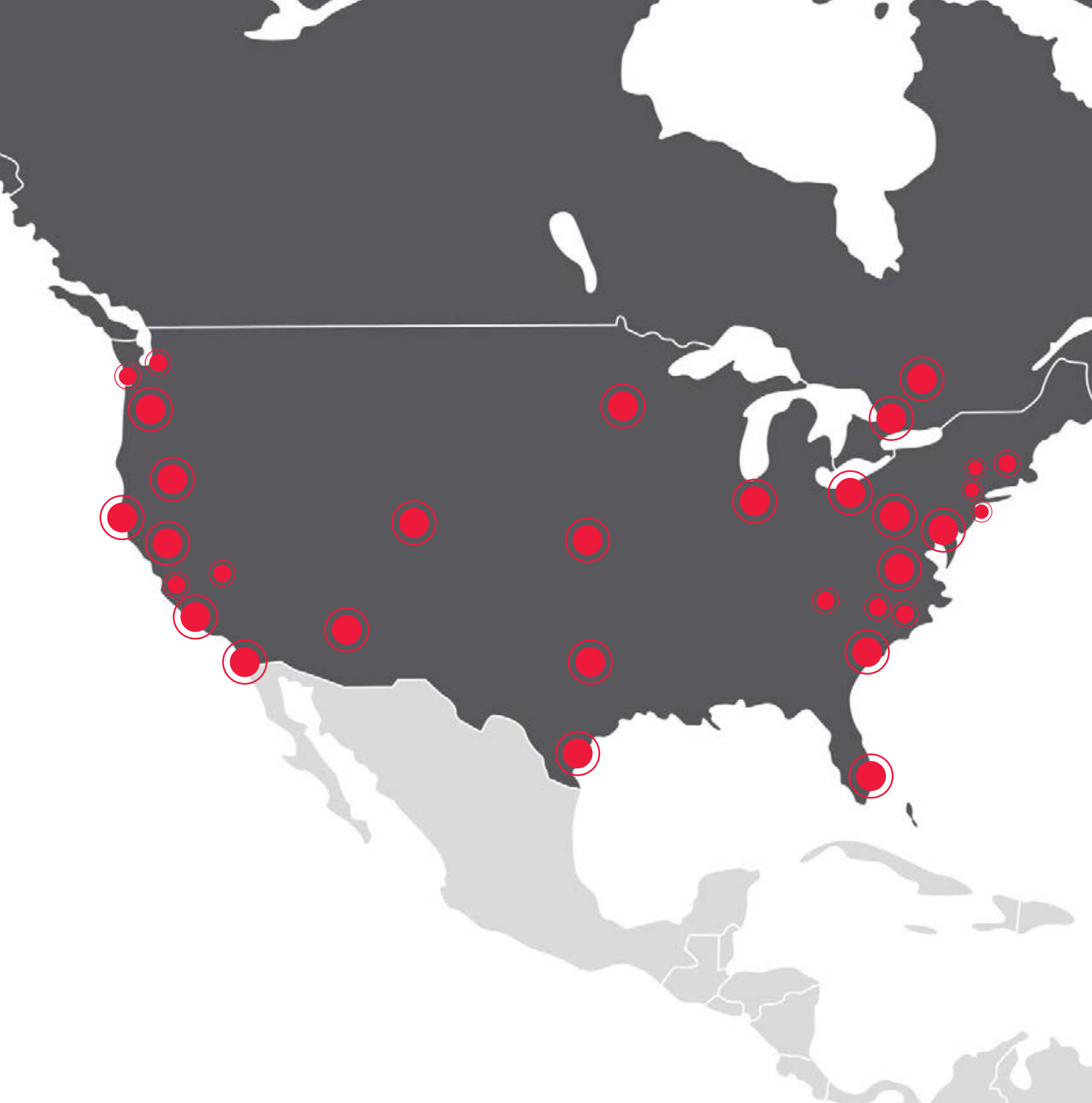
With the DC Public Library: *"Urban Transformation: Metropolitan Development, Demographic Change & Gentrification"* conference



With CityLab: *"Happy Hour Lab DC"*



With ONE DC: *"DC Ideas Festival, 'Making the Just City'"* panel

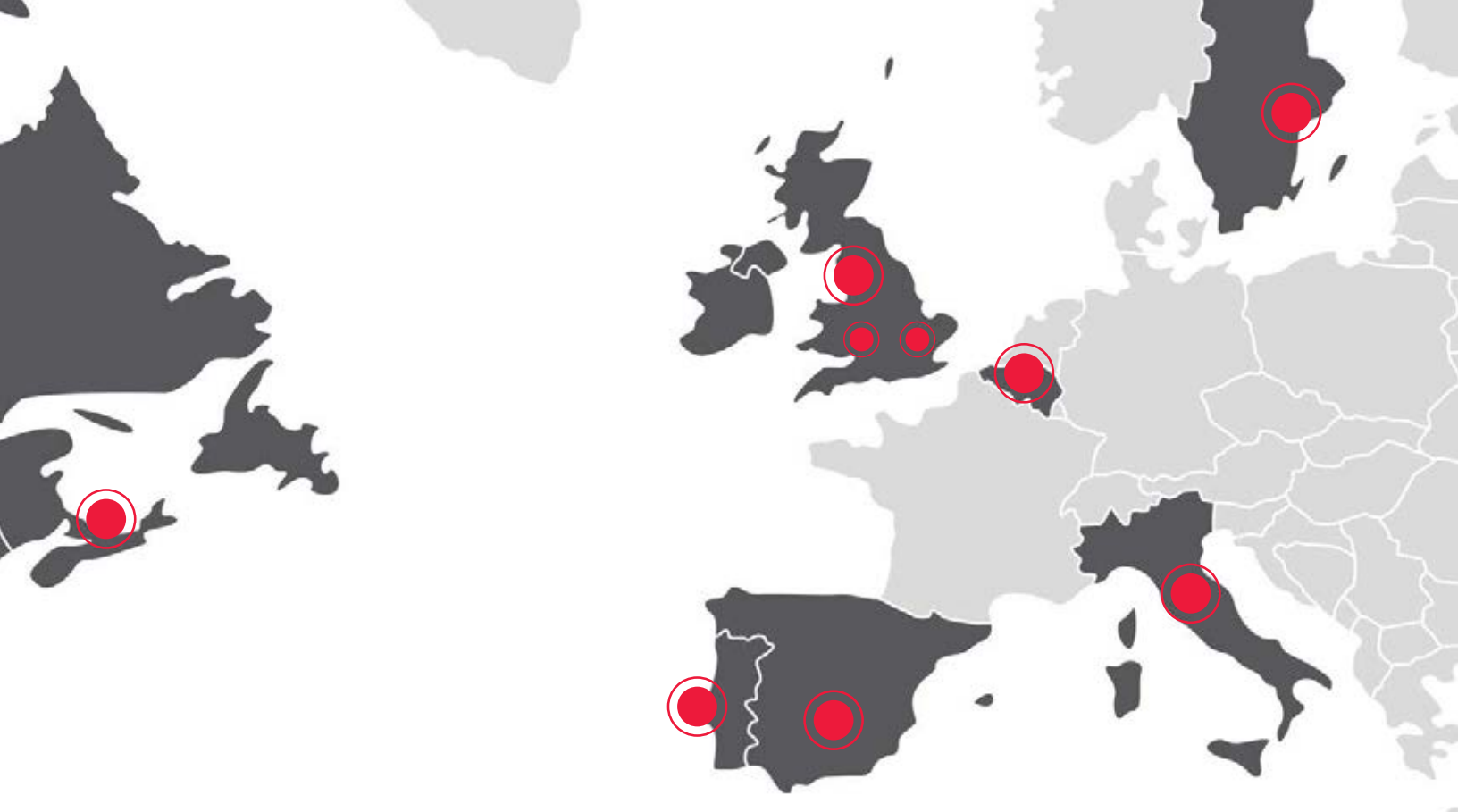


Albuquerque, NM
 Arlington, VA
 Aspen, CO
 Baltimore, MD
 Berkeley, CA
 Boston, MA
 Cambridge, MA

Cary, NC
 Chapel Hill, NC
 Charlotte, NC
 Chicago, IL
 Chico, CA
 College Park, MD
 Columbus, OH

Fairfax, VA
 Florence, Italy
 Harrison, NY
 Kansas City, MO
 Madrid, Spain
 Miami, FL
 Minneapolis, MN

New Orleans, LA
 New York, NY
 Oxford, MS
 Philadelphia, PA
 Pittsburgh, PA
 Portland, OR
 San Diego, CA



PRESENTATIONS

CONFERENCE LOCATIONS

MPC staff and Faculty Fellows presented their research findings, both domestically and abroad, at many conferences, events, and institutions over the last three years, including:

- San Francisco, CA
- Santa Monica, CA
- Seaside, OR
- Seattle, WA
- Stockholm, Sweden
- Washington, DC
- Brussels, Belgium

- Lisbon, Portugal
- London, United Kingdom
- Los Angeles, CA
- Madrid, Spain
- Montreal, Canada
- Oxford, United Kingdom
- San Juan, Puerto Rico

- Toronto, Canada
- Washington, DC



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

POSTER COMPETITION WINNERS

At this year's Annual Spring Lecture, MPC invited students to submit and display posters that addressed important urban policy questions. The following students won best poster in their respective student-level category and a \$500 cash prize.

Ph.D. Level – *Riordan Frost (SPA), “Is DC a ‘Transient City’? Residential Stability in the Nation’s Capital.”*

Masters Level – *Will Perkins (SPA), “Can We Really Have ‘Alice Deal for All’?: Policy Proposals for the Inclusive Integration of DC Public Schools.”*

Undergraduate Level – *Danielle Sindelar (SPA), “Perceived Police Security Differential Between Black and White Populations.”*

MPC STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Liz Mariapen was elected president of the School of Public Affairs Graduate Student Council and was the recipient of the Federal Diversity Initiative award.

Will Perkins published a blog post on Greater Greater Washington entitled, “Charter Schools and Why They’re So Controversial, Explained.”

Riordan Frost, who worked closely with MPC, received his PhD in Public Administration from American University and took a position at Harvard University’s Joint Center for Housing Studies.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

MPC strives to help our student staff achieve success. Below are some of the job placements of past students who have worked or volunteered at MPC.

Chloe Brown

Project Assistant, Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute

Hannah Dennis

Senior in SIS, Intern, Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy

Riordan Frost

Research Assistant, Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University

Danielle Krachie

Fan & Membership Services Executive, New York City Football Club

Trevor Langan

Research Associate, National League of Cities

Jasmyn Shumate

Creative Engineer, narratedbyjas.com

Statia Thomas

Office Manager, Office of Food for Peace, US Agency for International Development

Carley Wetted

Research Assistant, Center for Environmental Policy, American University

James Wright II

Assistant Professor, Florida State University (in Fall of 2018)



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MPC would like to thank the following individuals for their key contributions that helped make MPC's third year such a tremendous success:

Scott Allard	Carolyn Gallaher	Michael Musheno
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Sydney Bair	Eric Hershberg	Julie Pixler
Dwayne Baker	Amanda Huron	Sabiyha Prince
Scott Bass	Alison Jacknowitz	Malini Ranganathan
Rep. Don Beyer, Jr.	Paul Jargowsky	Robert Renner
Rachel Brittin	Jocelyn Johnston	Blair Ruble
Sylvia Burwell	William Julius Wilson	Jasmyn Shumate
Enesto Castañeda-Tinoco	Daniel Kerr	Brenda Smith
Michele Chatman	Neil Kerwin	Meagan Snow
Angie Chuang	Danielle Krachie	Clarence Stone
Mary Clark	Michael Leo Owens	Thomas Sugrue
Bell Clement	Constance Lindsay	Adrienne Todman
Cheryl Davidson	Willow Lung-Amam	Jonathan Tubman
Maria De Jesus	Lisa Manning	Carley Weted
Hannah Dennis	Liz Mariapen	Vicky Wilkins
Serena Elizondo	Jordanna Matlon	Brett Williams
Daniel Esser	Robert McCartney	Brian Williams
Lewis Faulk	Charles Menifield	William Julius Wilson
Lance Freeman	Liza Morris	James Wright II
Ester Fuchs	Taryn Morrissey	Rashad Young
Mindy Fullilove	Dominic Moulden	Jeffrey Zyontz

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