Call for Contributions to the Two-day Workshop

Who Cares?
Relational Mechanisms Involved in the Day-to-Day Subsistence of Families and Individuals Struggling with Poverty
February 7-8, 2019
Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

Scope
Inequality is one of the major challenges of our societies. Austerity policies, the withdrawal of the welfare state, and the advancement of neoliberal policies have led to an increase in income poverty and social exclusion in many countries. According to the academic literature, families and individuals struggling to get by rely on the informal support of relatives, friends and acquaintances, especially in contexts where public aid has been reduced and charities collapsed by excessive demand. However, the supportive capacity of individuals' personal networks has also been questioned: for example, the poor have been shown to have smaller networks and/or networks with a lower resource potential, and relational dynamics such as stigmatization and the norm of reciprocity may hinder the actual mobilization of support.

In this two-day workshop, we aim to focus on the relational mechanisms involved in the day-to-day subsistence of families and individuals suffering economic hardship, in a causally bidirectional way: On the one hand, how and to what extent do personal relationships provide social support that alleviate situations of poverty, and on the other, how do social support encounters redefine personal relationships? A complete analysis does not only require an understanding of the occurrence of supportive exchanges, but also of the absence of such exchanges, and of negative or harmful relationship dynamics (e.g., distrust, abuse, avoidance) that hinder the provision of support or that generate dependency.

The two-day interdisciplinary workshop will consist of invited addresses and selected paper presentations, with ample room for scholarly discussion. We intend to develop a special issue on the topic in a leading interdisciplinary journal in the social sciences.

Invited speakers


Mercedes González de la Rocha, CIESAS (Mexico). Author of the books The Resources of Poverty: Women and Survival in a Mexican City (Blackwell Publishers, 1994) and (with Gonzalo Saraví), Pobreza y vulnerabilidad: debates y estudios contemporáneos en México [Poverty and vulnerability: Contemporary debates and studies in Mexico] (Publicaciones de la Casa Chata, CIESAS, 2018)

Joan Maya Mazelis, Rutgers University (USA). Author of the book Surviving Poverty: Creating Sustainable Ties among the Poor (NYU Press, 2017)


Topics of interest
We welcome researchers interested in these themes to submit an abstract related
to the nexus between sociality and informal economic or material support in situations of poverty. We call for theoretical or empirical contributions that engage with one or more of the following questions, or others closely related to the main theme:

- How do families and individuals struggling with poverty obtain, mobilize and/or negotiate social support through their personal relationships or networks? Who helps out when needed and who does not?
- How do families and individuals participate in other forms of sharing or informal economy, going beyond a directional concept of support?
- How do social support transactions or sharing (or failed transactions) redefine social relationships, positively or negatively? (e.g., solidarity, reciprocity, rupture, dependency, submission, competition, compliance, paternalism)
- How do societal norms and values interfere with the above-mentioned dynamics? (e.g., social obligations, reciprocity, shame, stigma)?
- What forms of moral economy, empowerment or resistance can be identified?
- How are social support exchanges contextually dependent? (e.g., do third sector organizations facilitate or hinder the creation of support networks?)
- How do dynamics of sociality and care or support intersect with gender, social class and nationality/ethnicity?
- What are the emotional or psychological effects of these relationship dynamics?
- What is the temporality of the identified dynamics (e.g., the chronicity of poverty, continuous versus emergency help)?

**Abstract submission**

We invite researchers to submit an abstract of approximately 500 words, plus an author biography of max. 300 words, to the workshop organizers (by e-mail: mirandajessica.lubbers@uab.cat and hugo.valenzuela@uab.cat) by October 15th, 2018. The abstract must include a title and the names and affiliations of all authors, and indicate whether author(s) are interested in publishing the paper in a special issue after the seminar. Abstracts and presentations must be in English. Researchers will be notified of the decision before the 22nd of October, 2018.

**Organization**

The workshop is organized within the framework of the research project *Survival strategies of households in poverty: The role of formal and informal support networks in times of economic crisis* (http://pagines.uab.cat/pobresaixarxes/en) funded by Recercaixa (2015ACUP 00145) led by Miranda Lubbers and Hugo Valenzuela (2016-2019) and hosted by the GRAFO research group (www.grafo.cat) at the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

**Registration fees**

The registration fee is €150, which includes coffee, tea and refreshments during the breaks, lunch on the two workshop days, and a workshop dinner on Thursday evening. Authors of accepted papers are kindly requested to make their own accommodation and travel arrangements. Information about accommodation will be provided.

**Important dates**

Submission of abstracts due: 15 October 2018
Acceptance notification: 22 October 2018
Program publication: 15 December 2018
Workshop: 7 and 8 February 2019

**Questions**

For any questions related to the workshop, please do not hesitate to contact us:
Hugo Valenzuela: hugo.valenzuela@uab.cat
Miranda Lubbers: mirandajessica.lubbers@uab.cat