

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

Kayleigh Garthwaite, University of Birmingham (UK). Author of the book *Hunger Pains: Life inside Foodbank Britain* (Policy Press, University of Bristol, 2016)

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)

Mario Luis Small, Harvard University (USA). Author of the books *Villa Victoria: The Transformation of Social Capital in a Boston Barrio* (University of Chicago Press, 2004), *Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality of Everyday Life* (Oxford University Press, 2009) and *Someone to Talk to* (Oxford University 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 financial difficulties and related problems strain personal relationships?
- 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