

Community as Intellectual Space: Preliminary Program

Paseo Boricua, Chicago -- June 17-19, 2005

Presented by:

Puerto Rican Cultural Center
<http://www.prcc-chgo.org>

University of Illinois Office of Continuing Education
<http://www.continuinged.uiuc.edu/>

And:

Community Informatics Initiative
<http://ilabs.inquiry.uiuc.edu/ilab/cii>

Graduate School of Library and Information Science
<http://www.lis.uiuc.edu>

Symposium Co-Coordinator: Alejandro Molina (Puerto Rican Cultural Center) and Ann Bishop (Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

Sponsors: Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership (UIUC); Office of the Vice Chancellor for Public Engagement (UIUC); Latina/o Studies Program (UIUC); School of Public Health (University of Illinois at Chicago)

Central Symposium Location: Puerto Rican Cultural Center, 2739-41 W. Division Street

Symposium Overview

Studies in community are moving from deficit- to asset-based approaches, with an emphasis on how communities conduct inquiry to investigate and take action on their realities. Such approaches seek to build upon the unique capabilities, history, culture, and lived experiences in local settings, with the understanding that problems must be articulated, and solutions made workable, within the lived experience of actual communities. When we look around the world, we find exciting examples of community empowerment, places where people with limited resources are developing creative, liberating and

collective means of meeting challenges and goals in daily life. Especially exciting are places where youth—from middle school to college—are at the heart of social entrepreneurship in their neighborhoods, integrating expression, learning, and community action.

The concept of “community as intellectual space” is based on the premise that if individuals are to understand and create solutions for problems in complex systems, they need opportunities to engage with challenging problems, to learn through participative investigations, to have supportive, situated experiences, to express their ideas to others, and to make use of a variety of resources in multiple media. The aim of communities as intellectual space is to bring people from all walks of life together to develop “critical, socially engaged intelligence, which enables individuals to understand and participate effectively in the affairs of their community in a collaborative effort to achieve a common good” (John Dewey Project on Progressive Education, 2002).

Paseo Boricua provides one of the world’s leading examples of melding collaborative action and research across university and community settings. Paseo Boricua is a mile-long section of Division Street in Chicago’s Humboldt Park area. It is a vibrant neighborhood characterized by strong, multi-generational, multi-institutional community activism, where about 70% of residents are of Latino origin, and 30% of families are living below the federally defined poverty level. Paseo Boricua embodies the development of an autonomous cultural, political, and economic space for Puerto Rican and Latino/Latina residents that came into being as a response to encroaching gentrification and displacement in nearby sections of the city (Flores-González, 2001; Rinaldi, 2002).

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center (<http://www.prcc-chgo.org>) has served as an institutional anchor in Paseo Boricua for thirty years, galvanizing neighborhood residents around issues such as poverty, gang violence, AIDS, destruction of cultural identity, lack of educational resources, and racism.

Organizations affiliated with the PRCC include the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS), an alternative school that pursues a critical pedagogy while providing a safe place for; the Centro Infantil pre-school; the Family Learning Center, which grants high school diplomas to young women while providing daycare for their children; Vida/SIDA (an AIDS/HIV education center); Batey Urbano Café Teatro, which provides Latino youth with an outlet for expression and

community action; the Division Street Business Development Association, a community-based economic development nonprofit; and the National Boricua Human Rights Network.

With this symposium, we invite students, faculty, researchers and others interested in community research and action to participate in the life of Paseo Boricua, gaining first-hand experience with community as intellectual space. Symposium participants will attend panels and workshops that highlight the intellectual work of communities like Paseo Boricua, in addition to engaging in local activities—including youth performances at Batey Urbano, community-curated art and culture exhibits, and the Puerto Rican People's Parade. Of special note is the role of youth in defining the intellectual space of community; the symposium highlights youth participation in projects devoted to improving community health, democracy, artistic expression, and family learning.

Friday, June 17

2:00 p.m.

Welcome José López, Executive Director, Puerto Rican Cultural Center)

3:00-5:00 p.m.

Walking Tour, including exhibits: Samuel's exhibit on community life in Paseo Boricua (Division Street gallery); and De Pared a Pared: Counter-narratives of the People, a photographic exhibit by Marisa Alicea (Puerto Rican Cultural Center).

5:00-8:30 p.m.

Supper and Film (*Dream Makers*) and Discussion at the PRCC

8:30-10:00 p.m.

Performance at Café Teatro Batey Urbano: Community Narrative in Poetry and Music

Saturday, June 18

9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Panel: Community Narratives

Jorge Félix (Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture): Community Curatorial Projects--Fighting Displacement, Building a National Sentiment.

Laura Ruth Johnson (Latin American Studies Program, University of Illinois at Chicago) and Marisol Morales (Family Learning Center): A Re-Storying Framework--Community and Family Narratives and the Family Learning Center

Mirta Ramirez: Paseo Boricua Oral History Project

Panel: Community Action and Schools

11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Ann P. Bishop, Suhua Fan and Terry Kuster (Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), HS student (Family Learning Center): Paseo Boricua Community Library Project

Mark Aber (Dept. of Community Psychology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign): CARE3: Bringing Community Voice and Expertise to Policy-Making on Educational Inequities across Race

12:30 to 2:00 p.m.

Lunch in neighborhood venues; help with parade prep

2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Parade

4:00 to 6:30 p.m.

Panel: Participatory Research

Michele Kelley (University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Public Health): A Critique of the Inherent Colonialism in the Production of Academic Knowledge--The Role of Community-Based Participatory Research in Public Health

Marisa Alicea (School for New Learning, DePaul University): Community as Intellectual Space—Lessons from Participatory Action Research Projects

Nilda Flores-Gonzalez (Dept. of Sociology and Latin American Studies Program, University of Illinois at Chicago) and Alejandro Molina (Puerto Rican Cultural Center): The Militant Observer

Yarimar Bonilla (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Chicago): The Community Scholar in Residence

Michael Rodriguez (*La Voz del Paseo Boricua*) and Jonathan Rosa (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Chicago): The Humboldt Park Participatory Democracy Project

6:30 p.m.

Carnival in the Park

Sunday, June 19

9:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Parallel Workshops

Community Asset-Mapping (Josh Ostergaard, Urban Research Programs Coordinator, Center for Cultural Understanding and Change, The Field Museum).

The Center for Cultural Understanding and Change's approach to asset mapping uncovers a layer of social assets that connect spatial and social inventories. This is the human layer, the stratum of information that brings communities to life. These are data about residents' cultural attributes and local knowledge of the environment, stories, values, images and metaphors that alone can reveal which sites are appropriate for activism, which sites have meaning for local residents and why a particular piece of land is important.

Gentrification And Race: Discourses On Contested Space (Jesse Mumm, Social Sciences Division, University of Chicago)

This workshop will present preliminary findings from a current project that looks at discourses around gentrification and race, focusing on Humboldt Park and Logan Square. Interviews have been conducted with a range of stakeholders, including developers, Puerto Rican neighborhood leaders, and newcomers. The presentation will be used to launch discussion among workshop participants about issues and responses associated with gentrification. How does gentrification both reveal and transform our practices and attitudes on race?

11:00 a.m. to 12:30

Special Session: Youth as Social Entrepreneurs

Matthew Rodriguez and HS students (Pedro Albizu Campos High School): The Mini-Mural Project

Mike Reyes (Café Teatro Batey Urbano): Providing Latino Youth with an Outlet for Expression and Community Action

12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Lunch and film (*Urban Poet*) at La Bruquena restaurant

2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Plenary wrap-up discussion