

# MER Student Conference, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012



## Western Centre for Research on Migration & Ethnic Relations

**Time and Location: 4:00pm – 6:00 pm SSC 5220,  
Reception at 6:00 pm – SSC 3036**

### Program

**16:00**

Welcoming words and announcements

**16:05-16:25**

**Melissa Stachel**, PhD candidate, Anthropology Department. “Representations of Somalis in the North American Media: The Effects of Constructions of 'Risk' on Somali Youth”



Melissa Stachel is a PhD Candidate working under the supervision of Randa Farah in the Department of Anthropology and the Collaborative Program in Migration and Ethnic Relations. Her PhD research focuses on the experiences of Somali children and youth in multiple, simultaneous and/or transnational spaces in North America and how these experiences shape their worldviews, identities, and senses of belonging in the context of displacement, prolonged armed conflict in Somalia, and the post-September 11th environment. Melissa is also working on a collaborative research project with Victoria Esses and Gillian King on the experiences of autism spectrum disorders in Somali communities in North America. She is also an editor for the Journal of Internal Displacement.

**16:25- 16:45**

**Reena Shah**, PhD candidate, Sociology Department. “Emigration of Immigrant’s from Canada. Who, When and Why?”



Reena Shah is a student in the doctoral program in Sociology with specialization in migration and demography. Her educational background is Masters in Population Studies, from International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai and Masters in Statistics. Before coming to Canada, she has worked in various national and international funded projects on health, HIV/AIDS, and rural-urban migration in India with the responsibilities of management of large data set, its statistical analysis and report writing and presentation for funding agencies, stake holders and non-academic audience. She has also worked with an NGO for Street Children in India. She has recently published a paper in “Canadian Population Journal” based on her Masters dissertation. Presently she is working on her doctoral thesis on Emigration of immigrants from Canada.

**16:45- 17:05**

**Johnathan Osborne**, PhD candidate, Geography Department. “Immigrants in Toronto’s Inner Suburban, High-Rise Apartments: Analysis of the United Way of Toronto’s Vertical Poverty Data”



My name is John Osborne. I'm a PhD Candidate in Geography at Western. My research focuses on housing and immigration. I obtained my undergraduate degree at the University of Winnipeg, which is in my home province of Manitoba. For 3 years I worked as a Senior Research Assistant to the Canada Research Chair in Urban Change & Adaptation, both as an undergrad and after completion of my BA. Projects we were involved with included: studying refugee housing issues, evaluating the Provincial Nominee Program, challenging the anti-panhandling by-law in Winnipeg, and regulating the payday loan industry in Manitoba. Fun times! I came to Western as a Masters student and upgraded to PhD after my first Masters year. I am currently a SSHRC CGS Doctoral Scholarship holder. I finished Comps in June 2011 after which I have been working as a Canadian Policy Network (CPNet) intern and preparing my PhD proposal. The United Way of Toronto and I are extending our partnership that was developed within the CPNet internship program that will involve further data analysis as part of my doctoral program.

**17:05-17:25**

**Chris Taylor**, PhD candidate, History Department. “Protecting Whites: Colour, Class, and Sex in 18th and 19th Century Barbados”



Christopher Stuart Taylor is currently a doctoral candidate at Western University in History and Migration & Ethnic Relations (MER). His dissertation, “Flying Fish in the Great White North: Black Barbadians in Canada, 1940-1967” examines the Island’s early to mid-twentieth century social, political, and economic climate, and how it influenced the emigration of Black Barbadians. The work discusses the political nature of Barbadian emigration and racialized Canadian immigration policies. The thesis argues overpopulation, and a highly educated population seeking socioeconomic advancement abroad, facilitated transnational migration. Christopher also focuses on issues of multiculturalism, immigration, race and ethnicity, Black Canadian history, Caribbean history, slavery in the Americas, the African and Black Diaspora, and Black identity.

**17:25-17:45**

**Stephen Lin**, PhD candidate, Sociology Department. “Exploring Relationship Dynamics: the Case of Vietnamese Migrant Caregivers in Taiwanese Households”



Stephen Lin is a PhD candidate from the department of Sociology. His research interests include gender and migration, transnational family and elder care arrangement in Asian society. He is finishing up his dissertation and planning to do collaborated work with scholars who work in the similar area of research.

**17:45-18:00**

Final discussion and suggestions for next year

**18:00-20:00**

**MER end of the year reception**, Social Science Building, room 3036 (Faculty and staff lounge).

## Abstracts

### **Melissa Stachel**, PhD candidate, Anthropology Department. “Representations of Somalis in the North American Media: The Effects of Constructions of 'Risk' on Somali Youth”

In this paper I challenge the predominant discourse of Somali children and youth as ‘at risk’ or ‘the risk’ (see also Boyden and Mann 2005) and argue that the focus on youth’s experiences with interpersonal violence hides the fact that youth react to their marginalization in creative and complex ways. In this paper, I attempt to use the media as a site to examine how geo-politics, specifically the politics of representation, affects the everyday experiences of Somali youth in educational spaces. Throughout this paper, I argue that the representations of Somalis as perpetrators or victims of violence in the media have politicized Somali female and male bodies leading Somali youth to be recipients of routine and interpersonal forms of violence. For some youth, they have moments when they become agents of violence by fighting or joining gangs. Nonetheless, the majority of Somali youth resist violence and find spaces of belonging. This study is based on two years of preliminary research and sixteen months of ethnographic fieldwork with Somali youth and their families in Kitchener-Waterloo and Toronto, Ontario and Minneapolis, Minnesota. This paper draws on interviews I conducted with Somali youth, parents, and community leaders as well as participant-observation with Somali youth, and a media analysis of the representations of Somali bodies in Canadian and American newspapers.

### **Reena Shah**, PhD candidate, Sociology Department. “Emigration of Immigrant’s from Canada. Who, When and Why?”

Has economic instability in North America increased the likelihood of emigration of foreign born from Canada? This study utilizes longitudinal immigration database (IMDB) for indirect estimation of emigration of the foreign born individuals from Canada and to understand who are emigrating, and the reasons for, and determinants of, out-migration through statistical analysis of demographic and economic characteristics of the emigrants. The results show that overall, 12 percent of immigrants aged 18 to 65 years who landed (permanent resident) between 1980 and 2006 and have filed at least one tax return have emigrate from the Canada within 16 years of their arrival. Highly skilled immigrants, admitted under the skilled worker or business class category and those with below average income are more likely to emigrate from Canada. Further, while immigrants from India least likely to leave the country, more than 30 percent of working age immigrants from the USA and Australia and 20 percent from Hong Kong left the country. Further, immigrants residing in Atlantic regions and territories have higher rates of emigration. Canadian provinces provide assortment of facilities for settlement of immigrants and their emigration from the country raises the concern regarding the effectiveness of the selection process. Study compares the characteristics of emigrants and discusses the reasons of increasing transnational movements among certain group of immigrants from certain provinces.

### **Johnathan Osborne**, “Immigrants in Toronto’s Inner Suburban, High-Rise Apartments: Analysis of the United Way of Toronto’s Vertical Poverty Data”

Private rental housing is an under-researched but important segment of the housing market. Building on United Way of Toronto’s (2011) *Vertical Poverty* research, this paper presents a further analysis of the data collected from the original investigation with a focus on immigrant integration, residential satisfaction, and social networking. The descriptive analysis draws from 2,176 face-to-face interviews that were collected for *Vertical Poverty*’s original sample of private rental market tenants living in Toronto’s inner suburban high-rise apartment buildings. Results focus on immigrant housing circumstances by length of time in Canada and categorizes participants into very recent immigrants (< 5 years in Canada), recent (5-10 years), longer term (10+ years), and the Canadian-born. Findings are presented according to socio-demographic profiles of the sample, spatial concentrations, mobility, satisfaction with housing, and social networks. Like the original research, this study confirms and reinforces the importance of older suburban rental housing in Toronto’s overall housing mix. Accordingly, this paper recommends that policy for this segment of the housing market include protection of the stock, a greater appreciation for the role of rental tenure, multi-level integration of immigration and housing policy, and improvements to the social environment of high-rise buildings and neighbourhoods where they are located.

### **Chris Taylor**, PhD candidate, History Department. “Protecting Whites: Colour, Class, and Sex in 18th and 19th Century Barbados”

Poor White women and Black men became the physical demarcation between societal miscegenation and a threat to ideological and physical Barbadian “Whiteness”. White women were the “biological reproducers of whiteness...critical to the maintenance and reproduction of the cultural boundaries of whiteness”. Barbadian colonial authorities attempted to regulate the sexual autonomy and freedom of Poor White women, and their “perceived sexual and social unruliness distinguished them as a potential threat to white hegemony”. Cecily Jones argued Poor White women’s “social class and socio-sexual behaviour led to their constitution as “not quite white” women”. Poor White women could not rely on support from their White male counterparts and thus worked for themselves in such occupations as prostitution.

Poor White women were subject to class-based gendered and “racial” divisions. Denied “White” agency and the opportunity for social mobility within the White social hierarchy, their sexuality became an objectified commodity. Poor Whites were socio-economically inferior and “not quite white”, but their physical and social proximity to Blacks and “Blackness” challenged the fallacious and ideological boundaries of “Whiteness”. Colonial authorities thus instituted such programmes as vocational schools for Poor White women as a means of controlling miscegenation and protecting White supremacy. The prohibition of illicit interracial – Poor White female and Black male – sexual liaisons was impossible, but Barbadian legislature excluded the human offspring of these relationships from full and equal participation in society. Those “whose original Extract shall be proved to have been from a Negro,” were excluded from voting or testifying against Whites.

### **Stephen Lin**, PhD candidate, Sociology Department. “Exploring Relationship Dynamics: the Case of Vietnamese Migrant Caregivers in Taiwanese Households”

This paper makes conceptual and empirical contribution to the study of domestic care work. The analysis focuses on social and power dynamics in families hiring a foreign worker who provides around-the-clock care to the dependent elder. To better understand the occurrence of and changes in those dynamics, a two-tier analytical approach is employed. First, with the presence of the foreign caregiver, family care becomes predicated upon a triangulated relationship, one that incorporates the positionality and perspectives of three parties: the employee (migrant caregiver), the employer (the adult child or relative of the care receiver) and the care receiver (the elderly cared by the migrant caregiver). This unit of analysis reveals how the interconnectedness of those three parties produces complex interpersonal relationships in the context of family care.

The dyadic relationship contributes to a second tier of analysis. It helps to discern the relationship dynamics specifically occurring between two parties, such as conflicts, intimacies, and fictive kinship relations. It also helps to disclose the power dynamics in labour relations. In this regard, I borrowed the concept of ‘boundary work’ (Lamont 1992:11) to discuss how the Taiwanese employers define and redefine their status hierarchy and how manage employer-employee relationship with their Vietnamese caregivers in the private household. With the two-tier analysis, I argue that the foreign caregiver presents a new social ‘dimension’ that expands the pre-existing family caregiving relationship (as seen in chapter five); this dimension complexifies the family tie by creating both intimacies as well as tensions which are intertwined within both triadic and dyadic caregiving dynamics.