

**Call for Papers**  
Workshop for Junior Researchers and  
Ph.D. Candidates



Transatlantic Graduate Research Program  
Berlin – New York

**Urban Street Vending:  
Economic Resistance, Integration or Marginalization?**

May 15 -16 , 2009, Technical University Berlin

Urban street vending exists in various distributive forms and includes numerous products: From the mobile selling of food from bikes or trays, more stabile vending practices from carts, to street table vending, for instance, of books, CDs and apparel. The selling practices in public space vary tremendously depending on the particular country, city and neighborhood, affecting the sellers' networks, labor conditions and daily routines. The vendors' backgrounds are generally equally diverse. In Germany and the United States, the two focus countries of our workshop, the majority either have a migrant background and/or are people of color.

In a public space that is on the one hand designed to promote effective traffic and on the other hand aimed at regulated consumption and leisure, street vendors are frequently faced with harassment and restrictions. In contrast, there are also policies that facilitate access to street entrepreneurialism for certain groups (such as war veterans) – whereby street vending can also be understood as a depository for those marginalized from the formal labor market. As an alternative source for neighborhood-specific goods or an economic entry that does not require extensive capital, urban street selling can also foster social mobility and local economies.

In response to the so-far scarce research on street vending, this workshop – considering the underlying dimensions of race, class and gender – will focus on its economic conceptualizations, urban visions, cultural potentials and political challenges.

In a comparative approach, focusing on the German and American metropolis – but also considering selling modes in other cities worldwide – we seek to problematize street vending as a practice that is at the same time tolerated, restricted and promoted by public policies.

**In particular, we would like to examine:**

- \* The economic framing of street vending: Can we talk about an informal or illicit economy? Moreover, do notions like ethnic and niche economy apply to the urban selling practices?

- \* Contemporary and past vending practices: What are the daily routines of economic survival, labor and entrepreneurship of different vendors in different cities? How have products, vendors and clients changed in certain vending locations over the past decades?
- \* The conflict between street vending as a practice of resistance, integration or marginalization: Does street vending furthers the democratization of public space as well as alternative economies, or does it lead to an exclusion and stigmatization of particular groups?
- \* The use of public space: What can be considered an appropriate use of public space for vending purposes, both from the entrepreneur's and authorities' perceptive?
- \* To what extent does street selling in American cities contributes to building alternative public spheres (for instance a black public sphere in Harlem)?
- \* The relations between vending locations, types of products, clients and vendors: To what extent can vending spaces and economies be considered as racialized?
- \* Representations of street economics: How do different kinds of media deal with the topic? What kind of images of the profession and its people are mediated?

### **Keynotes**

The workshop offers internationally perspectives on street economics research, featuring keynote presentations by

**Mark Naison**, Professor of History and African-American Studies at Fordham University, New York, USA

**Alfonso Morales**, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, USA

**Kathrin Wildner**, Professor of Economic Geography at Viadrina University, Frankfurt/Oder, Germany

**Peter Herrle**, Professor of Architecture and Urban Development at the Technical University of Berlin, Germany (to be confirmed)

### **Workshop format**

The workshop aims at facilitating intense dialogue and exchange among doctoral students and junior scholars interested in the research on street economics. This will be reflected in the amount of time in the program allocated to discussion in a constructive, supportive setting. Participants have the opportunity to give 15-minute presentations introducing their research with subsequent discussion or to participate as a discussant without giving a presentation. There will be a maximum of 20 participants. Workshop language is English.

## **Papers**

We invite papers presenting theoretical and/or empirical contributions from a variety of methodological and disciplinary perspectives on street economics, regarding one of the questions above.

### **Submitted papers should**

- \* be directly related to one of the major topics of the workshop
- \* present current research

Papers should not exceed 2,500 words and include an abstract of no more than 300 words. It is expected that selected papers will be published in some form after the workshop.

### **Application for presenters / discussants**

Presenters: Please submit a short CV and a less than 300 word proposal in English for your presentation.

Discussants: Please submit a short description of your background and motivation to participate in the workshop.

Please send in applications **no later than 22nd February 2009** to the following address: **streetvending@metropolitanstudies.de**. Applicants will be notified via e-mail by mid-March 2009.

The conference will take place at the Center for Metropolitan Studies, Technical University Berlin, Ernst-Reuter-Platz 7, 10587 Berlin, Germany. The conference language is English. The participation fee will be 15 €.

Unfortunately, the Center for Metropolitan Studies cannot offer travel grants. Travel and accommodation expenses are responsibility of individual participants. However, we can support you with recommendations and information regarding your stay in Berlin.

### **Organizers**

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