

New Faces at the PSTC



2020-2021

Faculty



Jennifer Candipan

Assistant Professor of Sociology (incoming January 2021)

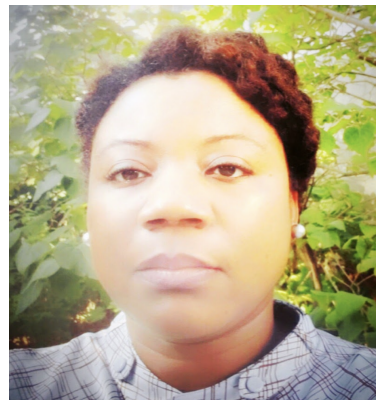
Jennifer's work is guided by understanding connections between people and places, and how policies produce or alleviate persisting trends in inequality. Her broad research interests are in stratification, urban sociology, and the sociology of education, with specific interests in how social and spatial contexts, like neighborhoods and schools, shape opportunities and produce racial/ethnic, health, and economic inequality.



Rachel Franklin

Professor of Geographical Analysis, Newcastle University, UK
PSTC Faculty Affiliate

Rachel is a population geographer working on depopulation and shrinking cities, spatial inequality, and the sources and impacts of local demographic change. In both research and teaching she specializes in integrating spatial methods and the social sciences, especially demography. She is currently professor of geographical analysis at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom and before that spent eight years at Brown affiliated with the PSTC and S4. While at Newcastle she has continued as a member of the PSTC community, and we reintroduce (and welcome her formally!) as a Faculty Affiliate. Unable to travel home to the US this year, she has sublimated the homesickness with a lot of baking, reading, and a truly epic hiking tour of Mont Blanc with the family.



Diana Grigsby-Toussaint

Associate Professor of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Associate Professor of Epidemiology

Diana joined the School of Public Health in Fall 2019 as an Associate Professor of Behavioral and Social Sciences. As a social epidemiologist, her research seeks to capture complex processes in the food, social and built environments to facilitate a better understanding of their influence on what has been coined the three pillars of health: diet, physical activity and sleep. She is particularly interested in vulnerable (e.g., low income) and racial/ethnic populations across various stages of human development. Her work is grounded primarily in theoretical approaches from epidemiology (documenting determinants and distribution of risk in populations), nutrition (processes by which individuals obtain and utilize food) and geography (the role of place in shaping health risk). In addition to exploring non-communicable disease risk among vulnerable populations in the US, she is also exploring the impact of the nutrition transition on health status in Ecuador and Uganda. She loves traveling with her family, with pre-pandemic trips to the Great Wall of China and Machu Picchu.



Megan Ranney

Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine, Associate Professor of Health Services, Policy and Practice

Megan's research focuses on the overlap between violence, technology, and mental health, with a focus on the lived experiences of adolescents. She is particularly interested in the ways that technology use shapes both exposure to and resilience in the face of youth violence. In this pandemic moment, she is also increasingly studying the use of technology to identify and mitigate effects of COVID on social, emotional, and physical health. As the founding director of the Brown-Lifespan Center for Digital Health, she is also interested in helping to grow collaborations on technology-related research across campus and with our academic medical center. As a PSTC faculty associate, she looks forward to co-exploring these issues with other faculty and developing innovative research proposals together.



Maria Steenland

Assistant Professor of Population Studies (Research)

Maria's research uses econometric methods to evaluate maternal and reproductive health programs and policies, with a particular focus on Medicaid policy. Her current research examines the impact of changes in Medicaid payments for contraception, and Medicaid coverage eligibility, on postpartum health care use and health outcomes. Maria enjoys making and eating desserts (tarte tatin, flan, galette), the beach, and listening to her fiancé sing to their cats in Spanish.

Postdoctoral



H. Jacob Carlson

Postdoctoral Research Associate

Jake is an urban and political sociologist, focused on democracy, housing, and changing cities. His current research examines the various causes and consequences of gentrification and displacement - and the relationships between the two. He recently completed his PhD at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, and spends part of his time in Brooklyn. He likes gardening, getting lost, and making fancy cocktails.



Samuel Kye

Postdoctoral Research Associate

Sam is a sociologist whose research examines racial inequality in the metropolitan United States. His primary work involves analysis of both U.S. Census and micro-level data to understand how and why residential segregation persists. His other technical projects have examined—and sought to improve—the methods researchers use to assess neighborhood change and stability. He has recently enjoyed trying to copycat his favorite takeout recipes as he cooks and fries his way through the pandemic. Please feel free to send him your favorite recipes!



Sonia Rupcic

Postdoctoral Fellow

Sonia is a legal and medical anthropologist and an Africanist, whose work explores the intersection of gender, ethnicity and harm. Her current project examines how survivors of sexual violence seek aid and recognition under a racialized system of legal pluralism in post-apartheid South Africa. She is a trained fire-eater and loves private room karaoke.



John Sullivan

Postdoctoral Research Associate

John is a social demographer who studies residential segregation, residential mobility and aging. His current work explores the effects of Hurricane Katrina on the mortality and migration of residents of New Orleans, historical trends in residential segregation by age and by race, and long-term patterns of neighborhood population succession. He is also interested in administrative records data infrastructure for the study of residential mobility and segregation. John lives in Los Angeles, CA where he is the Administrator of the UCLA branch of the US Census Bureau's Federal Statistical Research Data Center network. He is originally from St. Paul, MN and enjoys making bookmarks and taking wilderness canoe trips.

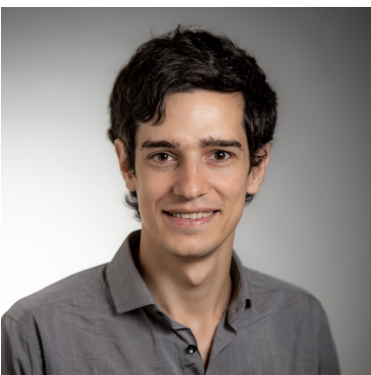
Predoctoral Trainees



Samantha Brady

Sociology

Samantha is interested in the societal and economic implications of an aging and increasingly multi-generational national workforce. She is interested in examining the evolving conception of retirement across generations and the role of employment in later life. Samantha enjoys running, inventing and cooking vegan dishes, watching classic movies and exploring New England with her puppy.



Santiago Hermo

Economics

Santiago's research interests include labor, urban and development economics. He is currently involved in several research projects about the effects of minimum wage policies on local rents, the differential impact of the ongoing pandemic recession across regions with different minimum wage levels, and the effect of education expansion in the development of Argentina in the period 1869-1914. More broadly, he is interested in the determinants of wage and well-being inequality, including skills, labor-market imperfections, and urban amenities. In the past, he has studied the determinants of the recent evolution of the wage structure in Argentina. Outside academia, he enjoys practicing and watching sports: while a fan of soccer, he has gained an increasing appreciation for basketball after he moved to the US.



Alison Lodermeier

Economics

Ali's research interests include development economics and the role of gender in labor markets in the developing world. Her ongoing work focuses on how polygamy influences female labor market outcomes in West Africa. She is originally from Wisconsin and enjoys traveling, hiking, and buying too much coffee.



William Lodge II

Public Health

William is interested in developing and testing evidence-based HIV prevention and treatment interventions in low-resource settings. He is specifically interested in using mixed-methods research to understand the intersection of health inequities and various psychosocial and contextual factors that drive behavior and risk. He's currently working on a project to test the efficacy of a behavioral intervention in improving Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) uptake, adherence, and persistence among people who inject drugs. William enjoys watching Netflix and making and eating a charcuterie and cheese board.



Ruchi Mahadeshwar

Economics

Ruchi is a PhD student in economics whose research interests lie in applied microeconomics questions, particularly in developing countries. Her current projects include assessing the impacts of Chinese investment in Zambia and an HIV self-testing intervention amongst sex workers in Kenya. She is also exploring how anticipatory beliefs can shape voting and vaccination decisions in the US. She grew up in Dubai, Toronto, and Chicago and enjoys dancing, indoor cycling, and any dessert with caramel.



Marquisele Mercedes

Public Health

Marquisele is broadly interested in weight stigma's connection to the conceptualization and promotion of health in medical care, research, policy, and public health institutions and initiatives. Her analysis of these relationships are heavily influenced by fat studies and scholarship on race/ism. She is currently working on a project for the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, compiling every long-term care and life insurance policy that does not discriminate by weight. In her spare time, Marquisele enjoys writing about fat politics, playing poker with her husband, eating Dominican street food, and FaceTiming her sister in the Bronx.



Argenis Hurtado Moreno

Anthropology

Argenis is a scholar-activist who focuses his anthropological inquiries on topics of migration, gender, race, kinship, social movements, and media. He wrote his thesis for Oregon State University's Applied Anthropology program based on ethnographic research conducted with immigrant mothers in the US. This multimodal-multisensory ethnography explores the relationship between undocumented mothers and their model-immigrant children, including how US immigration policies influence their everyday decisions -- he hopes to expand on this subject. In his spare time, Argenis appreciates kayaking, hiking, running, reading, cooking, and practicing photography.



Geetika Nagpal

Economics

Geetika's research focuses on how urbanization policies shape cities. Her ongoing projects focus on transport infrastructure investment in the US and the effect of land-use regulations in developing countries. She enjoys traveling, hiking, cooking and taking long walks.



Michael Neubauer

Economics

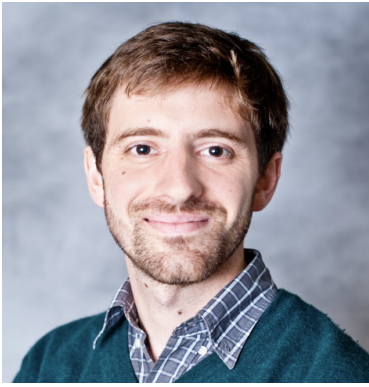
Mike is interested in the development of rural economies, especially in China and India. His current research examines how different aspects of governance in Indian villages influence villagers' willingness to pay for, or become involved in, projects to mitigate climate change. More broadly, he wants to study the consequences of rapid urbanization and development for rural populations. He enjoys listening to baseball, trying to read Chinese, and being extremely mediocre at both piano and tennis.



Sergei Pankratev

Economics

Sergei is a PhD in Economics student at Brown. His research interests are Economic Growth and Development, Cultural Economics, Political Economy and Behavioral Economics. Currently, he is working on the projects of Historical Gender Gap and Agriculture, and on Deep Roots of Preferences for Redistribution. Before Brown, he graduated with a BSc in Economics from Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Russia.



Juan Pedro Ronconi

Economics

Juan's research interests include development economics, political economy, and comparative development. His current work exploits football rivalries in Latin America to investigate the evolution of interpersonal trust in a context of social division/polarization. Among other things, he is also studying the determinants of long-term orientation. He grew up in the suburbs of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and in his free time he enjoys playing sports and going into nature.



Patrick Shaw

Sociology

Patrick is broadly interested in using quantitative methods to study social problems. He plans to situate his research at the intersection of education, labor, migration, and the environment with a focus on emerging economies, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to beginning his doctoral work, Patrick was a statistician with a research organization and spent several years teaching middle and high school math and science. He also enjoys playing (rookie league) ice hockey, running, cooking, and playing music.



Subadevan

Sociology

Subadevan is a second year student in the sociology department with broad research interests in the fields of political economy, and economic, political, cultural and urban sociologies. He is interested in three main interconnected areas of inquiry: 1) how global and national processes of change reverberate at national, local and city scales and across social groups, 2) Governance struggles at the sub-national and local levels, and 3) the construction of markets and their impacts across social groups. He is currently developing a research project trying to link attitudinal changes towards neoliberalism with the expansion and recession of social welfare provision in the Global South. In his free time he enjoys reading, cooking, practicing martial arts, and enjoying good coffee and beer.



Bishnu Thapa

Public Health

Bishnu is a third year PhD student in the Department of Health Services, Policy and Practice at the School of Public Health. He is from Nepal. He is interested in health systems and policy issues in low and lower middle income countries (LMICs) in South/South-East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Bishnu enjoys hiking, running, soccer, and travelling.



Amanda Votta

Anthropology

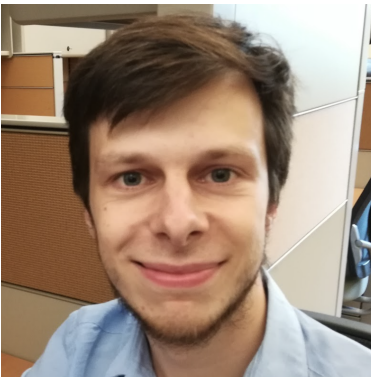
Amanda is interested in how chronic pain sufferers navigate opioid prescribing regimes in light of changes to policy and law around opioid prescribing, as well as how these changes have transformed the daily lives of chronic pain sufferers. Her current work explores how chronic pain sufferers do—or don't—access opioids for pain management, and how they are organizing to alter opioid prescribing policy and law they see as detrimental to their well-being. Previously, her work was based in the Boston area, but is moving to Detroit. She enjoys making and listening to music, going to record and book shops, travelling (when possible!), and drinking a lot of tea.



Alison Weber

Public Health

Alison is a PhD student in Behavioral and Social Health Sciences in the School of Public Health. She is interested in improving maternal health outcomes and erasing health disparities, particularly for Black mothers in the United States. Her work is in Cape Town, South Africa, where she supports projects that aim to improve postpartum HIV treatment adherence and retention, and in the United States, where she is evaluating maternal health disparities. She enjoys gardening and spending time outdoors with her toddler and puppy.



Alexander Yarkin

Economics

Alex's research interests are in the broad fields of economic growth and development, political economy, culture, and population. He uses theoretical models and data analysis to better understand the roots of underdevelopment, variation in political institutions, and sources of cultural differences across the globe. One of his projects explores how infectious diseases, such as Ebola and Covid-19, change the salience of ethnic identities and shape inter-group attitudes. Another project analyses the spillovers of political attitudes across borders along ancestral/ethnic lines. A third project is a mix of economics and anthropology: it explores the process of long-run cultural drift and selection in the Bantu-speaking populations in SSA. He enjoys travelling, reading about anthropology and history, and playing soccer, chess, and other sports.



Rachel Yorlets

Public Health

Rachel's work evaluates social determinants of infectious diseases. Her ongoing research investigates sociodemographic characteristics and health care utilisation patterns among persons living with HIV in a cohort of circular migrants in northeast South Africa. She is interested in understanding the largely unknown impact of migration patterns on HIV status and care, with the ultimate goal of informing migrant-relevant health policy. She enjoys barre, tennis, and reading medical non-fiction.

Project Team



Veli Murat Andirin

Research Associate, Economics (Prof. Jesse Shapiro)

Veli's research interests include development economics, public economics, and political economy. Currently, he is working on a project that investigates economic and political motivations of investments in urban transit systems. He's also interested in how institutions shape economic behavior and growth. In his free time, he likes reading, listening to music, and walking.

Staff



Corey Gelb-Bicknell

Communications Aide

Corey is a sophomore pursuing a degree in Economics-Applied Mathematics. He is interested in combining data and behavioral economics with creativity and writing in order to influence decision-making and support policy development. In his free time, he loves long-distance running, music production, and doing improv comedy.