

The Urban Planet

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On Park Street¹

By: Mary Daly ‘15 and Xiangming Chen

Park Street, in Trinity College’s neighborhood of Frog Hollow, is a distinctive commercial street. It is where cultural, commercial, and culinary diversity is seen, smelled, felt, and certainly tasted. Here is where globalization and local community come together, where immigrants from different regions of the world work alongside the native-born, and the national dishes of foreign cuisines, from pizza to pupusas, become local attractions.

According to Angel Sierra who owns and operates the successful Hispana Vision on Park Street, “the street is the Hispanic hub of the state, where you can find A-Z, food, bakeries, tailors, bodegas, jewelry shops, dentist offices, and pharmacies.” Angel is one of several business owners Mary Daly ‘15 has interviewed for her senior thesis in Urban Studies this semester. Informed by the new book² co-edited by Professor Xiangming Chen, Mary is completing an ethnographic study of Park Street. This essay presents our joint reflections on Park Street as we both try to understand the local shop or shopping street as a micro ecosystem of shop owners, shoppers, and local residents shaped by globalization, immigration, and gentrification in changing cities everywhere.

One can get a sense of how well a shopping street is doing by looking at its commercial vacancy rate. Park Street is in the single digits, compared to downtown’s 42 percent. The street is lively any time of the day and its vibrancy trumps Hartford’s Central Business District. This shopping street is filled with almost all locally owned stores stretching from Park Terrace to Main Street. The area provides a thriving environment for Latino immigrants and other dwellers from nearby and afar to not only buy distinctive Latino products, but also meet their everyday needs. Despite the perception of Park Street as unsafe or unwelcoming, it offers an inclusive community for Latino immigrants locally and regionally. Visitors from the broad region, in conjunction with local shoppers, sustain a pedestrian-friendly small-business economy. They make the shops on Park Street the kind of socio-commercial spaces that reflect the fabric of everyday life in Frog Hollow.

(cont. pg. 2)



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On Park Street

(cont'd from pg. 1) Similar to many local shopping streets or areas, Park Street has experienced ups and downs. The I-84 Interstate development through Hartford was detrimental to small businesses in the area, as those who used to travel through Park Street on their way to the Central Business District now bypass the area by taking the highway. The commercial street can no longer reap the benefits from suburban commuters passing through on their way to downtown Hartford. This only exacerbated the physical deterioration of the area starting in the 1960s, a period also defined by the population shift from the French Canadians to Puerto Ricans in the Frog Hollow neighborhood. Following the influx of Puerto Rican population, some community groups were formed to revive and sustain the area as an important commercial corridor in Hartford.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, many revitalization attempts were made by these organizations and proposed to revamp the area. Festivals like the Puerto Rican Parade that went along the street gained some publicity for the area, but many outsiders still felt uneasy about the neighborhood. These conceptions were rooted in the prejudice against the Puerto Rican community and other Latino groups in Hartford and especially on the street, plus gang and drug violence in the area in the early 1990s. To address the perceptions and stereotyping, the dominant Puerto Rican businesses claimed a “moral ownership” of the street by strengthening a community of social bonds. This collective action helped shape Park Street into a leading Latino shopping district in the New England region.

The buildings of no more than four stories along Park Street, coupled with the narrow side streets, create pedestrian walkability and its associated social interactions. The varied facades and dense yet diverse buildings of the shops and other small businesses invite shoppers and local residents to linger and socialize with one another. The lack of easily accessible parking on most blocks around Park Street reinforces pedestrian foot traffic. It allows people to park nearby and walk around. The residents on the contiguous and adjacent streets can easily walk to meet their shopping needs.

A shopping street of this commercial importance and ethnic identity has brought economic and cultural benefits to Hartford. This dense area of commercial activities creates an agglomeration economy whose small businesses generate spillover effects on other businesses due to geographic proximity and Spanish speaking as a lubricant for commercial transactions. The Spanish American Merchants Association (SAMA) whose President is Angel Sierra assists the small businesses on Park Street in getting loans and collaborating to create potential synergy. Organizations like Mi Casa Community Center have emerged due to the concentrated scale and density of Puerto Rican and other Latino businesses and residents. This collective commercial energy spreads to the surrounding streets as local residents shop for their daily needs by walking up and down the street. At the same time, about half of the client base originates from the New England region as shoppers drive in to purchase specialty goods.

To illustrate Park Street further, we highlight the personal journey of Hispana Vision’s owner. Angel Sierra told Mary Daly ‘15, “I was working before at LensCrafters, and everybody that spoke Spanish wanted to see me only, so I had a lot of people waiting for me. I ended up saying wow I should open up my own store.” In 1993, he did just that and started his business in Parkville. In 1999, due to his growing customer base, Angel purchased an abandoned building located at 86 Park Street. With a loan from the Spanish American Merchants Association and a grant from the city, he renovated the building for his new store.

It was Angel’s dream to offer the best in eye care to a diverse population. Early preventive treatment of glaucoma and other ocular diseases has been a cornerstone of his commitment to the community he has served for over 20 years. While the product he provides is a simple pair of eyeglasses, the service he delivers is invaluable--the ability to speak in one's native tongue when talking about something as complicated as a prescription. Today, he employs eight full-time employees, half of whom are from the Frog Hollow area. His business is one of the most successful and busiest inner-city vision-care centers in the state of Connecticut.

Park Street is a vibrant asset to Hartford’s economic landscape and social fabric. Its pedestrian friendly sidewalks, colorful and lively building facades, and cultural diversity contribute to a healthy street-level ecosystem even though it is an ordinary or lower-end business street.

The market imperative of local shopping streets is not, and cannot be, the sole and final arbiter of their survival. These are social spaces, and also a form of cultural heritage that sustains, and is sustained by, generations of city dwellers, both native and immigrants. Local shopping streets confirm the social and cultural embeddedness of economic activity. Though each store owner of any ethnic background acts individually to meet “market forces,” they also act collectively to create a sense of place and community. They are important social actors, offering a priceless “home” to many different people who pass through, and by, their doors.

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CELEBRATING PARTNERSHIPS: CLI'S ANNUAL COMMUNITY PARTNER APPRECIATION EVENT

By: Carlos Espinosa

Director, Trinfo.Cafe Partnerships for Community Learning

We are celebrating the 20th year of the Community Learning Initiative (CLI) that connects Trinity students and faculty members with the various communities of Hartford through reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships. These relationships develop through collaborative College-community projects that are embedded in individual courses across the College curriculum.

On April 21st, CLI is hosting its annual Community Partner Appreciation Event in the Social Science Center for community partners, faculty, and students to reflect and celebrate this year's collaborative work. The event represents the culmination of CLI's programming for the academic year and will include a presentation by Andrea Dyrness, Associate Professor of Educational Studies, about the community learning component in her course, Latinos in Education (EDUC-307), and her sponsorship of the CLI Colloquium (CLIC-299) which led to the creation of the mentoring partnership program at Expeditionary Learning Academy at Moylan School where seven students are enrolled for credit along with three students from her Latinos in Education course. Four students in the CLI Research Fellows program will also be presenting their year long community-based research projects and to close out the event program, a performance from the New Beginnings women's choir, an ensemble with the Judy Dworin Performance Project.

With forty-four community learning courses offered this academic year, CLI courses range from the hard sciences to the arts and from freshman seminars to upper-level courses. CLI is also sponsoring three \$1000 course development grants for faculty to design new or improve existing community learning courses. Finally, the program sponsored ten student researchers and their faculty advisors on eight research projects that directly benefited their community partners. Community Learning Research Fellows work with Trinity faculty advisors to design and carry out a credit-bearing research or creative project in the Hartford area, in partnership with a community member or organizations (such as a school, non-profit agency, or local advocacy group). Projects can be part of a Trinity course, internship, independent study, or a senior thesis. Both student-initiated and student-faculty collaborative projects are welcome and an announcement will be forthcoming in the coming weeks.

For more information about the Community Learning Initiative, please contact Carlos Espinosa at 860-297-4277 or via email at carlos.espinosa@trincoll.edu.



Diana Guay Photography



Diana Guay Photography

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CAPITOL SQUASH CONNECTS HARTFORD CITY YOUTH TO TRINITY SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

Arleigha Cook '16 & Julia Rivera, Manager, Community Relations

IN THE COMMUNITY - OCR

This year, Trinity College has partnered with Capitol Squash, an urban squash program founded in 2010 that provides both squash and academic enrichment to Hartford public school students. With the assistance of the National Urban Squash and Education Association (NUSEA), Capitol Squash has secured additional local funding, expanded its Board of Directors, and entered into a long-term partnership with Trinity College. On February 3, Trinity hosted an open house for Capitol Squash and welcomed Trinity President Joanne Berger-Sweeney to experience the program in action.

The youth development program introduces the sport of squash to students from low-income families while providing those students with mentoring and academic support. The program officially launched in early 2014 with two full-time staff members and 24 elementary school students. Capitol Squash recruits students in fourth and fifth grade at Dr. Michael D. Fox School, a neighborhood school. The participants and Trinity players meet at least three days each week after school for three hours of squash and academic coaching.



Trinity head men's squash coach Paul Assaiante is proud of Trinity's partnership with Capitol Squash. "We're a school with an urban setting," he said. "That's what defines us. Rather than build the walls up, we need to bring them down, and by doing so, we are celebrating students' experience of engaging with the community."

Meg Taylor, the executive director of Capitol Squash, attributes much of the program's success to Trinity students, who play an integral and indispensable role. "Capitol Squash is incredibly fortunate to be partnered with Trinity squash," she said. "Our students are mentored, tutored, coached, and inspired by elite squash players and coaches who epitomize what Capitol Squash is aiming to achieve."

Hartford students are selected to participate based on various factors, including effort, parental involvement, teacher references, athletic ability, character, and attitude. The program intends to keep students consistently involved from fourth grade and on through high school and college. Just recently, female participants from Capitol Squash competed in their first ever squash tournament at the University Club in New York. The 4th and 5th graders also had their first experience being away from home, riding a train, experiencing Times Square and walking the halls of the storied University Club.

SAYING THANK YOU! TRANSITIONS AND NEW BEGINNINGS

By: Carlos Espinosa

Director, Trinfo.Cafe Partnerships for Community Learning



With Spring upon us, change is in the air. Isabella Elizalde, Trinfo's graduate assistant is completing her masters program this summer and will be moving onto new adventures.

Isabella has been a tremendous asset in the two years she's worked at Trinfo. She has been instrumental in expanding Trinfo's joint programming with Trinity student organizations and external community partners. She's recruited a fantastic team of Trinity student workers who are helping residents with their technology questions, developing new computer literacy workshops for adults and children, revising existing curriculum, developing new online video tutorials to compliment our written material, and teaching in English and Spanish at Trinfo and at locations throughout the neighborhoods surrounding the College. And through her leadership, the community garden at Trinfo has grown to include Trinity faculty, staff, and students, as well as community residents.

We will miss her animal print sweaters and her delicious baked goods. But most of all we will miss her interpretive dance recitals of events that have occurred at Trinfo. Isabella is not just a huge personality, she is the thread that binds all things Trinfo together – from her work with Trinity students to the relationships she's built with residents and community organizations. And with mixed emotions we wish her only the best as she pursues the next big challenge in her life.

With Isabella leaving, the process of recruiting new candidates has begun. We are seeking a graduating senior who speaks Spanish, has a deep commitment for engaging the Hartford community, and is interested in continuing their education through one of the College's graduate programs.

We are currently accepting applications for a graduate assistant for the remainder of the semester. For more information, please contact Carlos Espinosa at 860-297-4277 or via email at carlos.espinosa@trincoll.edu.



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HARTFORD AT TRINITY

INVESTIGATING SCHOOL CHOICE AT THE STATE, CITY, AND SCHOOL LEVELS

Research presentation and discussion

Tuesday, April 7th, 2015

12:15 – 1:15pm (common hour)

Hallden Hall, Trinity College

Open to the public — Light lunch buffet for the first 30 guests

Moderator: Madeline Perez, University of St. Joseph

Presenters:

Choice Watch: Diversity and Access in Connecticut's
School Choice Programs
Robert Cotto, Trinity College

Who Chooses? A Comparison of Magnet School Lottery Applicants and
Non-Applicants
Stephen Spirou '15, Diane Zannoni, and Jack Dougherty, Trinity

'Untouchable Carrots'?: Marketing School Choice
and Realities in Hartford's Inter-district Magnet Program
Mira Debs, Yale University

Sponsored by the Educational Studies Program

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DR. ULADZIMIR KANANOVICH VISITING SCHOLAR



I am a Belarusian scholar of medieval and early modern East-Central European history. I received my Master’s degree in medieval history from Central European University in Budapest and my doctorate from the Institute of History at the Belarusian Academy of Sciences in Minsk. I worked as a researcher at the Institute during 1994-2004. Then I moved to the National Historical Archives of Belarus as a senior archivist. Later I taught courses on the history of culture and socio-political thought at the Belarusian State Pedagogical University. More recently, I was an associate professor of humanities at the A.M. Shirikov Institute of Modern Knowledge in Minsk. My current research focuses on favoritism and trust in medieval and early modern society in the context of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Speaking six languages, I have held post-doctoral and visiting scholar positions in Poland, Germany, and France,.

Thanks to the generous support from the Institute of International Education’s Scholar Rescue Fund and the Scott Johnson Memorial Fund at Trinity College, I am able to spend the calendar year of 2015 as a visiting scholar at the Centre for Urban and Global Studies (CUGS) with an affiliation with the Department of History. This gives me an excellent opportunity not only to carry out my research and complete a monograph but also to teach at Trinity. I am planning to offer two new courses in fall 2015, one titled “The History of Urbanism in Eastern Europe,” and the other “Ukraine and Belarus in Historical Perspective.” While a historian of the Middle Ages and early modern times in East-Central Europe, I am interested in connecting my research expertise and teaching experience to the urban and global curricular focus. I am looking forward to interacting with a variety of Trinity faculty members and students across a number of humanity and social science disciplines.

STAFF

JULIA RIVERA MANAGER, OFFICE OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS



Julia Rivera has joined the staff at Trinity College, and is affiliated with the Center for Urban and Global Studies, as the new Community Relations Manager. Julia will have a consistent presence in the Hartford community. She will pursue further opportunities for collaboration between students and faculty at Trinity and community stakeholders at the neighborhood and city level to capitalize on the rich resources that both the College and the community possess. Originally from Silver Spring, Maryland, Julia graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in Sociology, Economics, and Urban Studies from Trinity in 2014. While at Trinity, she worked as a Student Admissions Associate and for the Sports Communications Office. Julia was also a member of Trinity’s varsity field hockey team and she continues her athletic career today as a member of the Puerto Rican National Team. This fall, she worked as a consultant for Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA) before returning to the College as a staff member. She is excited to be back on campus and will continue her education at Trinity as a graduate student in public policy.

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ANDREW L. HOUSMAN, '17



A member of the class of 2017, an alumnus of the Cities Program, and President of the Charleston House for Interfaith Cooperation, Andrew is interested in researching cities across the globe from an historical perspective. As a double major in History and Religion, he likes to analyze how dense urban centers have evolved throughout time as a result of the interactions between social groups. He hopes working with CUGS will give him a hands-on experience that will accompany the scholarly work he carries out in his classes. Andrew was born and raised in Staten Island, the forgotten borough of New York City, and attended high school in Brooklyn. His travels

throughout what he thinks is America's most densely populated city has influenced his passion for historical urban studies and constantly informs his opinions on global urban issues. He is extremely proud of where he comes from and thinks the Big Apple is the great city in the world, despite its issues and the fact that people constantly tell him Staten Island is not New York (it actually is). Andrew also loves playing bass guitar and listens to a lot of punk rock.

TRINITY STUDENT URBAN RESEARCH WEBSITE LAUNCHED

By: Xiangming Chen

Dean and Director, Center for Urban and Global Studies

We are very pleased and proud to introduce a new [WordPress site](#) under the CUGS website for showcasing a variety of urban research and engagement projects and experiences of Trinity students in Hartford with connections and extensions to other American and world cities. The initial and growing content on this site confirms and demonstrates the critical importance, varied opportunities, and beneficial learning outcomes for Trinity students at a prominent city-based liberal arts college. We hope you will enjoy visiting this site and come back again as its content and reach continues to grow and draw more Trinity students to be engaged with our home city of Hartford. This site was designed and developed by three sophomores: Thomas Rice '17 (an Urban Studies and Political Science double-major), Andrew Housman '17 (a History and Religion double-major), and Ellen Liu '17 (an Urban Studies and Political Science double-major) who have been working as research assistants at CUGS since spring 2014. The students are grateful to David Tatem in Information Technology for his guidance and advice during the development of the website.

BIKING IN AND AROUND HARTFORD

By Alex Perez, '17



I am a sophomore at Trinity College. Back home in Chicago I would frequently ride my bicycle to navigate around the city. I personally always felt safe riding around Chicago. I feel like being able to ride your bicycle safely in a city allows you to connect more with your surroundings. When I arrived at Trinity, I did not know much about Hartford other than it was a small city on the east coast. I decided to bring my bicycle to campus and explore what Hartford had to offer. As I explored around the city, I saw issues with the number of bike lanes around the city, the conditions of these bike lanes, and very few people ride their bicycles. I have been working on my project to develop a bike map where the Hartford community can have open access to it. The

goals are to create a bike friendlier city and promote a bigger cycling culture that can give hopefully provide connectivity all across the city and not just the downtown area.

During my freshman year at Trinity, I started to develop a bike map of Hartford with Professor Cameron Douglass from the Environmental Sciences Program. We acquired GIS (Geographic Information System) data from the city of Hartford for their bike lane network, but discovered that the bike lanes currently in place are very disconnected from one another. We decided that in order to have an effective cycling route network in the city bike lanes should be connected to each other, and provide access to regional thoroughfares and existing bike paths. Our map (viewable at <http://arcg.is/1FfQzTI>) connected the bicycle lanes together, along with suggested bike routes that expanded throughout the greater Hartford region. After the map was completed, I realized my project has led to a broader initiative to lobby policy makers and community groups on these issues.

At this point in my project I want to seek feedback from different organizations or professionals who have worked to improve cycling in other places and integrate those ideas to Hartford. All of its residents agree that Hartford is in need of revitalization, and I think that my bike map and our initiative can help increase future development. This is the perfect opportunity to get my project out there as Hartford is planning to build a new baseball stadium and has just started a new dedicated regional bus network (CTfastrak). Governor Malloy's newly announced budget includes \$100 million for transportation planning in the state. Cycling ought to be integrated with improved public transportation to get more people to be active in Hartford. People would be encouraged to ride their bicycles more often and create safer bicycle trips. Cycling has grown in other cities and I want bring that to Hartford and generate accompanying environmental, economic, and health benefits. A stronger cycling culture can bring new life to the city. Life in Hartford can benefit in the long run if my bike map becomes possible; it can bring the connectivity in between communities that it is missing.

CITY HALL MEETING
CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE IN
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Sponsored by:

Trinity College Human Rights and Environmental Sciences Programs, in conjunction with
 Shawn Wooden, City Council President

On April 6, 2015 at 6:00 p.m., Cameron Douglass, Ph.D., Thomas McKenna Meredith '48 Postdoctoral Fellow in Environmental Science, Trinity College and Alex Perez, Trinity College sophomore, will be in Hartford's Council Chambers discussing the cycling infrastructure right here in Hartford, CT. Improving the cycling infrastructure in Hartford can help promote higher cycling usage and safer bike rides for everyone in the community. This presentation will introduce a bike map of Hartford with a connected bike-lane system throughout the city, along with a survey that shows responses and opinions regarding the current cycling infrastructure and conditions. Investing and improving cycling infrastructure has produced economic, health, social, and sustainable benefits in other urban areas, and it is time to get Hartford in the loop in becoming a bike-friendly city. We hope you will join us for this exciting presentation. The presentation will be held at Council Chambers, Hartford City Hall, 550 Main Street.

TRACKING THE ANIMAL(S):
an INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

Hosted by Trinity College
 and sponsored by

the Department of Philosophy, the Trinity Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies, the Human Rights Program, and the Connecticut Humane Society

FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2015

3pm—**Justin Eichenlaub** (Franke Program in Science & Humanities, Yale University)
 “From Road Ecology to Traffic Justice: Humans and Other Animals on the Road”

4pm—**Alexandra Rosati** (Yale University)
 “Decision-Making in Chimpanzees, Bonobos, and Humans”

5:30pm—Reception in Hamlin Hall

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2015

9am—Coffee

10am—**Toby Svoboda** (Fairfield University)
 “Teleology and Animal Flourishing”

11am—**David Alexander Craig** (University of Oregon)
 “Kant’s Animal-Rational Axis”

1:30pm—**Maggie Labinski** (Fairfield University):
 “Veganism as Activism: Feminist Agency and the (Non-Human) Animal”

2:30pm—**Michelle Neely** (Connecticut College)
 “Animal Kin: Pets and the 19th Century Racial Imagination”

4pm—**Kari Weil** (Wesleyan University)
 “The War on Pity in 19th Century France (or Putting Descartes before the Horse)”

5pm—**Michael Naas** (DePaul University)
 “Clothes Make the Man: Plato on the Origins of the Human, Politics, and Philosophy”

We kindly request that you bring pet-food or money to donate to the Connecticut Human Society. Thank you.

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THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR TO THE UN TO SPEAK ON APRIL 1

By: Xiangming Chen

Dean and Director, Center for Urban and Global Studies

The McGill International Studies Fund established by Patricia C. and Charles H. McGill III '63, with the co-sponsorships by the World Affairs Council of CT and United Technologies Corporation, will bring the Chinese Ambassador to the United Nations, his Excellency Liu Jieyi, to Trinity College on April 1. Ambassador Liu will speak on "China and the United Nations" at 4:30 in Washington Room to be followed by a reception in the Wean Terrace Rooms. The lecture is free and open to the public. One of China's top experts on United Nations issues, arms control, and U.S.-China relations, Ambassador Liu has served as the director-general of the Department of International Organizations and Conferences, the Department of Arms Control and Disarmament, and the Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was previously the assistant minister and vice minister of foreign affairs. He has twice served as the president of the United Nations Security Council.

FROM CHINA TO MYANMAR AND JAPAN

By Xiangming Chen

Dean and Director, Center for Urban and Global Studies

This summer CUGS will launch two new summer traveling study programs in Asia. The China summer program "River Cities", which has run continuously for the last six years with extensions to Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, will stretch its footprint to Myanmar this year under with the title "River Cities and Sustainable Development: Facing the Future in China and Myanmar." This program will be co-led by four faculty members (Michael Lestz in History, Joan Morrison in Environmental Science, Beth Notar in Anthropology, and Yipeng Shen in Language and Culture Studies). The program is jointly supported by the Henry Luce Foundation, the O'Neill Asia Cum Laude Endowment, the Thomas China Urban Studies Summer Program Fund, and the Charlotte Riggs Scholarship Fund.

The second program is titled "Seismic Disasters in Japan, Then and Now: Earth, Environment, and Culture" and will be co-led by two faculty members (Jeffrey Bayliss in History and Jonathan Gourley in Environmental Science). This program is also supported by the Henry Luce Foundation with additional support from the Tanaka Student Fund. The two programs are expected to bring over 20 Trinity students to China, Myanmar, and Japan during May and June to conduct field investigations on a variety of historical, social, and environmental issues in varied local contexts.

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We would like to express our sincerest appreciation to everyone who contributed to this issue.

DEADLINES

LEVY GRANTS AND SENIOR PRIZES

April 15

GROSSMAN GRANTS

April 15

For more info, please visit the [CUGS Student Research Page](#).

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urban beat!!

¹ We thank Terry Romero and Julia Rivera for their comments and suggestions on an earlier draft.
² Sharon Zukin, Philip Kasinitz, and Xiangming Chen, editors. "Introduction: Spaces of Everyday Diversity," in *Global Cities, Local Streets* (Routledge, July, 2015). <http://tandf.net/books/details/9781138023932/>