

***One New Jersey:  
Preparing For The Coming Challenge***

**Featured Speakers:**

- Martin Bunzl, Philosophy
- Wolfram Hofer, Landscape Architecture-SEBS
- Anne Piehl, Economics
- Nancy DiTomaso, Rutgers Business School
- Howard Gillette, History-Camden
- Peter Guarnaccia, Human Ecology and Health, Health Care Policy and Aging
- Kathe Newman, Planning and Public Policy
- Robin Leichenko, Geography
- Joel Cantor, Center for State Health Policy
- Lisa L. Miller, Political Science
- Nora Hyland, Education
- Janice Fine, School of Management and Labor Relations



*Professors Bunzl, Guarnaccia, Cantor and Hofer talk informally between sessions*

***Do disparities in health, education, housing, and criminal justice have common roots, or separate origins? From climate change to the subprime mortgage crisis, Rutgers researchers examine New Jersey as a microcosm of how a diverse state experiences and confronts national challenges.***

New Jersey is one of the wealthiest states in the U.S., with a vast regional reach into Philadelphia to the south and New York City to the north. Over the past decades, the state has passed some of the most progressive legislation in the country. Yet New Jersey also continues to have extraordinary pockets of poverty and contains an economic and demographic diversity across its cities, suburbs, exurbs, and rural areas that make for vexing disparities in opportunity, education, housing, criminal justice, health care, and the environment. Building upon a Spring 2008 roundtable discussion on inequities in New Jersey, a Fall 2008 conference at the Center for Race and Ethnicity ("Between Privilege and Poverty: Perspectives on New Jersey Disparities") featured Rutgers scholars from a wide range of fields who explored the ironies and challenges of remedying disparities in New Jersey. Among their conclusions: The state's capacity to meet challenges in education, health care, environmental policy, and criminal justice disparities has been limited by the dynamics of home rule, a system in which municipalities have governmental autonomy. In fact, across its towns, boroughs, and cities, New Jersey has more government per capita than any other state, and its localism stands in the way of the state's capacity to anticipate and respond to economic and social crises.

Rutgers faculty focused on the interconnections between the

seemingly separate areas of housing, education, environmental policy, criminal justice, labor, and law. Speakers highlighted, first of all, how each of these areas has benefited from the state's progressive laws and policies. New Jersey's Mount Laurel decision has required every town to have an allotment of affordable housing. In the area of environment policy, the state aims to achieve an 80 percent reduction rate of greenhouse gases by 2050, as Professor Martin Bunzl, the Director of Rutgers Initiative on Climate Change and Social Policy, noted. In education, New Jersey's Abbott v. Burke (1997, 1998, 2000) decisions, have mandated full-time preschool for all 3 and 4-year olds in 31 low-income school districts. According to Professor Nora Hyland from the Graduate School of Education, as a result of the court's "interventionis[m] in education policy," school enrollment has increased by over 35,000 in 2003, placing New Jersey among the most equitably funded states in the nation. In addition to pointing out these progressive pieces of legislation, however, presenters also called attention to the negative effects of privatization which have grown increasingly marked over the past ten years across sectors of housing, healthcare, environment, and education. Hospital and home foreclosures, along with increased cuts in welfare spending have produced glaring gaps and cracks in the social fabric that cannot be effectively mended by

isolationist local policies. The New Jersey Disparities forum thus tried to grapple with these problems and possibilities generated by New Jersey's complex mix of judicial and legislative progressivism on the one hand and excessive localism on the other.

**FACETS OF THE CURRENT CRISIS — FROM SUBPRIME MORTGAGES TO HEALTH CARE**

As all presenters noted, the current economic crisis raised key challenges for New Jersey's capacity to address its disparities of housing, health, insurance, and labor.



*An urbanist trained as a political scientist, Professor of Urban Planning and Policy Kathe Newman studies how cities change, and why and how these changes affect people of color, women, and the poor. Professor Kathe Newman (Department of Urban Planning and Policy Development) discussed the findings of her study of Newark, pointing to the fact that "lenders sold loans in many communities that were not affordable for borrowers." For years Newark celebrated housing as the city's "economic engine," but now the housing market in Newark as in regions across America has been undermined by the*

aggressive use of loose underwriting and subprime lending.

As a result of the housing crisis in New Jersey's cities and suburbs, the state now faces a 19 percent statewide foreclosure rate (up from just 8 percent in August 2007), the second highest in the country. Newman also spoke of the difficult task of locating the many people who have been displaced from their homes: it is not clear where people go after their homes are foreclosed, although increases in school mobility and in the number of people seeking emergency services suggest that more and more people have been displaced in recent months. Coordinating with the Newark/Urban Essex Foreclosure Taskforce to analyze housing statistics, Newman's ongoing study explores what foreclosures and their effects—from the looting of abandoned homes to the displacement of families—mean “not just at the theoretical level of capital, but at the scale of the block.”



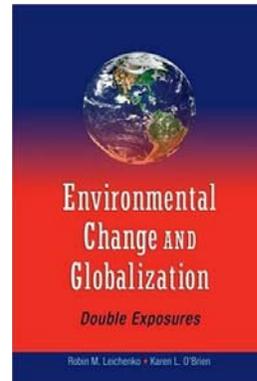
Foreclosed houses line one block in Newark.

Management and Labor Relations Professor Janice Fine focused on another sector of the New Jersey economy. Despite the contributions of immigrants to the state's economy, a number of counties have proposed anti-immigrant ordinances, suggesting that, as Fine put it, “immigration policy is getting made at the local level, in the absence of federal immigration policy that's sensible.” The deregulation of industry, which has permitted reduced rates of companies'

compliance with fair wage, health care and job safety rules, has had a devastating impact on low-wage labor, especially immigrant labor, which comprises a quarter of New Jersey's total workforce.

Other presenters like Geography professor Robin Leichenko and Peter Guarnaccia (Department of Human Ecology/Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research) tackled long-standing inequities in health and the environment. Leichenko discussed the differential effects that climate change-induced natural disasters have had on residents of New Jersey. Hurricane Floyd, for instance, caused extreme damage to poor areas of central New Jersey, largely because inhabitants, such as the immigrant shop-owners whose stores were ruined by flooding, lacked knowledge about the area's climate that would have helped them better prepare and thus limit the damage caused. Funding and research on climate change tends to focus on physical dynamics, Leichenko pointed out, rather than equity questions. Attempting to address this gap, Leichenko called for research that studies the impact of climate change to include nuanced considerations such as, the age-range of inhabitants, number of new immigrants, language ability, “knowledge-base,” and the quality of area infrastructure.

The current economic crisis will have a major impact on access to healthcare, but as Peter Guarnaccia suggested, this is not new – inadequate access has been an ongoing problem faced by the state's large Latino population. Guarnaccia discussed what he called the “Latino Paradox”: though many Latinos who come to the U.S. do so hoping for upward mobility, a lack of access to health care and health



*In this co-authored study which won the 2008 Meridian Award from the Association of American Geographers, Professor Robin Leichenko shows how broader human security concerns including growing inequalities, growing vulnerabilities, and unsustainable rates of development are integrally connected to processes of global change.*

services causes them to “trade their health for the future of their children, who in turn have greater substance abuse and other problems.” Puerto Ricans, in particular—a group who is supposed to bear the benefit of U.S. citizenship—have the lowest mental health among Latinos, Guarnaccia noted. Despite high rates of employment and multiple employment among Latino immigrants, 40 percent of all Latinos and 80 percent of Latino immigrants, lack health insurance. As Guarnaccia's, Newman's, Leichenko's and Fine's discussions made clear, the way we organize our state governance prevents us from dealing with issues in a coherent way.

### BEYOND LOCAL: THE CHALLENGE OF THINKING AND ACTING REGIONALLY

For many Rutgers faculty, one approach that remedies isolationist localism and its consequent inequities involves thinking *regionally* to turn social and economic deficits into opportunities for growth and development; a number of presentations offered examples of this more regional approach. Peter Guarnaccia, for instance, suggested that we need cross-

regional cooperation along the lines of California's agreement with Mexico, which allows citizens of both the U.S and Mexico to take advantage of the differential costs of healthcare across the border. Guarnaccia argued that reducing disparities in health requires not just improving healthcare services but also addressing differences in income, housing, and working conditions created in part by employers passing off to the public system the costs of providing appropriate wages and employee benefits.

Like Guarnaccia, Landscape Architecture professor Wolfram Hoefler questioned the micro-organization of power in New Jersey's municipal system. Speaking of the challenges he confronted as a landscape architect working on New Jersey's Brownfield remediation, Hoefler frankly stated, “The whole system of municipal organization is really stupid.” The minimal “state influence on local sites” worsened their deterioration and exacerbated regional inequalities. Hoefler critiqued the ideology that local sites control their own destiny, noting that “people in Orange think they are the city of Orange.”



Professor of Management and Global Business Nancy diTomaso's new project *The American Non-dilemma* analyzes how people in the U.S. workplace think about issues of inequality.

Yet, thinking beyond cities, towns, and regions is problematic—especially in a state like New Jersey. As Business School Professor Nancy DiTomaso argues, the state exemplifies something going on more generally in other locales: the “blurring of boundaries between cities and suburbs” on the one hand, and growing distinction in self-perception between city-dwellers and suburbanites on the other. To counter this opposition, she proposed that we must think about the “symbiotic relationship

between cities and suburbs” and acknowledge how inner city jobs and housing are negatively impacted by suburbanization, or how suburbs cannot be successful without cities. She raised the issue of whether definitions of cities and suburbs apply in the way they once did, given how these geographies are changing.



*Years of research on health care financing and delivery led to the recent appointment of Professor of Public Policy Joel Cantor to New Jersey's Commission on Rationalizing Health Care Resources.*

Director of the Center for State Health Policy, Joel Cantor, focused on the effects of deregulation in health care to reinforce a point he made as a participant of our Spring roundtable on New Jersey disparities: “Hospital closings, primarily in poor and minority neighborhoods, combined with cuts to charity care that fund many health care services in poor communities have created less access to health services...[H]igh profit health services like radiological and surgical services have moved out of hospitals to small independent businesses – draining part of the revenue stream from struggling hospitals.” Cantor contextualized these rapid and dramatic shifts in New Jersey’s hospital sector by noting that, “public policies have retreated from a progressive agenda.” As of the early 1990s, New Jersey was home to 115 hospitals, all of which were regulated by the state government to

follow egalitarian standards of care. Following a mandate for the deregulation of the hospital system in 1992, 36 percent of the state’s hospitals have closed. Cantor’s presentation thus made the case for re-examining payment and regulatory policy to ensure greater equity.

### CAN THERE BE EQUITABLE REGIONALISM? FORWARD LOOKING STRATEGIES

Though based in research and teaching, panelists’ informed understanding of New Jersey’s challenges offered practical and strategic proposals for new policy and community initiatives. In our first morning session on challenges for environmental social justice, Philosophy professor Martin Bunzl and landscape architect Wolfram Hoefer both raised the question of the relationship between ethics and public policy.

Bunzl asserted that New Jersey has some of the most “radical legislation in the world” with mandated 80 percent reduction rates of 2006 greenhouse gas levels by 2050. But Bunzl argued that attention needs to be paid to the way in which “political expediency shapes greenhouse policy,” especially given the strength of political interests concentrated in coastal areas.

Bunzl cited examples of changing building codes, differential energy pricing, mass transit extensions, and financial incentives that need to be examined to see who actually bears the burden of conservation costs. At the same time, he reminded the audience that despite our narrow regional efforts, climate change is a collective global problem and responsibility. Because growing economies in the developing world will rely on energy expenditure and

produce greenhouse gases at increased rates, the task of “reducing greenhouse gases is not going to be a heritage problem of the developed world” alone.



*Martin Bunzl directs the Rutgers Initiative on Climate and Social Policy which functions to marshal the resources of Rutgers University in the social sciences to address the challenges posed by global warming, greenhouse gasses and the reduction of carbon emissions.*

Professor Hoefer’s strategy involved using environmental damage as an asset in the design process of Brownfield remediation projects. Former commercial sites that are currently vacant and on which there is suspicion of discharge or contamination, these “Brownfields” make up a



*Design studios led by Landscape Architect Professor Wolfram Hoefer use student projects to support New Jersey municipalities, by generating public interest in a site and exploring landscape renewal opportunities that think outside the box.*

significant portion of New Jersey’s post-industrial landscape: the state is home to 23,000 contaminated sites, with Newark alone containing 1,000 such sites, many of which, Hoefer joked, are “lusted after by Cory Booker.” Hoefer’s Workshop Project for Public Spaces seeks to “improve the living quality of the urban environment” so as to “contribute to social justice.”

The Workshop’s designs reincorporate industrial relics as “meaningful elements” in an attempt to aesthetically

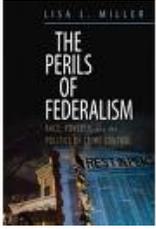
revitalize Brownfield zones. Hoefer added that “Brownfield remediation will make it possible to reduce land cover and increase density” in currently abandoned areas. His self-described fascination with “old rusty things” speaks to the promise that coexists alongside decay and danger in industrial cities.



*A river flows through one of New Jersey's Brownfields.*

History Professor Howard Gillette (Director of the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Humanities and author of *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial City*) highlighted the importance of remembering the legacies of the old New Deal if we “are on the way to another New Deal.” Gillette focused on Camden County, which “lost most jobs in the 1990s, while Mt. Laurel gained the most.” As he asserted, “Where you live matters. [Moreover], Deep structures we have inherited have set the parameters for present inequity.” Going back to the New Deal, Gillette pointed out that while it assured its primary constituency (immigrants) that they would have security in their homes, “the welfare state was unevenly distributed in special terms.” The impact of these inequitable policies has been that one portion of the housing market is stigmatized as an “antimarket,” while another is treated as a “megamarket.”

For Political Science professor Lisa Miller (author of a new study titled, *The Perils of Federalism: Race, Poverty, and the Politics of Crime Control*), crime and incarceration policy in New Jersey illustrates how “political institutions perpetuate social inequalities.” Some of these inequalities, however, stem from surprising sources. New Jersey has one of the highest rates of



In her recent book, *The Perils of Federalism: Race, Poverty, and the Politics of Crime Control* (Oxford UP 2008), Professor of Political Science Lisa Miller explores how America's multi-tiered political system shapes crime policy in ways that empower the higher levels of government yet demobilize and disempower local communities.

incarceration inequalities in the nation, with a 12.4 percent difference between black and white residents. Relative to the national average, this disparity is caused not by a high rate of black incarceration, but by a low rate of white incarceration.

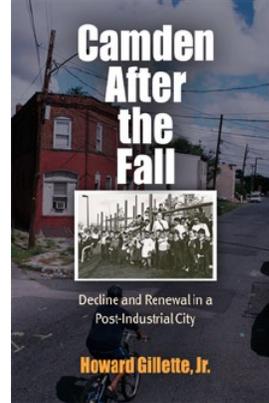
Miller's findings boldly suggest that our nation's federalist system magnifies incarceration disparities—and in turn reflect the racialization of income inequalities across the state. While this dynamic allows for local control, "the poor are marginalized in a federalist system" because it limits options open to localized community groups. In response, Miller proposed that trans-local citizen groups could more effectively pressure state and national governments for reforms.

For GSE Professor Nora Hyland, the Abbott school district innovation illustrated just how much progressive enactments in the state had expanded opportunity and

remedied inequalities by attempting to address, rather than promote, disparities. Mandates for making high quality pre-school available to all children in the state has produced "significant, meaningful improvements in language and literacy." A remaining problem, however, is the disproportionate ratio of white teachers in these primarily minority public schools—a disparity that increases as Abbott students move on from pre-school into grade and high schools. "We have to address disparities beyond Pre-K," Hyland concluded.

### COHERENT APPROACHES TO DISPARITIES ACROSS SECTORS

Throughout the day, panelists reminded each other, and the audience, of the overall challenge of addressing the inequities that grip the state of New Jersey. Peter Guarnaccia called attention to the way issues in health, immigration, labor, criminal justice, environment and education are "all entangled and interlinked." We thus need a coherent agenda to reform localism in each of these sectors, with an eye to the way policy in areas of health affect the lives of immigrants, for example, or the way changes in crime policy impact educational opportunities and access.



Howard Gillette's history of urban decline and renewal, *Camden After the Fall* (UPenn 2005) won several prestigious awards, including the Urban History Association's Kenneth Jackson Award for Best Book of 2005 and the 2007 Richard P. McCormick Prize of the New Jersey Historical Commission.

But, as many presenters averred, the complexity of interconnected issues is exacerbated by New Jersey's unique geographic position within the mid-Atlantic region—which ties internal structures to inter-state structures.

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- Facilitating research and enriching education on matters of race and ethnicity in contemporary life in America, in New Jersey, and the world
- Promoting collaborations and fostering cross-disciplinary seminars and discussions on topics from immigration and work, to ethnic politics and racial classification, from preservation of cultural identity to its transformation, and including questions of poverty, discrimination, advancement, integration, and privilege
- Identifying critical areas for future research and supporting race and ethnicity research and policy development.

Howard Gillette offered one illustrative example in his discussion of a recent port initiative in Camden, which met with difficulties in negotiations with Philadelphia. "The organizations that you would think would work together, like the port authorities, do not work together," Gillette said. "So we can't do it by social engineering or government alone. We need cultural and economic incentives. It has to be purposeful and it is going to take a long time."

At the end of the day, New Jersey's challenge is to achieve what Law Professor David Trout calls "equitable regionalism." As the panelists pointed out, New Jersey's history of progressive legislation provides a strong starting point for this ambitious project, and a means of challenging the way the state's present form of municipal organization limits its long-term potential for addressing economic and social crises.