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I am suggesting three basic ideas for broadening participation: First, Community engagement via community organizations. Second, the increased use and value of qualitative data collection methods that are connected to underrepresented communities and their experiential interactions with physical, structural, and institutional geographies. This would be way to make geography more meaningful and real, therefore an area of interest for study and practice. Third, changing the climate in departments and more broadly on campuses would go a long way to broadening participation.

Community Engagement.

Over the last 22 years I have worked with and in communities of color in Chicago and Boston. This work has focused on social and economic justice and precipitated my own entrance to graduate study. I was involved, though my position on the board of directors of the Greater Roxbury Neighborhood Authority (GRNA), in a study to examine the redlining that was occurring in the Roxbury section of Boston during the 1970s and 1980s. GRNA worked with a couple of students at MIT from the urban planning department to analyze HMDA data regarding mortgage lending in Roxbury (a predominantly African American community) and South Boston (a predominately white community). As a result of that research that showed clear patterns of banking discrimination in Roxbury, we were able to negotiate a Community Reinvestment Act agreement with the Mass Bankers Association. I saw research in action. That experience facilitated my entering graduate school to receive a master's in urban planning and policy and then a PhD in public policy analysis. Community organizations are places to develop pipelines of marginalized folks into geography and STEM education. Both the qualitative and quantitative skills obtained in graduate work particularly in geography are tools for social and economic justice.

After graduation, in collaboration with other women, we create a community organization called Women for Economic Justice (WEJ). WEJ is a collective of community activists, advocates and academics that addresses economic justice through programs that enable women of color, particularly immigrant survivors of gender violence, while acknowledging their cultural diversity and individual contexts. WEJ works with other community-based organizations and grassroots women's groups in Chicago to develop, implement, and evaluate economic development opportunities that can lead to women's financial independence. WEJ also aspires through discussion and action to foster a more uncompromising and inclusive anti-violence movement.

We developed curriculum and conducted research as a community organization regarding gendered economic self-sufficiency in the context of gender violence in communities of color, specifically in Latino, African American and Vietnamese neighborhoods in Chicago (see Sweet and Ortiz 2010, and Sweet, Lee and Ortiz 2012). Through my involvement in this organization, I have been at the center as

both a participant and as an observer of women of color developing real world solutions of spatial and economic marginalization. WEJ's programs evolved out of a place and asset based approach to economic injustice. Several of the women who have been involved in this program have also initiated undergraduate and graduate degrees. Their work in/with this organization (and some encouragement on my part) had a direct impact on their desire to go back to school.

Qualitative Methods

Through my work with WEJ, I became particularly interested in how theoretically informed place-based qualitative analysis could permit deeper interpretation of trends in the participation of underrepresented groups in higher education and the academy. As discussed below, the growing group of scholars who are attending to a diverse economies interpretation of everything from housing to food could add substantially to the way we think about education, how can we reframe the economy of education to be more inclusive. How can data be collected that represents quotidian experiences and then how can we use that data to understand the diverse economic value of education, specifically in geography and the ways to make it more relevant and accessible for marginalized communities?

As demonstrated above at WEJ, one way this can be productive is through developing research relationships and ties to community organization as a place of valuable intellectual activity. But since we know that data regarding communities of color are often inaccurate (Scott, 2001), we need to use alternative often qualitative and mixed methods to capture multiple realities that also allow us to move away from generalizations and toward capturing the nuances and intricacies of data and the communities from which they were collected. Part of the problem here is that qualitative methods are often considered second-class methods. This status is related to a common misperception that there are no techniques or skills involved with qualitative data. The skills needed to collect and analyze qualitative data are often more challenging than traditional quantitative processes and it is even thornier to combine quantitative and qualitative data in meaningful ways. But few schools offer qualitative methods in geography departments. In addition to adding qualitative methods as required training for graduate students minimally, there are two examples below of how specifically in geography we can think and act on more inclusive methods and how they actually make stronger scholarship in the process. This is not dumbing down methods or some how less scientific but engaging in a process that is more authentic in traditionally marginalized communities (probably in any community).

Some new and exciting spatial sciences projects are benefiting greatly from the addition of qualitative data and its analysis. For example, using GPS cameras to take pictures and recording the experience of people who are present and/or taking the pictures provides a dimension of information that the picture and

location of the picture alone cannot offer. Economic geography is also a site where we see an increased use of collaborative methods and mixed methods for collecting data. There is a significant opportunity here for geographers who I think by and large embrace interdisciplinary approaches to data collection and analysis. In the specific area of diverse economies a growing sub-field of economic geography, new ways of thinking about data and how we collect it are emerging. Instead of traditional indicators of economic activities, a much broader net is cast to catch what is below the surface of what Gibson-Graham (2006) calls the “iceberg” of economic activities. The previous focus on waged labor, market exchange and financial markets (based on data from the census and other institutions that have continuously missed the mark in data collection in marginalized communities) is limiting and required limited data collection nodes to capture activity. Once the net is cast wider, new and innovative ways of engaging with communities are necessary. Diverse economies theorists have borrowed from anthropologist but at the same time added collaborative components from urban planners that provide a much more inclusive and inviting approach to qualitative data collection and analysis that is spatially focused and distinctly geographic in nature.

Campus/Department Climate¹

Changing the climate in institutions of higher learning is also a key component of broadening participation. My experience suggests that there are several key components to changing the climate. 1) Specializations that connect with marginalized communities, 2) a clear declaration of inclusiveness, 3) safe places for underrepresented groups to support each other, and 4) targeted recruitment. I was actively involved in the formation of the Masters’ level specialization Community Development for Social Justice at Illinois. As soon as this specialization was developed we saw significant increases in underrepresented students in our program and those student were clustered in this specialization². I coordinated the diversity committee, which developed a code of professionalism and inclusiveness that is now on the department's web page and on the syllabus of each class. This sends a message that we are serious about diversity and we are putting it out there. I participated in the development of Students of Color and Allies (SOCA), a student group in the planning department. While our department

¹ I have published two articles on this topic for more details and ideas:

- Sweet, E. L. and H. Etienne. 2011 **Commentary: Diversity in Urban Planning Education and Practice** *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 31(3): 332-339
- Sweet E. L. 2010 **Diversity in Urban Planning: From the Discipline to Department Climates**. edited by Jorge Chapa, Helen Neville, and Margaret Browne Hunt. *Implementing Diversity :Contemporary Challenges and Best Practices at Predominantly White Universities*. Chapter . Chapter 12: 224-246, Champaign, IL Center for Democracy in a Multiracial Society

² This might be a problem as we did not want to ghettoize students but our first goal was to increase enrolment and then figure out how to make more traditional specializations more relevant to students coming from underrepresented communities. I am not necessarily addressing this here but increasing faculty of color is key for increasing students of color.

may have broadened participation to some degree there were still issues and in the context of the racist sports team mascot, chief illinawik (small letters intentional) we faculty and students of color needed a place to support one another and this organization was that place. I also worked with others in an effort to augment the diversity of the student body, and we achieved a significant increase in African American and Latino enrollment by doing targeted recruitment. We sent flyers to HBCUs, and to schools with high numbers of underrepresented students. We also provided funding for campus visits including individual meetings with faculty of color and allies to encourage them to come to the middle of the cornfields, as it were. A combination of these activities broadened the participation in the program of underrepresented students while the faculty of color were there (both of us left) and were dedicated to this project. At this point, I am told that diversity has once again waned some, suggesting that this is a process that needs continuous support and work.

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006) *The End of Capitalism (as We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press

Scott, J. (2001, June 27) A census query is said to skew data on Latinos. *The New York Times*, pA1

Sweet, E. L. and S. Ortiz Escalante (2010) Planning Responds to Gender Violence: Evidence from Spain, Mexico, and the United States, *Urban Studies* 47(10) pp 2129-2147

Sweet, E. L. S. Lee, S. Ortiz Escalante (2012) 'A Slow Assassination of Your Soul' Race, Citizenship and Gender Identities in the Borderlands of New Economic Places, *Transnational Migration, Gender and Rights* edited by Ragnhild Sollund, and Liam Leonard, Emerald Group Publishing Limited 99-126