

Graduate Student Poster Abstracts

1. Student Name: Yuchen Zhao

Title: From Boba Boom to Hunan Fiery Kick: Transformation of the food landscape in Chinatown, Chicago

Program: Urban Studies Program

This study is to examine how culture and ethnicity are negotiated, learned, and reproduced through the spatiality of food spaces in the Chinatown neighborhood. By investigating the architectural and material environment of ethnic restaurants and stores, including taste, building, layout, and symbolic content of interior objects and furnishing, the research shows how the new waves of immigrants toward Chinatown bring local cuisine, and more recently, restaurant concepts, that keep visitors coming back with new, and possibly more exotic, Chinese experiences. Based on semi-interviews with local residents, restaurant owners, customers, and other actors in the food landscape, along with the spatial ethnography of food places, this research seeks to understand how ethnicity is creatively reproduced during everyday life and social interactions between various individuals and groups on the ethnic food spaces.

2. Student Name: Jack Rongstad

Title: Policing Dissent: The Evolution of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Police Department in the 1960s and 1970s

Program: Urban Studies Program

This study presents a comprehensive examination of the formative years of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Police Department (UWM-PD) from 1964 to the early 1970s. It explores the challenges faced by the department in establishing legitimacy, acquiring personnel, and handling student unrest during a tumultuous time characterized by civil rights struggles, anti-war protests, and societal upheaval. The study investigates the strategies employed by the police departments on campus and in the community, including surveillance, suppression, and radicalization. Furthermore, it scrutinizes the implications of arming campus police and examines the intricacies of maintaining order in a tense environment. The paper, informed by archival materials, provides a localized narrative that enriches the understanding of the broader evolution and expansion of policing nationwide.

3. Student Name: Nadia Adusei

Title: Childhood Lead Poisoning in Milwaukee (1990-Present)

Program: Urban Studies Program

Childhood lead poisoning in Milwaukee is not merely a public health issue; it's a striking reminder of structural inequities and environmental injustices plaguing marginalized communities. Over the past three decades, the city has grappled with the effects of lead exposure on its youngest residents, confronting a complex interplay of socioeconomic

disparities, policy responses, and public health interventions. As this study delves into the evolution of this crisis, it uncovers a narrative of resilience, but also a sobering reality of persistent challenges and missed opportunities. This paper examines the evolution of childhood lead poisoning in Milwaukee from 1990 to the present, exploring factors contributing to its prevalence, policy responses, effectiveness of awareness campaigns, and socioeconomic disparities. Over the past three decades, the prevalence of childhood lead poisoning has fluctuated, influenced by various factors including changes in housing conditions, lead abatement efforts, and policy interventions. Government agencies, public health officials, and advocacy groups have responded with targeted initiatives, such as lead hazard reduction programs and legislation mandating lead testing and abatement in older housing. However, the effectiveness of these interventions has been challenged by persistent socioeconomic

disparities and environmental injustices, with marginalized communities disproportionately affected. Public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives have been implemented to raise awareness about lead exposure dangers and promote preventive measures, but their impact on at-risk populations remains variable. As we work to fight childhood lead poisoning in Milwaukee, we're at a critical point. We need everyone—government leaders, supporters, and local communities, to fully commit to finding solutions. It's important to remember the children who are most affected by this issue. Their future is at stake. We can only make Milwaukee safer and healthier for future generations if we come together with fair plans that empower everyone in the community.

4. Student Name: Russell Jacob Star-Lack

Title: Break Down the Walls: The Milwaukee Jewish Council and Jewish Civil Rights Activism in Postwar Milwaukee

Program: Urban Studies Program

This paper argues that the Milwaukee Jewish Council, the city's postwar Jewish human-relations organization, symbolically supported local civil rights efforts while minimizing Jewish exposure to charges of racism. This proved difficult to sustain during the 1960s as the organization became caught between the militancy of their urban allies and the conservatism of their suburban constituents. While the MJC's civil rights activism decreased after the passage of Milwaukee's 1968 fair housing ordinance, the ideas it championed regarding the performative mediation of race relations and emphasis of individualized solutions to systemic problems remain influential in the politics and policies of Milwaukee.

5. Student Name: Sana Avar

Title: Spatial Analysis of Pedestrian Crash Risks in Milwaukee: A Demographic Perspective

Program: Urban Studies Program

In my research, "Spatial Analysis of Pedestrian Crash Risks in Milwaukee: A Demographic Perspective" I employed Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to investigate the correlation between pedestrian crashes and demographic characteristics across Milwaukee's census tracts. The research aims to identify patterns of crashes and their association with factors such as race, income, and education. By analyzing spatial and demographic data, I focused on census tracts with increased crash risks, pointing to the need for targeted urban planning and policy

interventions. I emphasized the role of demographics in pedestrian safety and suggests avenues for improving urban well-being through informed, data-driven approaches. I will present a poster for explaining the research in detail.

6. Student Name: Fatemeh Salehi Mava

Title: Developing and Testing stress Reduction in Public Space using Virtual Reality:
Applying Neuroaesthetic - Based Design Intervention

Program: Urban Studies Program

The human brain, overseeing thoughts, emotions, and bodily processes, is profoundly influenced by its environment. Environmental factors play a pivotal role in shaping human emotions, stress levels, general well-being, and both mental and physical health. Stress, a persistent challenge throughout history, has prompted continuous efforts to find effective mitigation strategies. Urban designers, recognizing the profound impact of the environment on individuals, strive to create tranquil urban public spaces. However, many urban public spaces still grapple with heightened stress levels. This study guides the design and redesign of urban public spaces, focusing on stress reduction. It introduces an innovative approach, combining insights from neuroscience and urban design through a neuroaesthetic-based design intervention using Virtual Reality. The research begins with extracting and categorizing principles associated with calming environments, drawn from anthropological universal elements and insights from cognitive neuroscience, involving an examination of environmental elements that positively stimulate the brain.

The methodology involves an experimental approach, envisioning interventions in real urban settings. Virtual Reality simulations will test the effectiveness of neuroaesthetic-based design

in reducing stress levels. The experimental methodology includes site selection, application of interventions, and systematic measurement of stress responses among individuals.

Anticipating the results in Milwaukee, it is expected that these urban spaces not only fall short in alleviating stress but may exacerbate stress levels for individuals frequenting these areas. This abstract encapsulates the critical interplay between the environment and human well-being, proposing a pioneering approach to urban design that integrates neuroscience principles. The ongoing experimental phase promises to provide empirical evidence for the efficacy of neuroaesthetic-based design interventions in mitigating stress, contributing to the ongoing discourse on enhancing the quality of urban life.

7. Student Name: Maryam Karbasi Dehkharghani

Title: The Role of Urban Morphology in Elderly Recreational Walking, Case study of Guven Park in Ankara City

Program: Urban Studies Program

In metropolitan areas, automobilization has led to reduced physical activity and increased reliance on personal vehicles, particularly among the elderly, resulting in health concerns. Addressing this issue is crucial due to the growing elderly population in developing countries and rising healthcare costs. Although research has highlighted the influence of city design and morphology on mobility and physical activity, limited attention has been given to their impact on recreational walking among the elderly. In this way, this study addresses two primary research questions of how urban morphology motivates recreational walking among the elderly and what physical and spatial aspects of urban morphology affect elderly recreational walking. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify twelve urban qualities

shaping recreational walking motivation in older individuals, including street layout, land slope, density, land subdivision, patterns within urban blocks, origin-destination path distance, utilization of spaces, human scale, time considerations, connectivity, integrity, and depth distance. Employing a mixed-method approach involving observation, open-ended questionnaires, and space syntax simulation, we analyzed these qualities and correlated the results. Güven Park in Ankara, a well-known social space among Ankara's elderly population located in the city center, served as our case study. Our findings, derived from observations and interviews, highlight land slope and land subdivision as the most significant factors driving recreational walking motivation in older adults. Interestingly, urban morphology analyses revealed that density, distance between the origin and destination path, and human scale exerted the most significant influence. This research sheds light on the complex interplay between urban morphology and recreational walking among the elderly, offering valuable insights for urban planners and policymakers seeking to enhance the health and well-being of older urban residents.