

Track 2: Lived Experiences of Poverty-Related Interventions

Research Team

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Track Description

Poverty-related government policies and programs aim to maximize access to resources and minimize the rate of poverty. In the United States, some of these programs are Social Security, Medicaid, SNAP, school meals program, and Section 8 housing vouchers. Identified as safety-net programs these programs aim to enhance an individual's ability to meet their basic day-to-day needs (food, shelter, clothing, etc.) while helping them to pursue opportunities for socioeconomic mobility. According to Sherman et al. (2013), these programs “lift millions of Americans out of poverty, help “make work pay” by supplementing low wages, and enable millions of Americans to receive health care who otherwise could not afford it.” However, past research also highlights the negative long-term implications of these programs, such as obesity (Baum 2011), lack of access (Pardee and Gotham 2005), and stigmatization (Kreider et al. 2012).

Research highlighting the positives and negatives of these programs not only share a story of increased/decreased access, but they also provide insights on segments of the population that have different backgrounds, needs, and expectations. According to a survey conducted by USDA (2016), food insecurity is more prevalent than the national average (4.9 percent) for some groups, such as Households with children headed by a single woman (10.5 percent), Black, non-Hispanic households (9.7 percent), and Hispanic households (5.8 percent) (Coleman-Jensen, et. al 2017). While these individuals live in similar poverty-related material circumstances, they have fundamental differences in how they live their lives, their belief system, values, consumption style. These differences underpin their access to and experiences of the safety-net programs.

Consumer researchers have raised concerns over the unintended consequences of “one-size-fits-all” approach in addressing various social concerns. Corus et al. (2016) adopt an intersectional lens to shed light on how voices of specific groups are silenced because they are invisible in various policies. The overlapping complexities of race/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, housing insecurity, and poverty/income inequality, to name just a few, cannot be separated in the examination of an individual's lived experiences of policies and programs. In this research project, we aim to investigate the lived experiences of diverse individuals enrolled in safety-net programs with the goal to provide critical theoretical insights on socioeconomic mobility and policy insights on possible ways to elevate the transformative potentials of these safety-net programs.

Member Bios

Shikha Upadhyaya

Shikha Upadhyaya received her Ph.D. from the University of Wyoming and is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at California State University, Los Angeles College of Business & Economics. Her research focuses on the identity- projects and multidimensional experiences of socio-economically disadvantaged consumers and provides insights on consumption-related discrimination and disadvantage faced by these consumers with implications in the areas of public policy and transformative consumer research. She has published articles in the *Consumption Markets & Culture*, *Journal of Macromarketing*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, and has contributed a chapter to *Product Development and Management Association Essentials 3* (forthcoming).

H. Rika Houston

Rika Houston received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Irvine and is a Professor of Marketing in the College of Business and Economics at California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State L.A.). At Cal State LA, she teaches consumer behavior, sustainability marketing, qualitative market research, international marketing, and community-based social marketing. She also serves as the Faculty Coordinator of Community Engagement Programs for the Center for Engagement, Service, and the Public Good. Her research focuses on gender identity in consumer culture, sustainability, social marketing, and marketing education. She has served as a strong proponent of social justice and sustainability in low-income communities through her teaching and research, as well as her extensive work as a social justice activist in Los Angeles and the State of California.

Christopher P. Blocker

Christopher P. Blocker received his Ph.D. at the University of Tennessee and is an Associate Professor in the College of Business at Colorado State University. His research focuses on understanding value creation within marketplace relationships. In addition to business and consumer relationships, Chris' research explores value creation in contexts of global and domestic poverty, subsistence marketplaces, and social enterprise. He has published articles in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, among others, and has served on the advisory board for Transformative Consumer Research.

Nicholas J. Pendarvis

Nicholas Pendarvis is an assistant professor of marketing in the College of Business and economics California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA). He received his Ph.D. in Marketing from the Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina. He has also received an International MBA from the University of South Carolina as well as a B.S. in Marketing from South Carolina State University. His current research agenda includes several projects exploring social change processes within the marketplace, the negotiation and cultural production of meaning in the context of consumption communities, collective framing processes, social media, social networks and the evolution consumer movements. His work has recently appeared in the *Journal of Consumer Research* and he has contributed chapters to *Consumer Culture Theory* and *The Handbook of Research on Gender and Marketing* (forthcoming).

David K. Crockett

David K. Crockett's primary research interest is in sociological aspects of consumer behavior, particularly the consequences of social inequality. His research investigates the creation, manifestation, and resolution of class, gender and racial inequality in the marketplace and addresses consumer, managerial and public policy initiatives designed to alleviate inequality. Emerging areas of interest in his research include health-related policy and social enterprise.

Marjorie Sims

Marjorie has more than 20 years of experience in advancing the status of women and families at local, state, national, and international levels. She formerly served as program officer at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation with a specific focus on family economic security programs and managed a \$65M grant portfolio. Prior to joining the Kellogg Foundation, Sims held the positions of chief operating officer, interim president, and vice president of programs and operations at the Washington Area Women's Foundation. During her tenure in Washington, Sims helped launch Stepping Stones, a \$5 million, multi-year, regional initiative to increase the income and assets of women-headed families. Stepping Stones received national recognition as a model public-private partnership. In addition, Sims served as the executive director of the California Women's Law Center and as a policy analyst with the International Center for Research on Women. She is a co-founder of Women's Policy, Inc., an organization that emerged from the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues to provide unbiased analyses and educational briefings about federal legislation affecting women and families. Sims has additional expertise in expanding women's philanthropy and managing leadership transitions.