

Curriculum Vitae

Blaire O'Neal

Department of Geography
San Diego State University
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Current Position

Postdoctoral Fellow (June 2019 – present), funded by United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Department of Geography, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

Education

Doctor of Philosophy, Geography (June 2019)

San Diego State University, San Diego, CA
University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA
2015 – 2019

Master of Science, Environmental Science & Policy

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL
2012 – 2014

Bachelor of Science, Biology

Rhodes College, Memphis, TN
2008 – 2011

Certificates

Geographic Information Systems, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, 2014

Previous Positions

Teaching Associate (instructor of record), Department of Geography San Diego State University, San Diego, CA, 2018 – 2019

Teaching Assistant, Department of Geography San Diego State University, San Diego, CA, 2015 – 2018

Adjunct Professor, School of Geosciences, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, 2014 – 2015

Teaching Assistant, School of Geosciences, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, 2013 – 2014

Graduate Assistant, Department of Biology, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, 2011 – 2012

Teaching Assistant, Department of Biology, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, 2010 – 2011

Areas of Specialization

Geographies of Food
Urban Geography
Urban agriculture and food justice

Dissertation

Nature, Technology, & the Pursuit of Justice: Urban Agriculture Networks in San Diego County

Abstract: This dissertation investigates the significance of soil in distinguishing various forms of urban agriculture (UA) in San Diego County. Once dominated by traditional “soil-based” community gardens, UA is increasingly joined by technologically-advanced “soilless” growing methods like hydroponic, aquaponic, and aeroponic. These farming approaches embody different urban political economies and ecologies and engage unique, locally articulated networks of human and non-human actors that shape the way food is planted, grown, harvested, marketed, desired and consumed in the city. This research aims to uncover and examine these differences as they relate to justice, specifically the narratives, practices, and relationships that are deployed in the making of “just” urban agricultural commodities. I begin by examining how UA organizations discuss their practices in online discourse. Then, using a selection of soilless and soil-based UA projects that emphasize social justice in this discourse, I compare the material relations that promote or inhibit their justice practices. Finally, using the same subset of projects, I examine the way food justice “commodities” are materially and discursively produced through the placed networks that support their commodity circuits.

To examine these distinctions, I use mixed methods, integrating topic modelling, mapping, and multi-locale ethnographic analysis using US Census, website content, interview, and participant observation data. To guide my investigation and interpret my findings, I use a robust theoretical framework that combines urban political ecology, economic geography, and Actor-Network Theory. The results illustrate that while the way food is grown is an important factor for UA organization’s identity and practices, it is but one among the many factors that influence justice such as socio-spatial context. Justice is an ongoing process that is built from the ground up and evolves as UA commodities travel through their commodity circuits and interact with *placed* networks filled with intentions, actions, discourses, objects, actors, and forces. If we want to understand and enact justice, we have to look at this entire process of circulation – the discursive and material, the intentions and the actions, the human and non-human – to see the opportunities, possibilities, and vulnerabilities of justice.

Advisors: Pascale Joassart-Marcelli (Chair), Fernando Bosco, Keith Clarke, David Lopez-Carr

Publications

Refereed Articles:

Bosco, F.J., Joassart-Marcelli, P., and **O'Neal, B.** (2017). "Food Journeys: Place, Mobility, and the Everyday Food Practices of Young People." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 107(6), 1479-1498.

Downs, J.A., Lamb, D., Hyzer, G., Loraamm, R., Smith, Z.J., and **O'Neal, B.** (2014). "Quantifying spatio-temporal interactions of animals using probabilistic space—time prisms." *Applied Geography* 55: 1-8.

Refereed Book Chapters:

O'Neal, B. and Joassart-Marcelli, P. (2018). "Celebrities, Experts, and Advocates: How Chefs are Transforming the Food System." In Pascale Joassart-Marcelli and Fernando Bosco (Eds.), *Food and Place: A Critical Exploration*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. Pp. 292-307.

Other:

O'Neal, B. (2010). "Potential Brownfields in the Hollywood District: Research on Nine Sites in the Hollywood-Springdale Area, Memphis, TN." Research report. Rhodes College, Memphis, TN.

Works in Progress

O'Neal, B. (2019). "Thinking and doing justice: urban agriculture in San Diego County." (*in preparation*)

O'Neal, B. and Joassart-Marcelli, P. (2019). "Connecting the Dots: Local Urban Agriculture Commodity Circuits." (*in preparation*)

O'Neal, B., Schempp, T., and Skupin, A. (2019). "Using Discursive Mapping to Untangle Growing Method and Narrative in Urban Agriculture: A Case Study in San Diego County." (*under review*)

Presentations

O'Neal, B. (2019). "Connecting the Dots: Local Urban Agriculture Networks." Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Washington, D.C.

Joassart-Marcelli, P and **O'Neal, B.** (2018). "Southeastern San Diego's Food Landscape: Challenges and Opportunities." Project New Village, San Diego, CA.

Joassart-Marcelli, P and **O'Neal, B.** (2018). "Food Access in San Diego: Three Case Studies from a Geographic Perspective." San Diego Food System Alliance, Food Access Working Group, San Diego, CA.

Fritzche, L., **O'Neal, B.**, et al. (2018). Reflecting on the past and future of Supporting Women in Geography (SWIG), 6th Annual Panel. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. New Orleans, LA.

Joassart-Marcelli, P., Bosco, F.J., and **O'Neal, B.** (2017). Alternative Food Practices and Gentrification: How Foodies Are Transforming Urban Neighborhoods. Agriculture, Food, Human Values & Society and Association for the Study of Food and Society. Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA.

Joassart-Marcelli, P., Bosco, F.J., and **O'Neal, B.** (2016). Alternative Food Practices and Gentrification: How Foodies Are Transforming Urban Neighborhoods. International Conference of Food Studies. Berkeley, CA.

Bosco, F.J., Joassart-Marcelli, P., and **O'Neal, B.** (2016). Placing Young Peoples Food Practices in the Urban Foodscape. International Conference of Food Studies. Berkeley, CA.

Bosco, F.J., Joassart-Marcelli, P., and **O'Neal, B.** (2016). Food Journeys: Place, Mobility, and the Everyday Food Practices of Young People. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. San Francisco, CA.

O'Neal, B. (2015). Testing the feasibility of avian bioacoustics in urban environments. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Chicago, Illinois.

O'Neal, B. (2014). Testing the feasibility of bioacoustics localization in urban environments. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting. Tampa, Florida.

O'Neal, B. (2011). Brownfield Remediation in the Wolf River Greenway. Wolf River Conservancy Community Event. Memphis, Tennessee.

O'Neal, B. and Alsamadisi, A. (2010). Human-elephant conflict in Namibia. 10th Annual Regional GIS Conference. Memphis, Tennessee.

O'Neal, B. and Alsamadisi, A. (2010). Human-elephant conflict in Namibia. Rhodes College Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Symposium. Memphis, Tennessee.

Honors & Awards

Post-Doctoral Fellowship (2019), United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Inamori Fellowship (2019), San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

Lauren Post Award for Academic Excellence (2018), Department of Geography, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

Young People's Environments, Society and Space (YESS) Social Geography Award (2018), Department of Geography, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

Montaha Deek Curti Scholarship for Work in Social and Environmental Justice (2018), Department of Geography, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

Graduate Scholar Award (2016), International Conference on Food Studies, Berkeley, CA

Presidential Graduate Research Fellowship (2015), San Diego State University, CA
First Place Student Poster (2010), 10th Annual GIS Conference, Memphis, TN
First Place Environmental Science Poster (2010), Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Symposium, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN

Funded Research

United States Department of Agriculture (2019 – present), National Institute of Food and Agriculture Post-Doctoral Fellowship, “Systems Analysis of Hydroponic, Aquaponic, and Aeroponic Food Production (HAAFP) in the United States.” Principal Investigator.

San Diego State University Grant Program (2016), “Community Food Security: Ethnic Markets, Urban Change and Access to Food in City Heights.” Research Assistant. Principal Investigator, Pascale Joassart-Marcelli.

The National Science Foundation (2015 – 16), “Food, Ethnicity and Place: Feeding Families and Nourishing Communities.” Research Assistant. Principal Investigators, Pascale Joassart-Marcelli and Fernando Bosco.

The National Science Foundation (2014), “Collaborative Research – Developing a statistical time geography for analyzing animal movements and interactions.” Research Assistant. Principal Investigators, Joni A. Downs and Mark Horner.

Teaching Experience

Teaching Associate (2018 – 2019), Department of Geography, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA (World Regional Geography, Geography of Cities)

Teaching Assistant (2015 – 2018), Department of Geography, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA (Geography of Cities, Geography of Food)

Adjunct Professor (2014 – 2015), School of Geosciences, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (Introduction to Environmental Science, Wetland Ecosystems)

Teaching Assistant (2013 – 2014), School of Geosciences University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (Introduction to Environmental Science)

Teaching Assistant (2010 – 2011), Department of Biology, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN (Environmental Science)

Student Advising

Dominique O’Connor (2014 – 2015), Undergraduate Thesis Committee, School of Geosciences, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

Organizations

PhD Student Representative (2017 – 2018), Department of Geography, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

President (2017 – 2018), Society for Women in Geography, Department of Geography, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

Member (2015 –2017), Society for Women in Geography, Department of Geography, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

Member (2014 – present), American Association of Geographers (AAG)

Member (2015 – present), AAG Food & Agriculture Specialty Group

Member (2016 – present), AAG Urban Geography Specialty Group

Member (2016 – present), AAG Cultural & Political Ecology Specialty Group

Member (2009 – 2011), Biology Honors Society, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN

Community Service

Project New Village (2017 – present), volunteer research support, San Diego, CA

Coastal Roots Farm (2017 – present), farm and event volunteer, San Diego, CA

San Diego Food System Alliance (2015 – present), Urban Agriculture Working Group, volunteer research support, San Diego, CA

Vollintine Evergreen Community Association (2009 – 2011), volunteer research support, Memphis, TN

References

Pascale Joassart-Marcelli, Professor, Department of Geography, San Diego State University, pmarcell@sdsu.edu

Fernando Bosco, Professor, Department of Geography, San Diego State University, fbosco@sdsu.edu

Keith Clarke, Professor, Department of Geography, University of California, Santa Barbara, kcclarke@ucsb.edu

David Lopez-Carr, Professor, Department of Geography, University of California, Santa Barbara, davidlopezcarr@ucsb.edu

Joni Downs, Professor, School of Geosciences, University of South Florida, Tampa, downs@usf.edu