

**Buffalo, NY Since the Great Recession**  
**A Workshop on Economic Restructuring in the Rust Belt**  
**August 14-15 2017, Cornell in Buffalo and UAW Local 774**

Buffalo, New York State's second largest metropolitan area, occupies a unique place in the region's economy. Although its finance, service, and housing market sectors lack the spectacular size and depth of those in New York City, its manufacturing sector still occupies a central role in the regional economy. Economic development in Buffalo's manufacturing sector, however, is highly dependent on public resources, particularly those from Albany. This dependency, in the context of major transformations in the manufacturing sector since the Great Recession and decades of deindustrialization, is part and parcel of economic restructuring in the American Rust Belt broadly. Even though Buffalo metropolitan area was not affected by the Great Recession as much as other metropolitan areas in the country primarily due to the preceding deindustrialization, it experienced a similar process of economic restructuring following it. In this workshop, we will identify this unique position of Buffalo as part of both the Rust Belt region and New York State, and scrutinize its main economic troubles and trajectory since the Great Recession.

Sluggish national growth, the unequal distribution of the wealth generated by that growth among social classes, and the inability to create the long-desired dynamism in the economy since the recession have manifested in particularly interesting ways in the Rust Belt. Understanding the characteristics of Buffalo's economic development, one of the key areas within the Rust Belt, will help us contextualize the Great Recession and its effects on the ground. Such academic interrogation is important not only for identifying the changing economic dynamics in the still highly populated and formerly deindustrialized parts of the U.S., but also for interpreting political leanings of working classes in these communities which have played a key role in general elections since the Great Recession and particularly in the recent election of Donald Trump. The workshop will bring together experts from wide ranging backgrounds to shed light on critically neglected communities and transformations, and contribute to ongoing debates on economic development.

The workshop is divided into four sessions spanning two days. The first session will explore the economic characteristics of the region as well as main efforts to revitalize the region following the Great Recession. The first afternoon session of Day One will place Buffalo in its wider geographical context in terms of its economic relationships with the rest of the state (Albany and New York City) and other Rust Belt economic geographies. The third and final session of Day One will focus explicitly on economic sectors in Buffalo. Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of these sectors will also lay the groundwork for the fourth and the last session of the workshop, which will focus on Buffalo's manufacturing sector. With a specific emphasis on the auto industry, this session will crystalize the problems and potentials of a key economic segment, which has been one of the main targets of economic development programs since the Great Recession.

The assemblage of such expertise and interest in the region and its economic restructuring in this workshop is also expected to evolve into a book project which would fill a major gap in the literature. Despite interest in individual sectors, issues or cities in the Rust Belt region, studies with certain spatial and temporal focus to understand social class and economic development from a historical perspective lack in number and depth. This workshop also aims to address this need in the literature.

**PROGRAM**  
**DAY 1, AUGUST 14, Cornell in Buffalo**

Welcome, Arthur Wheaton, The Worker Institute, Cornell University  
09AM-09.10AM

*Introduction: The Contours of Economic Development in the Rust Belt since the Great Recession*  
Evren Dincer, Uludağ University  
09.10AM-09.30AM

**Session I**  
**Main Trends and Issues of Economic Development in Buffalo**  
**09.30AM-12PM**

*The Performance of the Buffalo Economy Since the Great Recession*  
Jaison Abel, Federal Reserve Bank of New York

*Healing Buffalo's Economy: The Buffalo Billion and Priorities for Economic Development*  
John Slenker, New York State Department of Labor

*General Trends in the Labor Market*  
Cesar Cabrera, New York State Department of Labor

*Labor Market and Challenges for Workforce Development*  
Heather Gresham, Executive Director, Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board

*Labor's Role in Economic Development and Organizing*  
Richard Lipsitz Jr., Western New York Area Labor Federation

*Economic Development from a Social Justice Perspective*  
Franchelle C. Hart, Open Buffalo

**Lunch Break: 12PM-1PM**

**Session II**  
**Placing Buffalo in its Geographical and Economic Context:**  
**Buffalo as part of New York State and the Rust Belt**  
**1PM-2.45PM**

*The Role of New York City in the Economy of New York State*  
James Parrott, Center for New York City Affairs at The New School

*Buffalo's Economic Relations with Albany*  
Bruce Fisher, SUNY Buffalo State

*The Role of Community Organizations in Buffalo's Economic Revitalization in a Comparative Perspective*  
Ronald Applegate, Cornell University

*Buffalo's Economic Development Compared: Buffalo as Part of the Rust Belt*  
Evren Dincer, Uludağ University

**Coffee Break, 2.45PM-3.00PM**

**Session III**  
**Sectors in Perspective I**  
**3PM-5PM**

*Buffalo's Housing Market since the Great Recession*  
Sam Magavern, Partnership for the Public Good

*Buffalo's Agricultural Economy since the Great Recession*  
Diane Held, Cornell University Cooperative Extension

*The Finance Sector in Buffalo since the Great Recession*  
Gary Keith, M&T Bank

*Buffalo-Niagara Medical Corridor Experiment: Perspectives on a Project for Economic Revitalization*  
David Scott, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (TBC)

*The Energy Sector, Community Development and Sustainability in Buffalo since the Great Recession*  
Rahwa Ghirmatzion, PUSH Buffalo

*Concluding Remarks and Reflections on Day One*  
Rosemary Batt, Cornell University

**DAY 2, AUGUST 15, UAW Local 774**

**Session IV, 09AM-12PM  
Sectors in Perspective II  
Manufacturing and the Auto Industry**

*A Historical Review of the Auto Industry in the U.S. and Western New York*  
Art Wheaton, The Worker Institute at Cornell University

*Recent Trends in Auto Manufacturing in Western New York*  
Ian Greer, Cornell University

*Canadian Auto Industry since the Great Recession: A Look at Buffalo from the other side of the Border*  
Mathieu Dupuis, School of Industrial Relations, University of Montreal

*The Reindustrialization of the U.S.: Tonawanda Powertrain since the Great Recession*  
Evren Dincer, Uludağ University

*Auto Manufacturing in Buffalo since the Great Recession: A Managerial Perspective*  
Steve Finch, Plant Manager, GM Tonawanda Powertrain

*Labor Management Relations and Restructuring in Manufacturing since the Great Recession:  
A Union Perspective*  
Wenceslao Valentin III, President, UAW Local 774

More Information about the Conference Venues:

**Day 1: August 14, 2017**

Cornell in Buffalo, 617 Main Street Suite 300, Buffalo, NY 14203

**Day 2: August 15, 2017**

UAW Local 774 Union Hall, 2939 Niagara Street, Buffalo, NY 14207

For more information please contact:

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