

SOCIOLOGY 2013 SENIOR THESIS WRITERS

**PRESCRIPTIONS AND POLICY:
EXPLORING THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF
PHYSICIANS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ACCOUNT-
ABLE CARE ORGANIZATION MODEL**



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ABSTRACT

My thesis explores the causes and consequences of physicians' attitudes towards healthcare policy at the clinical level. The recent introduction of expansive healthcare reform legislation highlights the importance of ensuring that policy is adequately received and adopted at the clinical interface. Using the Accountable Care Organization (ACO) model as a descriptive lens, I survey over 130 physicians to assess both overall response to the new policy as well as possible structural factors that could affect attitudes including decision power, patient control, financial incentives, and administrative organization. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, I explore physicians' assessments of the ACO model and consequently the practical implications of these attitudes with regards to implementation of policy objectives. The results indicate that different structural factors matter in terms of explaining positive versus negative assessments of the ACO model. In particular, perceptions of patient control and future earning potential are strongly and significantly associated with positive policy opinions, while concerns over loss of decision power under the new model are closely associated with the formulation of negative ACO assessments. Perceptions of power also appear to be closely linked to adherence to ACO cost objectives at the clinical level. Additionally, my findings suggest that attitudes towards the ACO model as well as the quality of the administrative implementation plan also relate to integration of the policy guidelines into clinical practice. In the end, the results emphasize the importance of the physician perspective in terms of healthcare policy implementation and suggest possible strategies for administrators to help ensure successful adoption of future healthcare reform policies.

**HEAD AND HEART WORK:
BOSTON COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND
THEIR APPROACHES TO BUILDING PARTICIPATION
AND CAPACITY IN MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES**



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ABSTRACT

My thesis identifies four distinct approaches of community engagement and capacity building used by community-based organizations (CBOs) in the Boston area. Using qualitative interview data, I examine the strategies used to both encourage participation and strengthen marginalized communities along the dimensions of programming philosophy and bureaucratic structure. Ultimately, I focus on the interaction of the programming philosophy of the organizations and their practitioners and the bureaucratic structure of the organizations to identify the four distinct approaches at the intersection of these dimensions. I label the four approaches: multiple programs/specific community resident services, community-led campaigns, and issue-based campaigns, identifying the specific features of each, and concluding with the benefits and limitations of each approach. These four approaches describe the strategies used by organizations to engage community members within the organization, build community capacity to strengthen the community at large, and encourage participation both within the organization and in the larger community. Community participation on an individual organizational scale can encourage broader political participation in community members, which leads to a more involved citizenry and a more equitable democratic society (Fung and Wright 2001; Fung 2004). My findings suggest that both practitioners' philosophies about how best to impact a community and the organizational structure and bureaucracy affect an organization's outreach strategies and community building efforts, and that the interaction of these two dimensions generates four distinct approaches to community engagement, participation, and capacity building.

**"ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?":
HOW COLLEGE STUDENTS USE INTERPERSONAL AND NON-
INTERPERSONAL DETERMINANTS TO FORM TRUST IN THE
HEALTHCARE SETTING**



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ABSTRACT

Although previous studies have investigated the processes of trust formation in the patient-provider relationship, there are few studies that look specifically at college students. Trust is a complex topic and has implications for patient satisfaction, compliance and quality of life. College students are a vulnerable population with many health needs. Through ethnographic interviews, I looked at how college students perceive and form trust in the healthcare setting. Overall, college students are trusting of healthcare providers. This study weighed in on the debate between interpersonal and non-interpersonal determinants of trust, and found that interpersonal determinants are more significant to trust formation. Additionally, this study found that there are three clusters/mechanisms of trust formation—competence-based, communication-based and confidentiality-based. Data illustrate that competency is the most critical component of trust formation. However, unlike previous research, patients in this study do not use external markers to determine provider competency. Instead, competence is socially constructed through interpersonal cues and interactions. This exchange is critical because it influences whether patients follow treatments, return to the provider and trust him/her. When interpersonal cues are positive, so are perceptions of competence, and thus, trust. Interpersonal cues are particularly powerful, and also promote patient communication, which then also impacts trust. The confidentiality-based model is a non-interpersonal determinant of trust formation, and also proved significant. Overall, college students base trust more on interpersonal determinants than non-interpersonal determinants, and these three models above work together to promote trust in the healthcare setting. This study emphasizes that trust is a conglomerate of many factors, and that interpersonal skills, which are not always prioritized in medicine, are critical to effective care.

**GENERAL THEORY OF SELECTIVITY:
THE INFLUENCE OF COLLEGE SOCIALIZATION ON STU-
DENT TEACHERS' EDUCATIONAL VALUES**



LAURA SIOBHAN HINTON
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ABSTRACT

There are currently two main sides that emerge from the debate about educational philosophies: those who believe in a well-rounded education that helps students develop both academically and personally, and those who believe in an intellectual education that focuses on students' acquisition of knowledge. Research presumes that teachers develop their educational philosophies during their teaching experience (e.g. see Lortie, 2002), but how do teachers develop their educational philosophies prior to teaching? In this thesis, I investigate the influence of college socialization on student teachers' educational values, as exemplified through their educational philosophies and beliefs about student engagement. Through interview data, I find that the selectivity of a college, defined by its admissions rate, influences the socialization process of student teachers during college. Highly selective colleges espouse well-rounded educational values, creating environments in which students engage academically and socially through extracurricular activities. Less selective colleges articulate intellectual philosophies, creating environments in which students are less likely to be engaged socially, focusing instead on their coursework. Through the socialization experiences in these environments, student teachers adopt the educational values of their college. These findings have implications for the socialization and recruitment of future teachers, as well as the children in their classrooms.

**BRIDGING THE GAP:
SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
IN THE DESEGREGATED PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL**



ETHYL LOUISE HYLTON
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ABSTRACT

Studies of desegregated schools have generally focused on either social integration or academic achievement when examining minority student experiences. While research shows that achievement gaps and social isolation persist in these schools (LaMura 2008; Ispa-Landa 2011; Holland 2012), little is known about whether social integration—within a desegregated school—is at all related to minority students' prospects for academic success. This thesis seeks to bridge this gap in scholarship on desegregated schools, by asking how social integration and academic achievement are linked for minority students in desegregated schools.

Using semi-structured interviews with 38 students at two desegregated high schools, along with observations and informal interviews with school leaders, I show that the relationship between social integration and academic achievement is both smaller and less straightforward than theory would predict. My study takes place in Massachusetts, where over 3,000 students participate in a voluntary busing program known as METCO. The study design allows for comparisons between two schools where the racial and socioeconomic composition of the student body differs. I find that when inequality in the school is higher and more visible, minority students perceive social and academic success to be linked and suffer feelings of relative disadvantage if they stand outside of the school's social mainstream. But the actual connection between integration and achievement is complex, and there is no consistent pattern between social integration, per se, and achievement levels within the METCO student sample. My findings hold implications for both the theory behind and the practice of school desegregation in the U.S.

**ASCRIPTIVE MATCH AND THE MINORITY
SCHOOL EXPERIENCE:
STRATEGIES AND ACHIEVEMENT**



VÉRONIQUE TARA IRWIN
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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents the findings of a quantitative analysis of the association between ascriptive match and inner city minority students' school experience and achievement. I address the heterogeneity of students' school experiences using Prudence Carter's influential typology of cultural mainstreamers, non-compliant believers, and cultural straddlers. I quantify these three student strategy types using data from a social-emotional learning program (4RS). Using hierarchical linear modeling, I investigate two research questions: (1) Is teacher race or gender associated with the formation of minority public school students' strategies within Carter's typology? and (2) How do student strategies and/or ascriptive match influence academic achievement, as measured by standardized test scores? I also ask whether student race or gender interacts with any of these associations.

The results of this thesis suggest that the association between teachers' ascribed characteristics and students' position within Carter's typology is strongest for Black male students (in a sample of Black and Hispanic fifth graders). Additionally, girls and Hispanic students are more likely to be cultural mainstreamers and less likely to be noncompliant believers than boys and Black students, respectively. This finding indicates that Black males are at the highest risk of an adverse school experience. In relation to the second research question, I find no association between noncompliant believing and student test scores in this study, but cultural mainstreaming is significantly associated with a modest gain in both math and reading. The association between cultural straddling and test performance is tempered by student gender.

**FAITH, HEALING, AND HEALTH:
EXAMINING HOW THE BLACK CHURCH INFLUENCES
HEALTH BEHAVIORS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY**



JOWANNA RENAE MALONE
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ABSTRACT

A significant portion of black Americans are heavily involved in church (Lincoln & Maniya 1990; Billingsley & Caldwell 1991). Research shows that the church provides a space that is beyond spiritual guidance and rather a space in which many blacks formulate multiple social connections as well as learn things they can implement in their life outside of church (George et al. 1989). The church has demonstrated an effect on black health in both positive (Hummert et al. 1999) and negative (Markens et al. 2002) ways. Due to the health disparities that overwhelmingly affect the black community—like hypertension, diabetes, obesity, etc. (Williams 1998)—, which can be prevented through improvements in diet and exercise, it is important to further examine the ways in which the church impacts black Americans, specifically in regards to black health behavior. By what pathways does church influence these health practices, if at all? What does this influence mean for how the black community navigates health advice between the church and the formal medical community? I explored these questions and set out to expand on the current research concerning these issues by conducting a qualitative study, interviewing 29 black congregants from three predominantly black churches in the Boston area. I found that the church environment influences its black congregants in varying degrees as a contingent of congregants relied heavily on the church, another group relied heavily on doctors, and a majority of respondents upheld both sources as valid providers of health information and inspiration. The church also influenced the intersection between the respondents and the formal medical community across my sample, as distrust towards the medical field was a prominent trend. These findings suggest that researchers should take the church more seriously as a source of health information in the black community as black congregants may use both the medical field and the church to pursue their health activities.

**RACE, GENDER AND WALL STREET:
AN IN-DEPTH STUDY ON DIVERSITY INTERNSHIP PRO-
GRAMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON BLACK STUDENTS IN THE
FINANCE INDUSTRY**



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ABSTRACT

Investment banks rely on the use of extensive summer internship programs to determine who will be selected to pursue full-time job opportunities each year. Similar to the affirmative action policies that have historically been used to help minorities gain acceptance into college, diversity specific internship programs are now used to help minorities secure internships in this industry. Although these programs and initiatives have been around for some time, it is worth exploring how they influence the experiences of the students who participate in them. Using intersectional analysis, this thesis seeks to explore how the complex relationship between race and gender influences the taken experience in the finance industry. Through 22 in-depth qualitative interviews of black Ivy League students who participated in investment banking diversity internships, I find that gender can only partially explain variations in experience between male and female respondents in regard to their perceived feelings of isolation and ability to break into informal networks of communication. Rather, the most significant variations can be seen between those students who participated in firm specific diversity program as compared with those who participated in the Sponsors for Educational Opportunity Career Program. This thesis adds to the existing literature by focusing on the process by which individuals gain entry into the finance industry and the findings of this study will be useful in furthering our understanding of how workplace inequality originates and is reproduced over time.

**BEYOND VICTIM-BLAMING:
STRATEGIES OF RAPE RESPONSE THROUGH NARRA-
TIVE**



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ABSTRACT

This study examines rape response through a meaning making approach. Using narratives in Saturday Night's Untold Stories of Sexual Assault at Harvard, an anonymous magazine published annually by Harvard's Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (OSAPR), I investigate the personal narrative strategies individuals employ in crafting empowering or hegemonic responses to rape. Prior research has centered on a limited understanding of rape and the dichotomous reaction to blame the victim or not. However, due to access problems, rape scholarship has not focused on the victim's personal response to rape. I bridge this gap in the literature by documenting victims' strategies in identity—construction after the traumatic event. Drawing from 33 anonymous narratives, I divide the strategies into empowering and hegemonic response categories. The data set is unique because it engages with rape victims (a difficult to access population) in a way that does not re-victimize them or encourage response bias. I find that, among others, an available strategy in rape response is one where victims use a narrative of self-blame in an empowering way. My findings challenge the assumption that meaning making only occurs by situating one's story in a socially constructed "family framework" (Pasupathi and Weeks 2010). Instead, in my analysis I find that individuals make meaning and sense of their experiences by distancing themselves from both the traumatic experience and preexisting social narratives of rape. I suggest that future research investigate the temporal sequencing of these narrative strategies, which the nature of my data does not allow me to assess, but are necessary to extend beyond the dichotomous understanding of rape response. I conclude by discussing the ways in which my findings can be beneficial to health care practitioners in developing case study materials to assist rape victims in the healing process.

**RIPE FOR REFORM:
THE SHIFTING DYNAMICS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
CENTER AND HOSPITAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE
HEALTH CARE FIELD IN BOSTON**



JUDY PARK
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ABSTRACT

Community health centers (CHCs) represent the largest safety net primary care network in the United States. Physician-activists founded the first health centers in the 1960s with the intent to reform the health care system by calling for a renewed focus on the community and attention to the social determinants of health. Yet, the historic dependence of CHCs on elite medical institutions for organizational survival has tempered this goal over the years. In this thesis, I explore whether such dynamics are changing in historical data collected from the archives of the Boston Globe to piece together a contextual narrative about the transformation of the health care field since 1980. In examining these events, I employ Fligstein and McAdams' (2011) concept of Strategic Action Fields as a guiding framework. My analysis suggests that Massachusetts' current focus on cost-containment and quality care is moving the patient-centered and cost-effective CHCs to an advantageous position while simultaneously undermining the position of hospitals, which are facing criticism for wasteful practices. Furthermore, the flexible structure of accountable care organizations generates a new realm of contestation within which CHCs have the opportunity to further challenge hospital dominance. Overall, a CHC-led reform of the health care system could constitute a potential settlement of the currently unstable and shifting field.

**FOSTERING EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS:
VEHICLES FOR MEXICAN MIGRANTS TO ATTAIN SOCIO-
ECONOMIC MOBILITY**



MARCO F. PEREZ-MORENO
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ABSTRACT

Recent census data shows that about 41 percent of all people of Mexican origin in New York City between the ages of 16 and 19 have dropped out of school, while no other major immigrant group has a dropout rate higher than 20 percent and the overall rate for the city is less than 9 percent. According to theories of segmented assimilation, the disparately high dropout rate of Mexican students can be attributed to their detrimental conditions in the United States, such as their low human capital, negative social ties, and low English proficiency. Although previous research has analyzed the factors that influence the assimilation of 1.5 and second generation Mexican migrants after they settle in the United States, few studies have explored the experiences of Mexican migrants in their communities of origin, and the impact of these experiences on their assimilation to their new societies in the United States. Therefore, this study explores how initial migration motivations as well as educational aspirations in Mexico impact subsequent educational attainment in the United States. Using data collected through 62 in-depth interviews conducted in Puebla and New York City, this study shows that high educational aspirations have a significant, positive impact on the educational attainment of 1.5 and second generation migrants. Moreover, this study demonstrates that Mexican migrants that move to the United States for economic and labor reasons and with low educational aspirations will have a low educational attainment and will be unlikely to complete high school. This study also shows that family reunification motivations for migration tend to have a negative impact on the educational attainment of Mexican migrants. This is especially the case if children were left behind by both parents, if the length of the family separation exceeded 3 years, and if the children developed a feeling of abandonment and low educational aspirations.

**RECOLLECTING CELIA SÁNCHEZ MANDULEY:
MOTHER OF A NATION, NATIVE HEROINE, AND CURA-
TOR OF CUBA'S REVOLUTIONARY LEGACY**



MIRIAM EILITTÄ PSYCHAS
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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I ask the questions: How did Castro's Cuba envision the role of the mother? More importantly, how does the work and figurative of Cuban revolutionary and Fidel's mother, Celia Sánchez Manduley, complicate how we understand that vision? For this project, I analyze the speeches and policies of Fidel Castro during the first two decades of the Revolution. I also conducted archival research in Havana, where I gathered important documents on Celia's process of archiving the revolution as well as poetry and articles, written about her in newspapers and magazines over the last three decades.

Fidel's policies on women and mothers from 1960 to 1980 are the focus of my first chapter, where I argue that, accompanying Fidel's generally very progressive policies regarding women, motherhood retained a privileged position within the Revolution. Fidel imagines motherhood as grounding his people and other nations within different temporal and historical trajectories, securing the continuation of a lineage and the connection between past, present, and future. While the revolution would greatly valorize biological motherhood, childless Celia would still serve as the example of an ideal cubana. In Chapter 2, I consider poetry written about Celia Sánchez after her death, in which Celia's figurations as a mother unexpectedly allows us to consider the ideal of the revolution as a multi-gendered, indigenous entity, connected to the earth and transcending time. In fact, during her life, Celia would literally work with time and the construction of memory as the founder and primary architect of the Revolution, the focus of Chapter 3.

**ASSUMING THEIR PLACES:
WORKING-CLASS STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN HIGHER
EDUCATION**



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ABSTRACT

The expansion of higher education that occurred in the latter half of the twentieth century has been hailed as a concurrent expansion of equality in the United States, a broadening of economic opportunity for those of the lower class. Yet, while working-class students are, as a result, attending college at increasing rates, their representation in elite institutions remains far below that of their wealthier peers. Thus, recent working-class literature has focused on these students' experiences in higher education in relation to those of students of higher socioeconomic status. Little comparative analysis, that is, exists to examine divergent experiences within the working-class: why do the majority of working-class students attend community college, relatively few elite universities? This thesis uses in-depth, qualitative interviews conducted with nine working-class students—five from Bunker Hill Community College and four from Northeastern University—in order to better understand the paths taken by these students through higher education—the factors that contributed to their matriculation and, through attendance, what social mobility was obtained. I find that there are profound differences in the orientations of these students towards higher education, despite the comparatively similar socioeconomic status from which they originate. Though pre-existing literature is generalizing, treating the working-class, as a group, holistically I argue that such is an overly simplistic view. For some of these students, college is a choice—for others, assumed. Through a comparative analysis of these nine working-class students, I will show that intra-class comparisons, too, are necessary; there exists significant stratification within the group.

**DRINKING IN ATHLETICS:
A LOOK AT SUBCULTURAL INFLUENCES ON
STUDENT DRINKING HABITS**



ADAM HAMILTON RIEGEL
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ABSTRACT

Modern research has taken a number of approaches in an attempt to explain different levels of drinking in college and the sprawling binge drinking epidemic. These studies investigate macro-sociological influences, self-selection processes, or network influences to understand these habits. These studies resulted in a partial understanding of college students' drinking. They found data showing the association between drinking characteristics different independent variables such as gender, race, the region of the country you are from, and being an athlete. However, none of these variables provided a complete explanation for students' drinking habits. The purpose of this paper is to look at the connection between the subcultures of individual sports teams and the drinking habits of their members. To study this association, 380 student surveys from sixteen teams and a set of non-athlete males and non-athlete females were collected. The survey collected demographic information and details about the five drinking habit subsets—the average amount consumed, how frequently a student drinks, what types of alcohol a student drinks, the format or style in which a student drinks, and with whom a student drinks. The results were then analyzed with comparison of means tests, chi-squared statistics, and a varying regression models. The findings of this study indicate that certain teams have very specific influences on the drinking habits of their team members. The presence of these team subcultures provides a better understanding of students' drinking habits, and also creates a new basis to more effectively reduce binge-drinking levels in college.

**THE GOLDEN HOUR:
VIOLENCE INTERVENTION, ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE,
AND THE RECOGNITION OF VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC
HEALTH PROBLEM**



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ABSTRACT

Urban community violence has long been considered a social and criminal justice problem, one that lies under the purview of the police and prison system. Healthcare providers in Boston during the 1980s and 1990s deemed violence to be an inevitability of life, and one that medicine was powerless to impact. Victims of violence were treated in hospitals for their physical wounds and then promptly discharged, without comprehensive follow-up or attention to the social environment in which violence occurs. Yet, in what appears to be a rapid transformation, three hospitals in Boston established violence intervention programs in the mid- to late- 2000s. Many hospitals now connect victims of violence and their families to psychological, emotional and community-based resources. This thesis applies theories from the literature on organizational change to explain the hospital's transition to a new model of care for violence victims. Drawing from in-depth interviews with healthcare providers, including trauma surgeons, emergency medicine physicians, nurses, program advocates, and public health workers, I identify two major classes of factors that drove the change in the paradigm of care. First, violence is now viewed as a public health problem. As such, institutions have shifted strategies to reduce violence through prevention rather than through punishment of violent offenders. Second, a growing dissatisfaction among healthcare providers in emergency and Trauma departments motivated providers to design a new model of care. Providers view the prevailing "treat and street" model of care as wasteful, ineffective, and harmful to victims of violence, and violence intervention programs address many of the problems with this model. My findings support an integrated theory of change that considers the external environment as well as intra-organizational dynamics, and demonstrates how organizational structures can pose barriers to transformative change.

**AGAINST THE LEGACY OF APARTHEID:
THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY, TRANSPORT, AND HOUS-
ING RESOURCES IN REDUCING SOUTH AFRICA'S
RACIAL GAP IN EDUCATION**



CHRISTOPHER HAoyu SUN
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ABSTRACT

South Africa faces at the moment a national crisis. Despite the best intentions of the prevailing African National Congress, the enduring legacy of the apartheid casts a dark shadow on the country's future. Severe educational inequality, intrinsically linked to economic and lifestyle disparities, persists between the white and non-white population, the latter grappling with high dropout rates and limited career opportunities. This thesis thus seeks to advance existing literature of South Africa's education racial gap, in the dual prospect of updating contemporary socio-education theory and appraising for the South African government a new sphere of scholastic growth. Employing the sizeable Cape Area Panel Study dataset, I explore a hitherto understudied unit, the household, as categorized by three main resource types: access to technology, access to transport, and physical living conditions. In other words, by how much does the availability of certain products and facilities in the domestic arrangement explain the education racial gap? Based on a series of rigorous logit and OLS regressions, this study finds that household resources—especially computer ownership and access to the car/motorcycle—fully explain and inverse the education racial gap of black students, as measured by school enrollment status, years of education completed, and highest grade finished. Furthermore, it observes that the education gap for colored adolescents is greatly reduced. Ultimately, it is evident from the significant findings of this thesis that further research on the association between household resources and educational success be conducted, with major repercussions for both the field of education and South Africa at large.