SOCIOLOGY 2012 SENIOR THESIS WRITERS

BEYOND THE TIGER MOM:
DIFFERENCES IN ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES BETWEEN CHINESE-AMERICAN AND WHITE-AMERICAN STUDENTS

DEBRA CHANG

ADVISOR: MARY BRINTON

ABSTRACT

With the recent release of Amy Chua's Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother, there has been increased interest in the academic success of Chinese Americans. Previous research has tried to explain the reasons for this academic success with a "model minority" label, but there remains a gap in the literature regarding differences in academic experiences between Chinese-American students and other racial-ethnic groups, including with parents, teachers, and peers. In this study, I aim to answer the following main research questions: 1) How do the motivations behind academic achievement differ between Chinese-American high school students and white-American high school students? 2) Is there a difference in the way that these ethnic groups interact with various social actors who are a part of the learning experience (parents, teachers, and peers)? 3) How are academic motivations and interactions with parents, teachers, and peers different between male and female students? Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, I surveyed 118 students and conducted 30 interviews of students at a high-achieving suburban high school. The results of the study reveal a difference in internal motivation between the two ethnic groups and tell a story of the stress these high school students face in regards to academic achievement. This research can be used to offer a better understanding of high school students' educational experiences and to explain differences among ethnic groups and genders in how they relate to others at school and to their parents.

DIGGING DEEPER:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL ORIGINS OF HIV-RELATED STIGMA AMONGST ZULU YOUTH

WHITNEY DONALDSON

ADVISOR: MARY JO DEFRECHEUD GOOD

ABSTRACT

My thesis is a qualitative analysis of the origins of HIV-related stigmas amongst the Zulu youth population in Durban, South Africa. Using data collected through interviews and focus groups with Durban youth and health educators, I challenge Erving Goffman's microsociological work on stigma, proposing that rather than being a product of interpersonal interactions, stigma is a product of institutional and cultural processes – what the origins of stigma – HIV-related stigma, to be exact – are. HIV-related stigma amongst the Zulu youth population has become a major deterrent for HIV-testing, safe sex practices, and HIV status disclosure, and examining its root causes provides insight as to how to combat and reduce it. Considering the theoretical refinements on health-related stigmas of Bruce Link and Jo Phelan and Mitchell Weiss and Jayashree Ramakishna, I put forth a new framework for studying the origins of HIV-related stigma, arguing that structural and cultural specifics of particular locations and around particular diseases must be taken into account. In other words, the origins of HIV-related stigma are not universal but rather deeply embedded in the unique structures, belief systems, and relationships of power in a given society. I also argue that these specifics must be taken into account when designing and implementing a discussion of how they influence and shape one another to produce HIV-related stigma. In terms of the Zulu youth population in Durban, I have found that the national political structure, the structure of health education, and elements of the Zulu cultural script all lay at the root of HIV-related stigma.

LIFE IN BLACK AND WHITE:
MIXED-RACE IDENTITY AND ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

VICTORIA ELYSE HARMAN

ADVISOR: TIMOTHY NELSON

ABSTRACT

The past ten years since the Census first allowed respondents to choose more than one race, the number of multiracial children in the United States has grown significantly. Although there is a large gap in sociological literature investigating the outcomes of this growing population, I investigate how variations in mixed-race identity among a sample of 15 Boston-area college students are associated with academic experiences. Using data gathered from in-depth, semi-structured interviews, I sort respondents into identity groups based on Rockquemore and Brunsma's mixed-race identity typology to demonstrate how variations in identity and validation experiences are related to educational experiences ranging from relationships with institutional agents to intellectual pursuits. I conclude that benefit of variation in educational experiences associated with key dimensions of racial identity.

A POLITICS OF BLOOD:
MARKING THE BOUNDARIES OF RACE, CLASS, GENDER AND NATION IN ONLINE WHITE SEPARATIST DISCOURSE

KERI HARTMAN

ADVISOR: JENNIFER SILVA

ABSTRACT

This thesis tests the limits of the theory that American whites across the political spectrum draw upon "traditional" discourses of race, class, and gender to "make sense" of racial inequality. Drawing on Dorothy Smith's (1990) the newly-emergent method of virtual ethnography, I conduct qualitative analysis of white separatist discussion on the Opposing Views forum at StormFront, an English-language white separatist web forum where white separatists and their opponents actively engage in boundary construction along lines of race, gender, and nation. I find that the unifying element in white separatist discourse is the idea of a white genocide, which coalesces elsewhere surrounding the decline of white working-class men in the United States at work and at home, assigning them a racialized meaning that allows white separatists to "make sense" of their marginalization. I argue that the idea of a white genocide is a "master frame" for white genocide allows white separatists to weave their claims to dominance as whites across class and to assimilate Americans, which gives their chaotic lives meaning and salvages their sense of dignity and pride in the wake of changing structural conditions.

A SPIRITUAL HOME AND A SPRINGBOARD FOR ACTION:
SPACE, CONSENSUS, AND REPERTOIRES OF CONTENTION IN OCCUPY BOSTON

EMILY JOAN HOGAN

ADVISOR: GENEVIEVE CRAMFORD

ABSTRACT

Politicians, the media and the American public have grappled with the question of the Occupy Movement, its meaning and its importance since the movement's inception in September 2011. I propose that a sociologically analysis of the movement's two most important repertoires — occupation and consensus democracy — can shed some light on why the movement achieved some degree of success and why it has subsequently declined. I analyze interviews of 30 Occupy Boston participants about how and why they chose to engage with the movement. My results show that protesters believed that occupation was a successful tactic: it called media attention to disinstitutionalized inequality, it activated people who were "on the sidelines" and it "prefigured" the society they hoped to create. Occupy Boston was ended by the forced loss of its public space in December 2011, the movement has had to make tactical changes, and now actions like marches and demonstrations have become more important. However, the consensus decision-making process that Occupy uses lends itself to inaction. Members of the movement who want to see action cope with this problem through innovation in their tactics, such as staging so-called "autonomous actions" that are not subject to the consensus process. I conclude that the study of repertoires can be a useful tool for understanding the development of social movements.

FIGURE SKATING IN HARLEM?:
THE POTENTIAL AND VIABILITY OF SPORTS-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN HARLEM

EMILY ANNE HUGHES

ADVISOR: DAVID AGER

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the impact of sports-based youth development programs on the youth and communities they serve. Many young people in underprivileged areas fall prey to the lure of crime and gangs, but given the opportunity, these youth can make positive decisions and become their socioeconomic status. Since the 1990s there has been a push toward positive youth development through program-based initiatives. Sports-based youth development programs (SBYDP) use sports as a means for positive youth development. In this thesis, I look at the intervention of sports and education in these programs—specifically how these build upon each other—by examining data I collected through observation and interviews with staff at Harlem Children's Zone, a well-known and well-funded sports-based youth development program in Harlem, NY. My work will contribute to the field of sports-based youth development programs in three ways: providing an exploratory and in-depth view of what sports-based youth development programs are and how they run, the benefits the programs deliver to the youth who participate, and the impact these programs have on the larger community. The findings in this study could have a large impact on the future of youth development, and change the focus of public funding for after-school programs.

THE SOCIAL INSTITUTION:
PERCEPTION OF MENTAL HEALTH IN THE INSTITUTION OF HARVARD COLLEGE

JENNIFER KIM

ADVISOR: SETH HANNAH

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the theoretical bodies of work surrounding the social institution and the place of mental health within the institution of Harvard College. Institutions are understood by Talcott Parsons and Charles Coleman as a social body with a stake in upholding a set of values, maintaining a normative influence over its members. With the theories of Erving Goffman, I bring a more nuanced definition to this concept of the institution. It is not a given that an individual will conform to an institution's norms—an individual may choose not to conform and even those individuals that do conform may have opinions that remain unaligned with the norms. I specifically examine how Harvard College functions according to this definition of an institution and then apply this model to mental health. I also examine how members' perceptions of the institutional norms affect their behaviors.

I used qualitative research methods to conduct 32 interviews of both students and staff at Harvard College. I found that just as an invitation has expectations that hold a normative influence on its members, this model applies to the topic of mental health. Due to the pre-existing normative influences for the members of Harvard to take advantage of opportunities and to achieve high levels of success, mental health is viewed as a detriment to that norm. Consequently, these perceptions of institutional norms affect members' behavior, discouraging an open dialogue about mental health struggles.

WHEN WILL THE VIOLENCE END?:
EXAMINING THE PERPETUATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST STREET CHILDREN IN LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

STEPHANIE KUEI

ADVISOR: TAMARA KAY

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the perpetuation of and responses to violence against street children in La Paz, Bolivia. Using ethnographic data, I argue that the ways in which the street children interact with various institutions – for example, personnel at governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations – define and frame violence against street children as a social problem and how the different labels that they place on street children affect their respective responses to and actions in addressing the issue of violence against street children.

Interviews were conducted over a two month period with various workers at nonprofit organizations, such as social workers, psychologists, and organization directors. Interviews were supplemented by various readings on the state of street children, human rights in Bolivia, and publications by the Bolivian government concerning street children.

The ways in which the different populations label street children ultimately have great predictive power in how they respond to instances of violence against street children. Findings indicate that the negative labels that the general public, police, and the government place upon street children tend to encourage non-response to violence against street children and work to perpetuate instances of violence. Labels that view street children more as victims than delinquents discourage the perpetuation of violence.

"GESTIÓN"-ING THE STATE:
COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF STATE-SOCIETY INTERACTIONS IN RURAL PERU

HERRISSA DEBORAH LAMOTHE

ADVISOR: JOCELYN VITERNA

ABSTRACT

Two nearly identical education projects operating in similar contexts in Peru, and using similar strategies, end up with vast differences in outcome. While one education project is able to scale up—its project components regionalized to affect education in the entire region—the other education project is not able to achieve this goal. In order to deepen our understanding of these differences in project outcome, this thesis conducts a thorough analysis of the two education projects. Through this analysis I find that key differences in which community groups the NGO teams engaged with during their projects had a tremendous impact on project outcomes. Further deepening of the analysis identifies a key mechanism called gestión, through which communities interact with local state institutions. I find that the role played by certain community organizations in organizing their communities for gestión can play a critical role in allowing NGOs to scale-up successfully.

SOUTHERN BLACK MASCULINITY IN THE MIDDLE CLASS

HUGH GREGORY MARTIN

ADVISOR: ORLANDO PATTERSON

ABSTRACT

Now numbering over 18 million, many black men in America are struggling to understand their roles in a country in the midst of ongoing social and demographic changes (Wenda 2007). In contemporary America, black males find themselves in a unique position, characterized by unprecedented opportunities and promise for the future, but also by many pitfalls, and remnants of a painful past.

This phenomenon however, is no new area of inquiry. A large number of urban ethnographic studies have examined low-income African-American communities and the individuals that reside within them (particularly black males), and the body of research on this group is far from limited (Anderson 1978; 1990; 1999; Billson 1996; 1972; Hunter and Davis 1994; Kornblum and Williams 1985; Majors and Billson 1992; Venkatesh 2000). Such studies focus on the prevalence of violent behavior, unstable familial relationships and unemployment as characteristics of the black male experience in inner-city communities undergoing deindustrialization. However, while much attention has been paid to impoverished and working class blacks in these predominantly African-American communities, especially in the rural South, middle-and-upper class blacks have been studied substantially less than their counterparts, even though they have faced many of the same obstacles and barriers to success (Lacy 2007; Patillo 1999; Sammons 2004). As they too, are considered one of the most marginalized groups in American society, the focus of my research was to understand how middle class southern black males construct their gendered sense of self, and the ways in which it functions in their daily lives. While my research yielded mixed results, it draws attention to the growing heterogeneity among black males in contemporary America.

TWISTED SISTERS:
WOMEN'S COMIC AND CULTURAL ACTION

SAMANTHA ALEXIS MEIER

ADVISOR: MATT KALLINS, TAMARA KAY

ABSTRACT

My thesis examines the experiences of artists involved in two of the seminal all-women underground anthologies, Women's Comix (1972-1992) and Tits & Clits (1972-1987). By examining the differences in attitudes about art as a form of political expression, political viewpoints, artistic influences, and the production of these two comics, I argue that Women's Comix, in contrast to Tits & Clits, between the two generations of artists in Women's Comix, I aim to illuminate how and when artists perceive themselves to be participating in what I term "cultural action." Drawing on the work of "new social movements scholars" like Alberto Melucci (1989; 1995), I define cultural action as the fighting of "political" battles on "cultural" grounds, like the production of visual art. I critique theories which maintain a rigid division between cultural action and political or organization action by schematizing art as an instrument for other forms of action. I suggest instead that cultural action and political action are mutually constitutive, and that cultural action can lead to political action, and vice versa. I draw upon both their political and artistic repertoires in the expressive act of art production. I build on theories of art production as a social process imbued with political meaning articulated by Bourdieu (1983) and Becker (1982) to examine how subjective analyses of cultural action are related to the artistic field and art world in which artists carry out their work. I further call attention to the difficulties in reconciling individual artistic and political motivations with collective frameworks for cultural action.

DIVERGENT PATHS:
NATIONALISM AND SECESSIONISM IN CATALONIA AND THE BASQUE COUNTRY

STEPHANIE N. OVIEDO

ADVISOR: OAKA DAN IZA DING

ABSTRACT

During the 1990s, renowned Spanish scholars such as Juan Díez Medrano predicted that although independence the Basque Country and Catalonia was unlikely in the coming years, support for Basque and Catalan nationalist parties is likely to become increasingly moderate. Yet, Díez Medrano's claim, in the 2000s, the opposite seems to have event seems to have followed this pattern, while the Basque movement has been on a steady decline. This, in turn, not only contradicts predictions, but also changes a long historical trend of higher support for separatism in the Basque Country than in Catalonia as the latter now seems to be much more separatist than the former. Although several factors such as leadership, changes in political discourse and the involvement in formal politics are factors that can account for part of this change, there is one more factor that most scholars have not accounted for when analyzing social movements: the European Union. With its regional policies of redistribution, its funds for cultural preservation, its laws that ban "hate speech" and its promotion of diversity and even its benefits towards small states, the EU has changed the economic and political panorama for nationalist movements as well as the attractiveness of independence for citizens in these areas. Thus, this thesis will aim to solve this puzzle by answering the following two questions: (1) Why has support for Catalan secessionism strengthened in the past decade while support for Basque independence seems to be waning? (2) How does the European Union factor into this change?

THE LANGUAGE QUESTION IN NAMIBIAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

YVETTE RAMIREZ

ADVISOR: MARY BRINTON

ABSTRACT

Like other multilingual African nations, Namibia and South Africa struggle to resolve the Language Question. In other words, they must determine what roles to allocate to the African and European languages spoken by their populations in ways that are sensitive to their histories with colonialism as well as to the present demands brought upon by globalization. This thesis examines the Language Question in primary school education. It uses the interviews of 37 teachers and principals in four schools in Namibia and South Africa (two predominantly black and two predominantly coloured) in order to understand contemporary attitudes about English, Afrikaans, and indigenous African languages, as well as mother tongue education. It also examines educators' experiences with their schools' language policies.

The study demonstrates that Namibian and South African teachers agree that English is a prestigious language that is typically associated with high socioeconomic status and high-quality education. There is a high demand for English-medium education since parents appear to believe that fluency in the English language will help their children overcome the social and economic disparities they inherited from the apartheid era. Although teachers and principals face relatively few challenges teaching English to children who do not speak English at home, they believe mother tongue education is best for all students since it promotes their academic success and the preservation of their languages and cultures. Ultimately, respondents recommend that their schools continue to offer mother tongue classes in primary school, but unanticipated linguistic barriers to students' academic success. I argue that the underlying issue in the discourse about the Language Question in education is essentially race-based social and economic disparities.

IN THE SHARK TANK:
THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDERED VALUATION AND THE VENTURE CAPITAL FINANCING OF WOMEN'S TECHNOLOGY START-UPS

ALISHA DIANA RAMOS

ADVISOR: ERIN REED

ABSTRACT

Only four to nine percent of all venture capital (VC) funding goes towards women-led start-ups each year. Inspired by this gender gap, this thesis explores the influence of gender on the venture capital (VC) fundraising process. The study examines obstacles female technology start-up founders may face in gaining access to VC funding, as well as the characteristics needed to overcome these obstacles. By using gender as a variable, the study uncovers the effects of human capital and social capital in the VC fundraising process. I argue that gender is socially constructed, and that this social construction influences perceptions of structural factors such as education level, VC interests, and how the risks of female start-up founders access to VC funding.

The study found that while human capital and social capital both have a positive impact in obtaining access to VC, other endogenous and cultural/cognitive factors must be examined in the future. The key finding of this study was the existence of gendered valuation, a shared cultural belief among actors within the VC industry that the ventures of male founders are more valuable than those of female founders. This gendered valuation is made manifest in and replicated through various mechanisms within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, including social interactions, the gendered division of roles, and symbolic systems. These mechanisms are reproduced not only within the separate institutions of VC and start-ups, but between them as well, thereby fortifying the belief of gendered valuation across the entire entrepreneurial landscape. Moreover, the study found that gender and gendered valuation is a topic of much contention within groups of women and men, which has significant implications for the possibility of institutional change.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE PRISON GED:
BENEFITS, FAILURES, AND THE PRISONER'S PERSPECTIVE

MARISSA ANALIESE REICHEL

ADVISOR: BRUCE WESTERN

ABSTRACT

Approximately 70% of state prison inmates in the United States are high school dropouts, and state inmates on average have a 10th grade education (Western 2006). Most studies that examine the penal education of high school dropouts assess the impact of the GED earned in prison on recidivism and employment outcomes upon release. Research has found that incarceration decreases the probability of GED attainment (Hungerford and Jenkins 2008). I use the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy to examine the impact of the GED earned in prison on literacy scores. My regression analysis compares incarcerated high school dropouts to incarcerated men who earned a GED in prison. I find that earning a GED in prison improves overall literacy levels. If all incarcerated high school dropouts earned a GED in prison, the literacy gap between the general population and the prison population would be closed by over two-thirds (71%). My research highlights a missing link between improved literacy as a result of obtaining a GED in prison and recidivism and employment outcomes. To fill this gap, I conduct ethnographic research at the Florence Crittenton County Correctional Facility (FCCF) with men who are involved in the FCCF GED Program. From these interviews, I learn that inter-inmates are pessimistic about the transformational power of the GED, and pursue it primarily to productively fill time. Given this, I conclude that the potential benefit of the GED program may in part be negated by the low expectations of the participants. The disadvantages faced by the interviewees, including learning disabilities, low socioeconomic status, and bias against offenders, may be so severe as to offset some of the positive effects of the GED.

MOTHERS OF CHANGE?:
DIVERGING RESPONSES TO RAPE IN CAPE TOWN BETWEEN FEMALE CITY COUNCILLORS AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE ACTIVISTS

SOJOURNER ALICE RIVERS

ADVISOR: JOCELYN VITERNA

ABSTRACT

Scholars have long examined the forces placing more women in elected government bodies, with the expectation that more women politicians cause more women-friendly societies. But do women politicians understand their role as advocating for women, and do they facilitate government's improving women's lived experiences? This study examines the relationship between female city councillors and sexual violence in Africa has the 7th highest proportion of women in government in the world and an array of women-friendly legislation, including very progressive ban on sexual violence. Despite these political advancements that should benefit women, South Africa has the highest rate of rape in the world, affecting 1 in 3 women. These rapes often take very brutal forms, such as gang or even infant rape. Consequentially the rights legally promised and symbolically demonstrated to South African women, effectively do not exist in their daily lives. For South Africa, have female politicians been useful in government's addressing rape? To answer this question, I interviewed female city councillors and activists in Cape Town about their understandings of the problem of rape and possible solutions to it. From my data I found that diverging gender and political ideologies as well as conception of the government led to drastically different solutions between the groups. The activists used a radical feminist lens that focused on structural response. The councillors, however, used a nationalist lens that relied on traditional gender norms and law-rape as a problem women should address individually in the private sphere. Thus, they not only placed the burden on women to respond, but also use it as outside of the government's jurisdiction to intervene. So despite the legal progress made regarding rape, women did not prioritize enforcing the laws that could result in change. Recognizing this disconnect in ideology not only clarifies why progressive rape policies are failing in South Africa, but also extends our sociological understanding of representation in political institutions.

PARENTING CHILDREN FROM CHINA:
FOSTERING AN ETHNIC IDENTITY

ALEXA ING STERN

ADVISOR: MARY WATERS

ABSTRACT

Parents who adopt children from China to the United States face many unique challenges due to the transracial and transcultural nature of the adoption. Some parents socialize their children with Chinese culture, while others do not. Drawing from a survey of hundreds of parents, as well as some in-depth interviews, my research explores what factors influence parents' socialization strategy. I will explore the effects of both agency and structure: while some parents follow an assimilationist paradigm and do not want to provide Chinese culture for their children, others would like to but do not have the resources and opportunities to do so.

SUMMER MATTERS:
EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE MOTOR CITY

IMAN CHANTE TAYLOR

ADVISOR: EVELYN BROOKS HIGGINBOTHAM

ABSTRACT

Compensatory education has long been viewed as an efficacious solution to the education-based conundrums facing urban students. That non-mandatory, supplementary education can serve a vital role in the lives of minority children was the premise behind the founding of MotorCity Urban Summer Enrichment (MUSE), an academic summer enrichment program, in the summer of 2008. MUSE, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, was founded in Detroit, Michigan, by undergraduates at Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Denison University. As one of the three co-founders, I, like them, was a former Detroit Public Schools student. We knew firsthand of the great need to provide Detroit youth with academic enrichment and access to educational opportunities, in order to mitigate summer learning losses and strengthen the students' social networks. Additionally, we believed that fostering relationships between college students and our communities was an important opportunity to revitalize grassroots efforts for educational reform at the local level—specifically in regard to Detroit's educational disparities. While we all participated actively in this program, I have sought to understand our efforts from an interdisciplinary intellectual standpoint, that drawing from sociological theory, political science, and educational research, and quantitative and qualitative data analysis. This social engagement thesis posits that summer enrichment programs have important wide-ranging effects on the lives of minority students and should be viewed as necessary resources within low-income communities. Not only do such efforts speak to older traditions of African American activism, but projects like MUSE highlight a unique role for today's college students who are committed to social change.

MULTILEVEL ANALYSIS OF NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURAL EFFECTS ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' SMOKING INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE IN BOSTON

SUSAN SI-YAO WANG

ADVISOR: MARY RUGGIE

ABSTRACT

Background: Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. The earlier in life smoking begins, the easier it is to become addicted. Despite many anti-smoking campaigns targeting high school students, approximately 10.3% of Boston high-school students reported smoking a cigarette in the past 30 days in 2010.
Objective: To determine whether physical neighborhood structures may result in higher rates of smoking among adolescents.
Methods: I used the 2008 Boston Youth Survey to examine the association between neighborhood characteristics and smoking among students enrolled in the Boston Public High School system. I also conducted an ethnographic study to include qualitative data about Allston/Brighton.
Results: This study identified two key components which influenced smoking behaviors among high school students: locations for obtaining cigarettes and locations for smoking cigarettes. The further included convenience stores located close to the students' school or home. The latter locations included parks, playgrounds, and other outdoor spaces with inadequate lighting, poor visibility, and high concentration of benches and other such surfaces. Because most students smoked in groups of two or more, friendships ties may help propel the spread of smoking behaviors.
Conclusions: Policy efforts to reduce adolescent smoking should aim to reduce the density of tobacco outlets and retail cigarette advertising in residential and school neighborhoods. In addition, policy efforts should also curb smoking in public locations frequented by children such as playgrounds and parks.

PUNISHING RACE AND SUSPENDING FUTURES:
THE EFFECTS OF SUSPENSION ON YOUNG ADULT INVOLVEMENT IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

TIANA WILLIAMS

ADVISOR: BRUCE WESTERN

ABSTRACT

Previous research has identified that a racial discipline gap exists in school punishments and that suspensions hinder academic achievement and foster delinquent behavior. However, researchers have given little attention to discovering the connection between the racial discipline gap in the education system and the disproportionate representation of minorities in the criminal justice system. Therefore my research adds to the existing body of work by exploring how school discipline strategies affect young adult involvement in the criminal justice system. I ask the following questions: Do racial gaps in school suspensions exist? Do school suspensions risk for students? How do suspensions influence arrest risk for young adults later time? Finally, how do students' shape their own risk of incarceration by adopting certain attitudes?
I address these questions by conducting an empirical analysis of paying adults using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth 1997 (NLSY97). My findings build upon much of the previous scholarship on the effects of school discipline on students' risk of incarceration. First I provide more evidence that a racial discipline gap exists in school suspensions; almost twice as many black respondents as white respondents reported being suspended from school. Secondly, I find that school suspensions do increase students' risk of incarceration as young adults, even controlling for delinquency, race, socio-economic status, and academic achievement. Students who were suspended increased their risk of incarceration compared to students who were never suspended. Finally, I identify that positive student attitudes are associated with lower arrest rates for boys and girls.

KODAK MOMENTS:
REPRESENTATIONS OF INDIA IN TOURIST PHOTOGRAPHY AND TRAVEL GUIDEBOOKS

SARA JOE WOLANSKY

ADVISOR: BART BONIKOWSKI

ABSTRACT

Scholars such as Edward Said have argued that Western representations of the developing world have "Orientalist" tendencies and portray the developing world in a stereotyped manner that reinforces existing power inequalities. This thesis explores how Westerners represent India through tourist and guidebook photography to test Said's argument in a contemporary context. Western tourists treated Indians as objects of an ethnographic gaze in their travel photographs. Westerners tended to photograph strangers, photograph people in ways that reinforced stereotypes, photograph people in ways that reproduced stereotypes about Indians and their culture. Western photographers ultimately decided who and how someone was photographed, rendering Indians relatively powerless in their own representation. Although Western tourist photographers portrayed India largely in a way consistent with Said's theory, there were some important exceptions to this overall tendency, such as the lack of exotic female photographs. Despite the presence of many of the same power relationships and stereotypes about Indians on the covers of guidebooks, one critical difference between representations in tourist photographs and guidebooks was that the people on the covers of guidebooks were more likely to be photographed in the same levels of subjugated acts across racial groups. Furthermore, even when controlling for demonstrating academic performance, and socio-economic status, black students faced a higher risk of suspension. Additionally, my analysis provides support for the hypothesis that there is something unique to the experience of suspension which increases students' risk of incarceration. Even when controlling for delinquency, race, socio-economic status, and academic achievement, students who were suspended increased their risk of incarceration compared to students who were never suspended. Finally, I identify that positive student attitudes are associated with lower arrest rates for boys and girls.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:
HOW CULTURE SHAPES THE WAY INDIVIDUALS ADJUDICATE BETWEEN COMPETING NUTRITIONAL CLAIMS

SHADMAN ZAMAN

ADVISOR: KIM PERNELL

ABSTRACT

How do individuals assess the legitimacy of a claim? I analyze how cultural beliefs shape the way that consumers adjudicate between competing nutritional claims. Public health research suggests that culture is an important factor that guides nutritional decision-making, but this perspective conceptualizes culture as a set of norms and values. I argue that this approach to culture pre-determines nutritional behavior, ignores variation in choices amongst groups of people, and fails to account for the process by which culture is used to evaluate nutritional ideas. I draw from theories of legitimacy construction in organizational sociology and the tool-kit theory from cultural sociology to provide a better understanding of what culture is and how it shapes nutritional decisions. I conduct in-depth interviews with twenty-one female shoppers and ask them to evaluate competing claims about the health risks associated with corn syrup. I find that the institutions that surround us provide us with distinctive tools and standards to evaluate the legitimacy of claims. Three institutional logics guided the evaluation of competing nutritional claims: the logic of science, the logic of professionals, and the logic of family. Each logic came with a varying set of frames and scripts for assessing the legitimacy of nutritional information. These frames and scripts shaped the way individuals evaluated the legitimacy of the claims presented in each video. I discuss the implications for cultural sociology, organizational sociology, and the sociology of health.

CONSTRUCTING THE RIOTS:
INTERPRETATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE 2011 ENGLAND RIOTS

SIMONE ZHANG

ADVISOR: BART BONIKOWSKI

ABSTRACT

In August 2011, England experienced five days of highly destructive rioting. These riots were ambiguous events that opened up a space for a variety of actors to define and negotiate their meaning. This thesis examines the interpretive process that followed the 2011 England riots and how it mediated the relationship between the riots and their political consequences. In this study, I conducted content analyses of newspaper articles, House of Commons debates, research reports, and government reports. In addition, I interviewed twelve people involved in journalism, research, and politics and policymaking in the UK. I found that a dominant frame emerged early on in the discourse, constructing the rioters and the community in opposition and establishing the riots as apolitical. In this context, politicians were able to define the riots in terms of two crises, a crisis of public order and a crisis of social breakdown. These early framing activities structured the dynamics of research into the causes of the riots by introducing norms dictating whose version of the riots was trustworthy and legitimate. I found that the public debate on the riots offered discursive tools for politicians to use the events to advance specific policy issues of interest. Once political action was directed toward these policy issues, it became irrelevant how central the issues actually were to the riots. My findings suggest governments do not respond mechanistically to public disruption by increasing social and coercive controls. Rather, governments participate actively in a meaning-making process and the outcome of this process helps define the course of political action.

WHY DON'T MEN DO ZUMBA?:
THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS ON EXERCISE BEHAVIOR

WILLA ZHOU

ADVISOR: EVA ROSEN

ABSTRACT

I researched the ways in which social interactions influence exercise behavior. I completed 100 hours of observation and participant observation at three fitness facilities, partook in 62 zumba group exercise classes, conducted 23 interviews of affiliates of a non-profit gym, and analyzed demographic data presented by two fitness facilities. I find that social interactions shape how, and how often individuals exercise by providing recipient-specific knowledge about available forms of exercise, and social support in trying new forms of exercise. I discuss how social interactions create, propagate and change the social norms of zumba classes and exercise in general. I present the Tripod Effect, wherein the presence of three unique social network ties – an authoritative, a peer, and a support tie – strongly supports sustained exercise behavior.