

# SOCIOLOGY 2020

# SENIOR THESIS WRITERS

**LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION: Exploring Arab Immigrant Mothers' Conceptions Surrounding HPV, Cervical Cancer, and its Methods of Prevention**



NADA ALAA ATTIA  
ADVISOR: SV SUBRAMANIAN

ABSTRACT

This study examines the conceptions of Arab immigrant mothers in New York City surrounding cervical cancer, and two primary methods of prevention: Pap testing for themselves and HPV vaccination for their children. I conclude that, while the women are largely familiar and comfortable with Pap testing, the majority of my respondents are not aware of the connection between sexual activity, HPV, and cervical cancer. I also find that the majority of my respondents report that their children's providers have not recommended the HPV vaccine to them, nor have their children received the HPV vaccine. I explore the implications of these findings, if substantiated by future research, for these women's access to cervical cancer prevention in the United States.

**THE ONLY BABA IN "MOMMY & ME": Determining Parenthood, Re/Doing Parenthood, and the Queer Potential of Non-Binary Parenting**



FERNANDA PIRES BARON  
ADVISOR: JOCELYN VITERNA

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the experiences of 37 parents who identify outside the gender binary. I begin by describing respondents' experiences with the medical industry and the legal system, demonstrating their power to determine parenthood and contributing to respondents' erasure as parents. This illegibility of parenthood generates discrimination, or what I label the intolerance of parenthood. Yet, respondents argue that their non-binary identities free them from traditionally-gendered expectations of "mothers" and "fathers," opening space for new and more equal family structures. Building from West and Zimmerman's classic notion of "doing gender" (1987), I propose that non-binary families "re/do parenthood." I posit that my findings extend the epistemic boundaries of interpellation, sociological theories about the determination of gender, and the queer potential that arises from challenging the traditional gender dichotomy.

**ANTI-BLACKNESS AS A FOUNDATIONAL STRUCTURING AGENT OF UNITED STATES PUBLIC SCHOOLS: What History And Case Study Tell Us About The Need For Complete Reimagination**



ALEXA J.J. BROWN  
ADVISOR: SIOBHAN GREATOREX-VOITH

ABSTRACT

Often taught as two separate narratives, history of Black people in the US and the history of US public schools are kept distinct, however these stories must be told in tandem to understand the present day where most high schools practice a form of tracking, or separating students into different learning spaces based on perceived ability. I seek to understand and evaluate track-level experiential and observational disparities across racial lines through examination of unique survey data collected from high school graduates attending desegregated schools. Between the recollection of this history and a comparative means analysis of responses, I argue that increasing school engagement and decreasing the experiential discrepancies for students across all tracks lies in reconciling with and correcting for anti-Blackness plaguing many of its contemporary components.

**"I AM PROUD TO BE WHITE": Identifying and Defining White Racial Identity Among White Nationalists**



EKEMINI UDUAK EKPO  
ADVISOR: JASMINE OLIVIER

ABSTRACT

Previous literature characterizes white people as a homogeneous group that does not experience their whiteness as a salient aspect of their identity. I contest this pattern in the literature by focusing on the salience and definition of whiteness among self-defined white nationalists. Using content analysis of threads on the white nationalist forum Stormfront, I demonstrated that white nationalists are highly aware of their racial identity as a stigmatized, yet ultimately positive, trait. Further, white nationalists define whiteness using the two categories of genetics and culture, but fail to agree on how to precisely deploy these categories in the service of defining who is or is not white. This project contributes to extant literature by suggesting that whiteness is not only a system of power, but a continuously constructed identity by those who hold it.

**THE PEOPLES' CORPORATIONS: A Comparative Historical Analysis of Settler Colonial Policy on Alaskan Native and Native American Tribal Corporations**



ASHLEY NICOLE HAMILTON  
ADVISOR: DEREK ROBEY

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the impacts of settler colonialism and government interactions on the economic development of Alaska Native villages - through Afognak Native Corporation ("Afognak") - and Native American Tribes - through Ho-Chunk, Inc ("HCI"). Utilizing historical-comparative analysis of these successful Indigenous-group-owned corporations developed under varying government involvement, I find that compared to Afognak, Tribal economic development corporations, e.g. HCI, pivot toward community-facing initiatives instead of profit, but Tribal corporations, like HCI, face governing instability. These divergent results stem from differences in governmental and corporate structures wrought by evolving colonial Federal Indian policy. While both corporations are forms of Federal government approved self-determination and work to undo the damage of centuries of harmful Federal Indian policy for their key stakeholders, they ultimately reinforce the structures of settler colonialism.

**Is Caring for Older Adults Just About Help? How Capacity and Desire to Participate Illuminate the Link Between Caregiving and Social Participation**



ETHAN MICHAEL KAHN  
ADVISOR: MARK GLICKMAN (STATS), ALEXANDRA KILLEWALD

ABSTRACT

Social participation is a vital component of successful aging, but disabilities prevent many older adults from performing social activities independently. While most disability research focuses on whether or not older adults perform activities, I study how social participation is connected to both the capacity to participate and the value placed on activities. Using transition models and longitudinal mediation analysis, I find that people whose caregiving needs are fully met are more likely to have the capacity to participate but tend to place less value on some activities. These two mediators partially counteract each other and suppress the overall positive association between assistance and participation. In some cases, the negative consequence of unmet needs on social participation is greater for men than for women. My findings suggest that assistance could more effectively enhance older adults' participation in social activities if help were not associated with older adults placing less value on those activities.

**"I Can't Die Like This": Inequality and Agency Among Senior-Citizen Workers in South Korea**

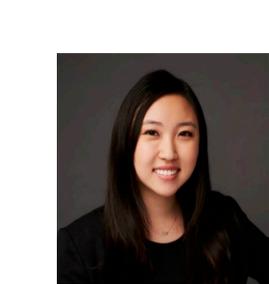


ASHLEY JIIN KIM  
ADVISOR: PAUL CHANG

ABSTRACT

Among all nations in the OECD, Korea has the highest elderly poverty rate at 49.6 percent and the highest suicide rate that is driven by elderly suicides. Due to widespread destitution, many Korean seniors are pushed into old-age employment. While previous research explores inequalities that exist within Korean senior workers through comparisons of wages or benefits, less is known about the on-ground mechanisms that cause these inequalities. Through ethnographic research and 32 interviews with precarious senior workers, I discover two main pathways to old-age employment in Korea that lead to two types of work: jobs in the regular labor market and government-produced employment. I find that these two types of employment lead to different material and cultural resources, which then cause significant inequalities for senior workers. Moreover, my findings reveal that senior workers emphasize hard work, valorize independence, and retain positive narratives to carve out their sense of agency against the extreme social and financial hardships they face.

**Worship in the Workplace: Investigating Christian Faith-Work Integration in Consulting and Finance**



CHARLOTTE EUN-JI KIM  
ADVISOR: DEREK ROBEY

ABSTRACT

Through the lens of Christians working in consulting and finance, I investigate which industry and firm traits correlate with more seamless faith-work integration. My findings speak to two issues of faith-work integration: 1. Do Christian values and beliefs clash with consulting and finance work? If so, in which ways? 2. Do the work environments and structures of consulting and finance firms impede Christian practices? How do their Christian employees adapt, and how do firms accommodate them, if at all? At the industry level, I identify faith-work integration challenges that are unique to each industry and argue that financiers struggle more than consultants with this integration. At the firm level, the consulting firms either superficially support many or thoroughly support few Christian consultants; the secular finance firms also fail to fully accommodate their Christian employees, as none simultaneously has a supportive culture and robust firm-based Christian groups. Christian-centered finance firms, however, reconcile profit-making with Christian values in a manner that other firms should emulate if they desire to better serve their religious employees.

**Blackness on the Whiteboard: Teaching Race and Racism in Mississippi Social Studies Education**

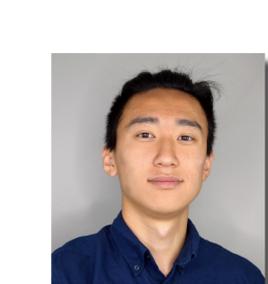


TREVOR WADE LADNER  
ADVISOR: TOM WOOTEN

ABSTRACT

America's public schools have always shaped and been shaped by anti-Black ideology. While Jim Crow was characterized by overt white supremacist ideology, contemporary racism is characterized by neoliberal, colorblind ideology. Based on interviews with high school social studies teachers in Mississippi, I find that while teachers in my study highly value the Civil Rights Movement and discussions about race in their classrooms, most teachers—who are white—engage in pedagogical approaches that are marginally-inclusive. These pedagogical approaches are inclusive in the sense that, unlike past schooling, they do include African American representation; this inclusion is marginal because teachers disconnect racism past and present and devalue contemporary anti-racist protest. In relation to existing literature, my most novel finding is that teachers use the language of partisan politics as a colorblind euphemism for discussing what is actually racial conflict.

**"Fancier Bubble Tea": The Promise and Pearls of Minority Gentrification**



LIREN MA  
ADVISOR: JOSCHA LEGEWIE, LUKE MIRATRIX (STATS)

ABSTRACT

In mainstream media accounts, gentrification is usually portrayed as a monolithic process of wealthy, college-educated whites moving into historically underinvested neighborhoods and displacing low-income minority residents. However, in the past couple of decades, there has been a growing number of low-income minority neighborhoods experiencing dramatic influxes of same-race gentrifiers. In this thesis, I test claims that minority gentrifiers can mitigate the negative consequences of gentrification and amplify the positive outcomes of economic development compared to white gentrifiers. First, using Census data on the fifty largest metropolitan areas, I find little evidence that the arrival of minority gentrifiers is associated with lower rates of displacement than the arrival of white gentrifiers, but I find some evidence that they are associated with improved socioeconomic conditions for same-race minority populations in the neighborhood. Next, through 24 semi-structured interviews with minority gentrifiers and community leaders in two neighborhoods in New York City, I find that minority gentrifiers contribute in substantial ways to the economic, political, and social well-being of minority neighborhoods while also exhibiting interests that align them against poor and working-class minority neighbors.

**State Carceral Institutions and Community Identity in Rural America: Perceptions of Community in Dilley, Texas**



MARIBEL NAVA  
ADVISOR: ETHAN RAKER

ABSTRACT

Since 1996, the United States has seen the creation of an immigration enforcement industrial complex with the simultaneous growth of a detention system and the expansion and localization of immigration enforcement. In this thesis, I study Dilley, Texas, and its relationship with the South Texas Family Residential Center (STFRC), particularly how it shapes notions of community and belonging, immigrant sentiment and attitudes towards policy and enforcement. I ground my research in the sociological literature on carceral spaces, "prison town identity" and immigration detention. Through an analysis of spatial conceptions and sociolinguistic tool use, I uncover how Dilley residents define "immigrant detention town" for themselves. Beyond Dilley and STFRC, this study contributes to a larger conversation on the role of carceral institutions in rural America and its policy implications.

**Policing the Paths to Recovery: Barriers to Opioid Use Disorder Treatment on Boston's Mass and Cass**

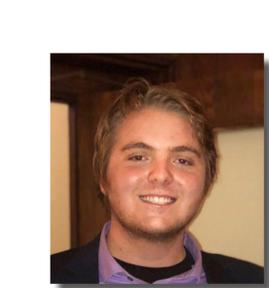


ELIZABETH LOUISE ROE  
ADVISOR: JOEY WALLERSTEIN

ABSTRACT

The opioid epidemic claims 130 American lives per day. In recent years, Boston Police Department has reduced drug arrest rates in favor of rehabilitative methods designed to refer people to recovery treatment. Yet, surprisingly, overdose and overdose deaths persist at high rates on Mass & Cass, the area with the highest concentration of homeless people misusing opioids in Boston. I use observational research and interviews with public health and law enforcement officials on Mass & Cass to argue that the issue remains due to 1) police's overly coercive method of referring people to treatment, 2) public pressure on the police to "hide" substance users from the nearby wealthy South End neighborhood, 3) the lack of long-term treatment options, and 4) strained relationships among police and public health organizations.

**Full Stands, Empty Prairies: High School Athletics and Community Identity in Rural North Dakota**



IAN VINCENT MEHMEI SAUM  
ADVISOR: NICOLETTE BARDELE

ABSTRACT

In the rural Midwest, high school athletics hold a special place in the culture of many small towns. They provide a consistent entertainment source to the otherwise empty prairie. And for many communities, athletics provide so much more. My thesis researches the role of high school athletics on building community cohesion and collective identity in Southeastern North Dakota. Through 47 interviews with individuals living in rural parts of the region, I profile both how these communities navigate their identity around the team and the effects of that community identity on the athletes themselves. I find that the dense networks in these communities creates a culture of collective efficacy and bonding social capital centered around involvement in high school athletics. This project breaks ground in exploring the integral role that high school athletics play in the sustainability of rural communities amidst limited economic opportunities and growing urbanization. Furthermore, high school athletics prove to be a critical aspect of rural communities, as they supply younger individuals with the social capital necessary to remain in an area into adulthood and contribute to the sustainability of rural communities.

**Diversity in Schools: Academic and Economic Outcomes in Chicago Public Schools and Nationwide**

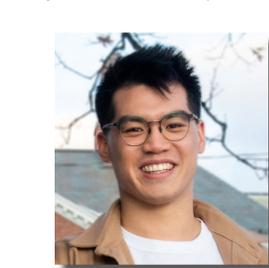


AMY TAN  
ADVISOR: ROBERT MANDUCA

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the relationship between school-level diversity and student outcomes. First, the paper examines the Chicago Public School district's novel admissions policy for selective enrollment schools that incorporates neighborhood socioeconomic status. Using a difference-in-difference approach to analyze the policy's causal impact, the paper finds no significant changes in the racial composition or academic performance of selective enrollment schools relative to non-selective enrollment schools. The paper also investigates the correlation between school diversity, academic performance, and intergenerational mobility by conducting a nationwide descriptive analysis of academic data on 3rd-8th graders from the Stanford Education Data Archive and economic outcome data from Opportunity Insights. The paper finds that school segregation has heterogeneous effects on academic performance and intergenerational mobility, with more advantaged groups reporting higher test scores while less advantaged groups report lower scores with higher segregation.

**Industry & Mobility: Examining the Relationship Between The Productive Structure of the Local Economy and Intergenerational Income Mobility**



PATRICK TAN  
ADVISOR: ROBERT MANDUCA

ABSTRACT

Over the last few decades, low income mobility and rising inequality have reduced opportunities for upward mobility in the United States. While progress has been made in understanding the key factors that underpin mobility, there are still areas left unexamined. This paper explores the productive structure of the local economy as a potential factor for mobility, seeking to answer the questions: what is the relationship between economic complexity and mobility? And, what specific productive capabilities are correlated with mobility? Overall, the paper finds a negative linear relationship between mobility and economic complexity. Moreover, the oil, transportation, and nursing sub-sectors correlate positively with mobility, while the real estate, clothing manufacturing/retail, and administrative services sub-sectors correlate negatively. Taken together, these findings reiterate the consensus that economic development creates upward mobility, instead, it suggests that the key lies within strong community support and the presence of growing industries offering stable, inclusive job opportunities.

**Structural Barriers Preventing Upward Social and Economic Mobility for Educated Youth in Tanzania**



SARAH TISDALL  
ADVISOR: BRIANNA CASTRO

ABSTRACT

From as early as the 1950's, research has generated the understanding that a strong positive correlation exists between education and upward economic and social mobility. This thesis uses mixed methods to identify the structural economic and social barriers preventing upward mobility for those who successfully graduate from secondary school in Tanzania. Data sets from Afrobarometer are analyzed using Stata, and qualitative interviews with experts in the field are used to complement the quantitative data. The results show that factors including gender related issues, frameworks which generate self-perceptions and preconceived ideas, as well as internal schooling issues each contribute in unique ways to consolidating unequal opportunities and therefore perpetuating unequal life outcomes. The findings also suggest that social mobility outcomes significantly differ regarding geographic location (urban vs rural), as well as by religious preferences.

**The Formation of Educational Aspirations and Expectations for First- and Second-Generation High Schoolers**



ELMER VIVAS PORTILLO  
ADVISOR: MARY WATERS

ABSTRACT

The Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS) in Cambridge, MA, is one of the state's best-funded public high schools. Serving a racially diverse student body, offering various academic class levels, extensive staff infrastructure, and over 100 elective courses, this school stands in stark contrast with many of the inner-city, underfunded schools traditional sociology has studied. Yet, the school has continuously confronted issues of inequity, amplified by tracking. This thesis explores how immigrant and children-of-immigrants high schoolers form their educational and life expectations and aspirations at CRLS. I also examine the roles that teachers and school counselors have on students. My findings reveal that despite an abundance of resources meant to create a level playing field, the prevailing idealistic ideologies, accumulation of capital, and brokerage of knowledge, primarily benefit students with academic and social capital. Thus, CRLS perpetuates and reinforces class and status inequalities for students unable to navigate the school.

**A Burden Gone Unnoticed: The Gender Politics of Emotional Labor in Black Activism Spaces on the U.S. East Coast**

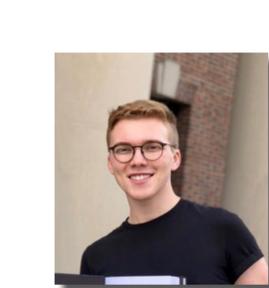


NAJYA AMARI WILLIAMS  
ADVISOR: JOCELYN VITERNA

ABSTRACT

My thesis investigates the following question: How is emotional labor distributed among Black activists and organizers in Black activism spaces along the U.S. east coast? Between February 2019 and November 2019, I completed 16 in-depth interviews with Black activists and organizers in the Cambridge-Boston metropolitan area, Washington Metropolitan Area, and South Carolina, six of whom being Black men and the remainder being Black women. I find that Black women more often understand activism to be their life's work, whereas Black men approach it as a career/finite experience. Second, Black women are more concerned with how activism jeopardizes personal safety and exposes them to interpersonal conflict whereas Black men don't note these concerns as significant. Finally, despite the fact that activism takes away so much from them, Black women give little thought to self-care, and when they do take a moment for themselves, it often generated significant feelings of guilt.

**Inhabiting an Unjust System: A Case Study of Prosecutors and Defenders in Alabama**



NICHOLAS TYLER WYVILLE  
ADVISOR: HANNA KATZ

ABSTRACT

I explore the intersection of race, incarceration, and criminal justice reform through interviews with criminal attorneys in Alabama. Do prosecutors and public defenders conceive of their work as a mechanism towards furthering racial justice and criminal justice reform more broadly? I remind scholars and policymakers that the justice system is not just a set of national policies and institutions but also a decentralized system of local courts inhabited by individual actors. These findings suggest that if we seek to diminish the punitive policing and harsh sentencing that people of color face in the current U.S. criminal justice system, we should focus on shifting our theoretical framework and perspectives of these very individuals, while also enhancing the lines of communication between attorneys, policymakers, and advocates. I seek to fundamentally disrupt the ways in which reformers and academics think about attorneys, courts, and legal policy.

**Carceral Spaces, Polluted Places: Prisons and the Distribution and Cleanup of Superfund Sites**



EMILY ZHU  
ADVISOR: ANGELA WANG, ALAN ZASLAVSKY (STATS)

ABSTRACT

In this project, I examine how the presence of prisons is related to the distribution of toxic waste sites in the EPA's Superfund program and their remediation. Despite limited scholarship, prisons are a particularly critical site to examine questions of environmental justice, given the historical and contemporary entanglements of the carceral system with race, class, and state violence. I present two key findings: 1) census tracts with correctional facilities are significantly more likely to contain active Superfund sites, and 2) Superfund sites in proximity to state and federal prisons are associated with faster cleanup rates. These mixed findings motivate further research on the relationship between prisons and toxic waste, as well as between prisons as a site of environmental justice broadly.