

For the last year or so, I have had the great opportunity to work as a research assistant to Professor Michèle Lamont. The project I'm working on is a comparison of how African Americans in the US, Afro-Brazilians in Brazil, and Arabs, Ethiopians, and Mizrahi Jews in Israel deal with being stigmatized. The project is a collaborative book with researchers in each country, and it has been really interesting to learn about the issues facing these countries. I started working for Professor Lamont in the summer of 2013. Over the summer, I worked with another research assistant on finishing up the data analysis. The research was in the form of 150 interviews, so I got to read some of them. Getting to hear what such a diverse array of people were saying was fascinating. I had to learn Atlas.ti to code the interviews, which will definitely be useful in the future. I also did some literature review, so I read lots of different sources relevant to the subject. I got to learn a lot more about stigmatization and its effects, as well as how to read and summarize more effectively, which is another useful skill.

On a larger level, I feel like I've learned a lot about how research really works. Before this experience I almost had the impression that books and articles just fell from the sky, but now I know the nitty gritty details of how they are produced. I also have a deeper appreciation of this kind of collaborative work, and the value that comes from having a lot of different opinions weighing in on a project. This experience has definitely enriched my experience as a Sociology concentrator. Professor Lamont is at the top of her field, and getting to work and learn from her is a unique experience. I've also gotten greater insight into the classes I've taken. This project has made me strongly consider pursuing research as a career, and I'm thinking of doing a PhD in Sociology in the future. I would definitely encourage Sociology concentrators to pursue similar opportunities!