

**DISSERTATION COMMITTEES, ACADEMIC YEAR 2016-17:  
CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENTS WHO ARE ABD  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF CA, DAVIS**

\*All faculty are from UC Davis unless otherwise noted\*

**Name: Lauren Acosta**

**Dissertation Title:** “Professional Identity Meets Migration: The Case of Puerto Rican Physicians”

**Committee Chair:** Ming-Cheng Lo

**Committee Members:** Ming-Cheng Lo  
Erin Hamilton  
Drew Halfmann

**Abstract:**

Professionals often experience tensions within their professional identities as a result of conflict between their professional and personal lives. As socially embedded individuals, professionals must balance the ideals of their profession, which often value Whiteness and maleness and the professional ethics of service, with their own social categories and self-interests (Abbott, 1983; Lo, 2005). The experience of professional migrants represents a particularly complex and un-investigated case with regards to how professionals cope with tensions and challenges to their professional identities. Migrants often belong to racial/ethnic groups outside of the professional White ideal. In addition, they face challenges to their commitment to professional ethics after having migrated from countries in need of their skills for their own self-interest. This study aims to illuminate how physicians experience and resolve tensions related not only to self-interest/professional ethics and social embeddedness/professional life, but also how the interaction of these two elements shapes professional identity formation. I will conduct 60 in-depth interviews with recently migrated Puerto Rican physicians in New York and Texas, and continuing physicians on the island, asking about their migration process, their views on the healthcare crisis and U.S./Puerto Rico relationship, and their professional identities. This study contributes to present debates in professional, medical, and migration research, allowing for a better understanding of how physicians experience and resolve conflict between self-interest, professional ethics, and social embeddedness in their professional identities, and illuminating the subjective experiences of migrating and non-migrating professionals.

**Name: Sean Arseo**

**Dissertation Title:** “Compliance, Control, Capital Investment, and Community: Local Stakeholder Engagement and its Consequences under California’s Local Control and Funding Formula.”

**Committee Chair:** Jacob Hibel

**Committee Members:** Jacob Hibel  
Stephanie Mudge  
Drew Halfmann

**Abstract:**

The emerging subfield on “the new public participation” (Walker, McQuarrie, and Lee 2015) documents a growing trend in elite-sponsored civic engagement projects, drawing upon and refining theories of civil society, political economy, and social capital (Habermas [1962] 1989; Lee 2015b; Levine 2016; McQuarrie 2013; Pacewicz 2016; Walker 2014). Importantly, much of this research omits an explicitly comparative component, preventing scholars from articulating and assessing variation(s) in local stakeholder engagement patterns. The implementation of California’s Local Control Funding Formula (2013) offers such an opportunity. The law requires input to be solicited from district and school administrators, teachers, staff members, local bargaining units, and students and their parents (Cal. Educ. Code §52060 (g)) for budget allocations, chiefly through the development of Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs). However, districts are encouraged to incorporate additional “community members” in the process. This “bottom-up” approach to accountability (Vasquez Heilig et al. 2014) impels school district officials and the “local community” to coproduce and act upon local definitions of both “stakeholder” and “engagement”. Using a variety of computer-assisted content and text analytic methods, including clustering and topic modeling, paired with traditional case-study techniques, I will comparatively analyze school district LCAPs and selected representative cases to describe and explain local variation in and consequences of locally-based, state-sponsored civic engagement requirements (Baiocchi 2003; Campbell 2010; Lee 2015a).

**Name:** Bridget Clark

**Dissertation Title:** “Contested Energies: Controversial Energy Transport Infrastructures and the Fight for America’s Energy Future.”

**Committee Chair:** Thomas Beamish

**Committee Members:** Thomas Beamish  
Stephanie Mudge  
Ryken Grattet

**Abstract:**

This dissertation uses a comparative case study of controversial energy transport infrastructure projects, specifically the Millennium Bulk Terminal, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, and the Grain Belt Express, to gain insight into which energy source(s) will become the next dominant “energy regime,” as fossil fuels have been for the last 200 years. Utilizing a multi-methods approach combining media and archival analysis, semi-structured in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, and advanced preparation fieldwork approach (McAdams and Boudet 2012), this study addresses 1) Who are the stakeholders that have engaged each case, what are their discursive positions—pro-, neutral, anti-, and how did alliances and coalitions form amongst stakeholders? 2) How do stakeholders justify their support of or opposition to the proposed

energy project, frame how these investments fulfill (or not) the public good, and articulate their vision of an ideal energy future? 3) How have the regulatory and institutional contexts of each case shaped the politics of energy, the conflicts and mobilization among stakeholders, and the discourses that have characterized their exchanges? Through this analysis, the goal is to investigate which sources and types of energy are receiving attention, investment money, and public support and what shape that support takes in the energy transformation that is currently taking place. In so doing gain insight into the shifting moralization and contestation over which energy regime is believed to best fulfill the public good as fossil fuels once did.

Many social scientists have left the study of energy to the natural and material sciences; policymaking has largely been relegated to engineers and industry, which all neglect the deeply social and cultural components of energy production, consumption, and distribution (Lutzenhiser 2009). Just as Mitchell (2013) argued that the transition to fossil fuels literally reorganized western civilization, our society is currently undergoing a transition that is much more than a simple technological shift, but one that represents a broader change to the social order. By utilizing the orders of worth perspective (Boltanski and Thevenot 1999) to expose the justificatory frameworks used to advocate and denounce these energy projects and their relationship to “the public good”, this project provides a window into this transformation.

Furthermore, this project will analyze how these discourses exist in or in tension with reigning social, political, and economic discourses regarding what constitutes modernity, progress, and prosperity, and with them the role or roles the state, the market, and civil society should have in the contemporary political order. These discourses are not simply embedded in a national-scale conversation but are also animated by community level contexts and conflicts. The growing literature on facility-siting controversies provides tools for understanding under what conditions industrial projects stir local controversy and social movements. However, the placement of interstate energy transport infrastructures must pass through multiple jurisdictions, thus this project seeks to contribute a better understanding of how these differing regulatory and institutional contexts further moderates a local communities’ power, mobilization, and ability to affect siting decisions. Additionally, by focusing on the controversies around energy infrastructures rather than specific policies, this study contributes to the literature on sustainable transitions by providing an analysis of how political processes and local social movements shape energy transitions.

Investments in energy transport infrastructures has the ability to lock in a certain energy regime for decades to come (Seto et al 2016), and infrastructure investments have become the de facto energy policy of the US. By understanding the controversies-- and their embedded local, political, and institutional contexts-- around energy infrastructures, and through broad dissemination of the results, this project will provide policy makers and interests groups a broader understanding of the social changes necessary to decarbonize society. The tools to design specific policies and framings to increase support and overcome barriers to intentionally steer investments towards more sustainable energy pathways, in the hopes of mitigating the effects of climate change.

**Name: Beth Hart**

**Dissertation Title:** "On the Verge: College Life in an Era of Precarity."

**Committee Chair:** Vicki Smith

**Committee Members:** Vicki Smith  
Caitlin Patler  
Michal Kurlaender  
Sara Goldrick-Rab- Temple University

**Abstract:**

Although community colleges are often touted as a policy solution for providing our economy with more educated workers, further research is needed to understand the mechanisms by which students successfully complete community college credentials. An abundance of research describes low completion and transfer rates for community college students, but fails to explain the causal mechanisms in students' daily lives that actually produce this inequality. This qualitative study draws on longitudinal, in-depth interviews with 45 community college students to investigate how college students reconcile their educational goals with the context of their lives, how they endeavor to make progress towards their college credentials, and their narratives of their community college experience: how they make sense of their struggles and successes and what they emphasize and minimize in their explanations. Drawing on theories of precarity in the 21st century (Cooper 2014, Pugh 2016, Silva 2013), this study will reveal why so many students never finish community college credentials. The results from this study will inform scholars interested in educational inequality, social mobility and reproduction, and precarity in contemporary society.

**Name: Po-Chun Huang**

**Dissertation Title:** "Educational Selectivity, Educational Attainment, and Economic Returns to Education among Contemporary U.S. Immigrants"

**Committee Chair:** Erin Hamilton

**Committee Members:** Erin Hamilton  
Jacob Hibel  
Michal Kurlaender

**Abstract:**

Immigrants and children of immigrants (1.5- and second-generation) jointly account for more than a quarter of the total U.S. population to date (Waters & Pineau 2015). To understand who the new arrivals are and how the contexts within which they demonstrate their multi-dimensional adaption to our society is not only intriguing to scholars but also frequently discussed and debated among politicians, policy makers, pundits, the media, and the public at large.

The dissertation aims to dialogue with two threads of literature: immigrant (educational) selectivity and immigrant assimilation. First, the dissertation will shed light on how various factors give rise to immigrants' educational selectivity at the local level by tracking a Mexican migrant cohort through three waves of the Mexican Family Life Survey (MxFLS). Second, by following a young cohort repeatedly surveyed by the National Longitudinal Study of Youth 1997 (NLSY 97) up to date, the dissertation is going to refine the assessment of how pre-migration educational experiences affect immigrant youth's educational assimilation by accounting for country-specific factors beyond pre-migration educational experiences. Lastly, the dissertation will incorporate the NLSY 97 data and employ both a multi-level modeling and an instrumental variable approach for addressing the selectivity bias and heterogeneity in intergenerational educational transmission among immigrant youth across national origins, expanding our understanding of the economic returns to education for 1.5- and second-generation immigrant young adults.

**Name:** Evan Lauteria

**Dissertation Title:** "The Field of Video Games Production: A Comparative Organizational Study of Nintendo, SEGA, and Sony"

**Committee Chair:** Laura Grindstaff co with Colin Milburn

**Committee Members:** Laura Grindstaff  
Colin Milburn  
Cuihua Shen

**Abstract:**

In the 1980s and 1990s, the global video game market quickly became a site where the multiple institutional forces and local social realities intersected. Indeed, organizations leading the nascent video game market from the early 1980s onward, particularly Japanese companies, confronted the tensions and frontiers of globalization, differences in standard practice and law, variation in organizational behavior and structure, and general cultural variance in their endeavors to enterprise around a growing market. This dissertation project is a comparative-historical study of Nintendo, SEGA, and Sony, three Japanese companies that spearheaded what came to be known as "The Console Wars" in the 1980s and 1990s. Collectively, these three companies were responsible for producing, manufacturing, and shipping the most globally lucrative home video game consoles and portable gaming devices following the collapse of the North American video game market in 1983. Despite their similar origins and nearly identical geographic regions of operation, these three companies and their licensees engaged in distinctly different business practices and approached issues of globalization in highly divergent ways. Taking this particular field and moment in history as an instantiation of institutional logics and the global-local dialectic, this project explores three key theoretical concerns: (1) the material and cultural factors that led to different industrial standards or meso-level organizational logics stemming from core organizations' discourses, practices, and technologies; (2) the means by which these logics spread across the industrial field; and (3) the impact of the eventual institutionalization of these logics on the production, regulation, translation, and marketing of formal culture. This project

thusly endeavors to expand organizational and cultural sociology's explanatory capabilities in addressing global markets broadly and the history of the video games industry specifically, by drawing on the institutional logics school, the production of culture perspective, social network methodology, and comparative-historical analysis.

**Name: Duane Wright**

**Dissertation Title:** Social Movement Unionism and Transgressive Contention: The Case of the Garfield High School 2013 MAP Test Boycott

**Committee Chair:** Drew Halfmann

**Committee Members:** Drew Halfmann  
Eddy U  
Jesse Drew  
Gloria Rodriguez

**Abstract:**

Duane's dissertation will investigate how forms of organization in the labor movement, specifically teachers unions, can help facilitate or hinder resistance to neoliberal reforms in education. Duane will use Garfield High School's 2013 test strike and boycott of the Measures of Academic Progress test which inspired a wave of test boycotts across the country referred to by some as the Education Spring as a case study to examine how different models of unionism - Business Unionism and Social Movement Unionism - are more likely to engage in contained contention or transgressive contention. Historical comparative and in-depth interview methods will be used to explain the how and why of the emergence of this movement in Garfield High School.