

**DISSERTATION COMMITTEES, ACADEMIC YEAR 2010-11:  
CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENTS WHO ARE ABD  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF CA, DAVIS**

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

**BAHAR, ROXANA**

**Dissertation Title:** *Cesarean Section, Race, and Hybrid Habitus: Toward an Understanding of the Underlying Mechanisms of Medicalized Birth*

**Committee Chair:** Ming-Cheng M. Lo, Sociology

**Committee Members:** Diane Wolf, Sociology

Carole Joffe, Sociology

**Abstract:**

Public health officials and social scientists are currently at a loss to explain why African American women are more likely than their white counterparts to experience cesarean sections and other birth interventions. This study seeks to understand the mechanisms underlying this racial disparity by investigating how race becomes a salient factor in patients' experience of and orientations toward medicalized birth. Using the theoretical lens of "hybrid habitus," I argue that patients' logic of practice surrounding birth interventions is not only structured by larger social forces within patients' lifeworld, but is also mediated by the situational context in which the birth plan is constructed: namely, patients' interactions with obstetricians and patients' embodied experience of pregnancy itself. By focusing on both the larger social forces shaping patients' clinical orientations and the situated context in which patients make decisions about birth interventions, this study seeks to further the medicalization literature by highlighting both the structural and situational forces that underlie the increasing, and increasingly uneven, medicalization of birth.

**FELDMAN, VALERIE**

**Dissertation Title:** *Shifting Struggles in the Governance of Prostitution: An Organizational Economy of Victims, Deviants, and Workers.*

**Committee Chair:** Michael McQuarrie, Sociology

**Committee Members:** John Hall, Sociology

Maxine Craig, Women and Gender Studies

**Abstract:**

This dissertation advances sociological research on conflict and social change to better account for the ways in which political struggles for authority over the definition and management of social problems are won, and how certain practices and understandings about social issues become institutionalized. Standard accounts of prostitution politics in the U.S. claim that sex workers engaged in political activism have lacked the moral capital to advance their approaches in policy without significant aid from mainstream organizations that possess greater moral, cultural, and political resources, but this does not explain why sex workers have been successful in mobilizing changes in other contexts, or why self-identified survivors of prostitution – mostly women of color who have exited and denounced their former lives in prostitution – have recently been very successful at mobilizing change in the U.S. Using a field analysis of over eighty prostitution intervention organizations in the Chicago Metro and SF Bay Areas, I examine the dynamics of material and symbolic *exchange* across adjacent social spaces to illuminate how victim-centric perspectives and approaches to prostitution have been successfully mobilized and implemented over others. I argue that mutually beneficial exchanges between the fields of prostitution intervention and criminal justice have enhanced the authority of gendered victimization narratives and practices around prostitution governance, while marginalizing competing approaches based in harm reduction and sex worker empowerment. Specifically, the criminal justice field values the successful production of self-identified survivors because these individuals embody success for neoliberal social policies,

can act as stable witnesses in prosecutions against male pimps and traffickers, and provide narratives of rescue and rehabilitation that cast involved organizations and elected officials as moral saviors, rather than just executors of discipline and punishment. In return, organizations employing victimization narratives and perspectives receive legitimation, funding, and other institutional supports from criminal justice agencies. In sum, this research sheds new light on the the way local dynamics and broader institutional contexts interact to produce change around contemporary social problems.

### **FREIBURGER, NATHANIEL**

**Dissertation Title:** *Cultures of Engineering and the Engineering of Politics: The Making of Lithium as an Object of Techno-Scientific Knowledge and Politics in Bolivia*

**Committee Chair:** Patrick Carroll, Sociology  
**Committee Members:** John R. Hall, Sociology  
Marisol de la Cadena, Anthropology

#### **Abstract:**

My research examines the making of lithium as an object of techno-scientific knowledge and practice in the Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia, a site of massive untapped lithium deposits. I contend that how lithium is constituted as an object by techno-scientific practice, as well as non-technoscientific practice, is likely to shape the particular way that it factors into state-building projects, potentially altering not only the physical landscape of the region of the Salar de Uyuni—the source of lithium—but the political context of Bolivia as well. No universal technology of lithium extraction and purification exists because the chemical composition of the salt water (salmuera) containing lithium is unique to each salt flat. This requires that the technical solutions of obtaining lithium from that water be produced locally. With international pressure to secure cheap sources of lithium for the production of "green technologies"—i.e. battery operated vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles—lithium is increasingly being made into an object of Bolivian politics and state policy in the context of a reconfiguration of the very notion of the state. My research examines the practices of engineers guiding a nascent lithium industry in order to understand how they intersect with controversies around the conceptual boundaries of the "plurinational" state.

### **GUTIERREZ, TIMOTHY**

**Dissertation Title:** *Migration, Narrative Identity, and Boundaries among Dispersed Iranians*

**Committee Chair:** Luis Guarnizo, Human and Community Development  
**Committee Members:** Fred Block, Sociology  
Omnia El Shakry, History

#### **Abstract:**

By redrawing existing lines of similarity and difference, experiences of global migration lead to the creation of new group and recreation of old group identities among international migrants. In a dialectical relationship, this reconfiguration of collective migrant identity also helps transform local and national identities in places of origin and destination. Group identity formations and transformations occur through shared narratives constructed, in part, by shared experiences and circumstances. My argument is that these narrative identities construct boundaries that create a third space betwixt societies of origin and reception, expressing the fact that international migrants do not fully belong to either of them. These boundaries, I further argue, define and delimit the group in relation to other, non-co-national groups, and act as zones of contestation between competing narratives of group identity. While migration and identity are key topics for scholarship, existing paradigms of assimilation-incorporation and transnationalism neglect the question of how international migrants develop new identities that are distinct from both their society of origin and their society of reception.

## **HARTZOG, CASSIE**

**Dissertation Title:** *Segmented Acculturation? Acculturation Patterns, Substance Use, and Health*

**Committee Chair:** Kimberlee Shauman, Sociology  
**Committee Members:** Erin Hamilton, Sociology  
Dina Okamoto, Sociology  
Joshua Breslau, Internal Medicine

### **Abstract:**

Culture has assumed a prominent role in the research on health disparities, as researchers strive to understand why ethnic differentials in health exist among immigrants and how they change over time and across immigrant generations. Several immigrant groups have better health when they arrive in the U.S. than the native born, despite generally lower levels of education and income, a paradox which is often attributed to migration-induced health selection. Whatever the causes of this initial difference, a growing body of research generally finds that the health of immigrants tends to worsen over time, whether measured by years in the U.S. or immigrant generation. A number of theories have been proposed to explain why this is the case, but among the most prominent is that immigrants benefit from cultures that promote healthy lifestyles. Among the beneficial cultural traits that have been proposed, and which the evidence by and large supports, is that immigrants tend to consume healthier foods and engage in less substance use, but as they become more “American,” they exchange these healthy behaviors for less healthy ones. Further, some immigrant groups are thought to have dense social networks and strong family ties, providing social and material support which can buffer against stressors that harm health. The evidence regarding the role of culture is mixed, however, and points to the need for a more nuanced understanding of how immigrants are incorporated into cultural and structural settings that influence their lifestyles, and ultimately, their health. I argue that acculturation is a process of change not well-suited to measurement with single-item proxies such as immigrant generation or language ability. This dissertation will explore multiple facets of acculturation and their interrelationships to look for distinct patterns of acculturation, and how those patterns are associated with health behaviors and health outcomes. These acculturation patterns, arising out of shared experiences that cut across immigrant generation and language, may be more useful for understanding how and why some health behaviors and health outcomes deteriorate with greater exposure to U.S. culture and environments.

## **HERDA, DANIEL**

**Dissertation Title:** *What Happens When Racial Groups Come Together*

**Committee Chair:** Mary Jackman, Sociology  
**Committee Members:** Dina Okamoto, Sociology  
Brad Jones, Political Science  
Diane Felmlee, Sociology

### **Abstract:**

The three papers of this dissertation will consider interracial relations within the increasingly diverse American context. Using quantitative methods I plan to focus on instances of contact between racially distinct groups and the potential benefits or consequences for those involved. In the first paper, I examine how neighborhood racial context influences the likelihood of people reporting that they have been victims of discrimination among black, white and Latino respondents. In the second, I build on the findings from paper 1 by analyzing the perceptions of discrimination of white respondents and how such perceptions influence racial attitudes. In the final paper, I examine interracial friendship patterns in the U.S. from 1975 to 1998 and focus on how these relationships influence racial and political attitudes. Through these related analyses I hope to inform multiple bodies of literature and make inferences about whether and how increasing diversity will change the character of race relations in the US in the coming decades.

## **PHAN, LE**

**Dissertation Title:** *Polishing the Future: Vietnamese Immigrants in Nail Work and the Work Trajectories of Second Generation Children*

**Committee Chair:** Dina Okamoto, Sociology  
**Committee Members:** Vicki Smith, Sociology  
Erin Hamilton, Sociology

### **Abstract:**

While immigrant entrepreneurs are perceived as very successful in the United States, the ways in which their perceived success has impacted their second--generation children has not been thoroughly studied. Despite parents' efforts to discourage their children from entering work in ethnic businesses, many second--generation children eventually follow the occupational path of their parents. But what factors contribute to children's decisions to work in ethnic businesses while others to avoid it? In this dissertation, I am interested in how Vietnamese parents' participation in nail work shapes the educational and occupational aspirations and attainment of second-- generation Vietnamese. Through semi--structured interviews, I explore second-- generation Vietnamese's perceptions of nail work, education and occupational attainment and aspirations, parents' involvement in nail work, differences in support based on parents who are nail workers and nail salon owners, and their motivations to participate or avoid nail work. Furthermore, I will interview first generation Vietnamese nail technicians about their family life and experiences in nail work. A qualitative approach will highlight the intricate ways parents' involvement in nail work impinges on second--generation children's lives as well as illustrate how intergenerational relationships regarding nail work are meaningful and impact their educational and occupational decisions.

## **PLEAU, ROBIN**

**Dissertation Title:** *Multigenerational Coresidence and Its Effect on Women's Employment, 1989-2009*

**Committee Chair:** Kimberlee Shauman, Sociology  
**Committee Members:** Vicki Smith, Sociology  
Erin Hamilton, Sociology  
Ann Stevens, Economics

### **Abstract:**

Poverty is a significant problem for older women. Women are more likely than men to live in poverty in old age, due primarily to employment disruption arising from family caretaking. The effects of employment disruptions cumulate over a lifetime, often resulting in insufficient income in old age. Continued employment at midlife benefits women through longer tenure and greater pay, which translates into increased Social Security income and higher likelihood of old age income vehicles such as private pensions and investments. However, a large body of literature suggests that women of all ages curtail employment in the face of family obligations. My dissertation considers the relationship between midlife women's labor force participation and multigenerational coresidence, an important but understudied context that may affect women's employment behavior. We would expect middle-aged women in three-generation households to reduce their labor force participation, since they would be more likely to take on obligations for both ascendant and descendant family members living with them. I use a three-step process to explore trends and correlates of multigenerational coresidence and its effect on midlife women's employment behavior. Using IPUMS-CPS (Current Population Survey) data from 1989-2009, I first describe current characteristics of multigenerational households using 2009 data. I then compare households across time and household type to determine if these households have increased in prevalence over time, and how their characteristics compare across time and across household types. Finally, I examine the effects of multigenerational household formation on midlife women's labor force participation using the Health and Retirement Study panel data.

## **SETELE, JULIE**

**Dissertation Title:** *Life After Prison: experiencing and contesting prisoner reintegration in the San Francisco Bay Area*

**Committee Chair:** Carole Joffe, Sociology  
**Committee Members:** Ryken Grattet, Sociology  
Millard Murphy, Law School

### **Abstract:**

My research will examine formerly incarcerated people's perceptions of the reentry process, comparing how they account for their success reintegrating into "free" society, with the "expert" advice of criminal justice practitioners, policy analysts, and researchers. This qualitative study, to be based on both interview and observational data, will explore the efforts by some formerly incarcerated people and their family members to organize on their own behalf and the relationship between such promoters of lay, "insider" knowledge and the local governmental reentry councils established to coordinate services for this population in the San Francisco Bay Area. I will examine the role that (reentry justice) activism plays in the lives of some formerly incarcerated people, and compare what these activists envision as necessary to support individuals' transition from prison with the needs and solutions identified by criminal justice practitioners and local reentry councils. This research engages with the literature on recidivism and risk, but seeks to broaden it by developing more nuanced understandings of the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated people. Unlike most of the literature on reentry, this research uses a holistic understanding of reintegration that expands the concept beyond avoiding recidivism or maintaining desistance. This study will take an intersectional approach to examine how individuals' social locations shape their reentry experiences. I seek to extend the literature on the embodiment of masculinities to explore how formerly incarcerated people simultaneously embody statuses based on race, ethnicity, gender, and class, and what this means for their reintegration experiences. Informed by principles from feminism and convict criminology, I aim to represent the formerly incarcerated people that I study holistically and compassionately, attuned to the objectification and dehumanization that institutionally controls this stigmatized population.

## **VEAZEY, BRIAN**

**Dissertation Title:** *Midnight's Children: Work, Culture, and Identity in an Indian Call Center*

**Committee Chair:** Laura Grindstaff and Ming-cheng Lo, Sociology  
**Committee Members:** Beth Bechky, Graduate School of Management

### **Abstract:**

My dissertation seeks to understand how the process of *talent transformation*, a very specific form of cultural, soft-skill, and technical training common in the Indian call center industry, has unintentionally created a valued, and potentially transferable, form of 'organizationally-engineered' cultural capital (Kunda, 1991; Bourdieu, 1986) that some young, non-elite Indians strategically seek to accumulate, cultivate, and ultimately activate in their struggle for upward professional mobility. More precisely, I am interested in the ways in which cultural and soft skills training transmit a very specific form of 'American' cultural capital, and how call center agents experience, make sense of, and ultimately respond to this process. By combining in-depth interviews with current and former customer service representatives (CSRs), trainers, and Human Resource professionals with ethnographic observations from my fieldwork as an American 'culture trainer' in an Indian call center, I provide an empirically-rich, and theoretically-important, account of one organization's attempts to create and transmit 'American' culture; how its agents receive, consume, and attempt to use it; and what happens when CSRs spread such organizationally-engineered cultural forms and practices beyond the walls of the call center into the larger society.

## **WILLIAMS, MONICA**

**Dissertation Title:** *Configurations of Social Control in Community Responses to Sex Offenders*

**Committee Chair:** Ryken Grattet, Sociology

**Committee Members:** Tom Beamish, Sociology

Bill McCarthy, Sociology

Valerie Jenness, Interim Dean of Social Ecology and Professor, Criminology,  
Law and Society; Sociology, UC Irvine

### **Abstract:**

Communities responding to sex offenders simultaneously enact formal and informal social controls. Yet, social control theories conceptualize formal and informal social control as separate realms that operate inversely. I extend these theories by proposing a theory of configurations of social control. In a configurations model of control, elements of the form and content of informal and formal social control combine to create new types not reducible to their formal and informal components. Drawing on legal consciousness, legal mobilization, risk, disaster, and community research, I provide a framework for understanding how the law links formal and informal social control such that we cannot experience either type of control without experiencing the other. Examining configurations of social control in the context of community responses to sexually violent predators (SVPs) provides a way to understand how social control operates on the ground. In my dissertation research, I will combine media, archival, interview, and participant observation data from three responses to SVPs in California to analyze how communities invoke formal and informal social controls in their responses to sex offenders. My findings will suggest how we must account for configurations of control when understanding the conflicted social control system that mandates sex offender releases, but also creates an inhospitable social context for reentry. More broadly, this research will provide a framework for understanding conflicts around other social problems that create a system at odds with itself.