

**DISSERTATION COMMITTEES, ACADEMIC YEAR 2011-12:
CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENTS WHO ARE ABD
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF CA, DAVIS**

All faculty are from UC Davis unless otherwise noted

BAXI, PARUL

Dissertation Title: *E-governance and The Politics of Identification: Unique Identities, Citizenship and State in Contemporary India.*

Committee Chair: Fred Block, Sociology

Committee Members: Victoria Smith, Sociology

Sudipta Sen, History

Abstract:

In 2009, the Indian state, in collaboration with an elite group of software entrepreneurs from the Information and Technology sectors launched the Unique Identification project (UID) to grant India's 1.2 billion residents a unique identification number. An e-governance scheme, unprecedented in scale, the state markets the UID as a "magic bullet" that will simultaneously solve the problems of poverty and exclusion, and significantly reduce corruption in India's welfare delivery systems. This internationally celebrated, yet controversial project, allows for an exploration of three critical questions in Indian politics and society: a) What does universal national identification signify in a context where historically Indian citizens have differential access to varying forms of documentary identification; b) What are the barriers to implementation of this e-governance project in a context where state and citizenship relations are complicated by politics of civil and political societies; c) What logics prompt the Indian state to institute the UID when projects of biometric national identification are controversial in developed countries across the globe?

To answer these questions I draw upon data from over 100 in-depth interviews with various demographic groups in three states including UIDAI authorities, migrant workers in the informal economies, activists, and nonprofits. I also analyze policy and legislative briefs and media articles on this ongoing project of identification.

My research illuminates how new identification regimes of the Indian state shape the practice of citizenship at intersections of class, caste, gender, location and mobility. The focus on the history of identification furthers our understandings of citizenship and state formation in post-independence India. The UID's fortunes affect more than one-sixth of the world's population, and although its success and failures are yet to be determined, it provides crucial insights into the politics of identification and citizen-state relations in contemporary Indian society.

HAYLETT, JENNIFER

Dissertation Title: *Surrogacy as a Case of Relational Work*

Committee Chair: Diane Wolf, Sociology
Committee Members: Carole Joffe, Sociology
Fred Block, Sociology
Lisa Ikemoto, Law School

Abstract:

Despite women's success in the labor market and politics, motherhood is still expected to be their primary identity in the U.S. Furthermore, the notion of the "natural" mother-baby bond continues to inform our dominant ideas about motherhood. Embedded in understandings of that bond is the assumption that reproduction is rooted in the physical location of a singular female body. With the development of reproductive technologies, such as egg donation and gestational surrogacy, both reliant on In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), previous notions of reproduction are no longer stable. As a result, we are witness to a transformation in the meanings and identities surrounding family and motherhood (Almeling 2011; Teman 2010).

Gestational surrogacy, whereby a woman gestates an embryo made with another woman's egg, carries it to term, and relinquishes the baby to an intended parent or couple, is the most common surrogate practice today and remains largely unregulated. Yet, there is a dearth of ethnographic research documenting gestational surrogacy, one form of reproductive technology that is rapidly increasing in practice. This research will focus on the experience of gestational surrogates as they navigate their way through the fertility industry and engage in relational work with both intended parents and fertility center staff. I will conduct in-depth interviews with surrogates, intended mothers, and fertility center staff as well as participant observation at a fertility center in the Bay Area that matches surrogates and intended parents.

KINCAID, JOHN

Dissertation Title: *Suburban Politics, Race and the Far Right in Texas*

Committee Chair: Fred Block, Sociology
Committee Members: Eddy U, Sociology
Thomas Timar, School of Education

Abstract:

This dissertation explores the dramatic shift in Texas politics towards the far right that began in the 1990's. Through an in-depth historical analysis of the state's political realignment coupled with a fixed-effects regression analysis of state-wide elections, the author explains durable support for radical, right wing candidates in the context of statewide battles over equalization of education finance. The confluence of these factors helped consolidate support of white suburbanites behind far right candidates leading to an uneasy but solid alliance with an increasingly conservative state Republican Party. The dissertation adopts a modified version of McVeigh's "power devaluation" frame, and argues for a broadened examination of the

relationship between social movements, political parties and the state, especially in relation to right-wing movements.

MCCOY, JABOU

Dissertation Title: *Partying While Black: Exploring Political Party Identification among the Black Electorate.*

Committee Chair: Bruce Haynes, Sociology
Committee Members: Drew Halfmann, Sociology
Clarence Walker, History

Abstract:

While most party identification studies examine White Americans' political behavior, this study seeks to understand how Black Americans experience political party politics. Drawing from in-depth interview, survey, and content analysis data among Black Republicans, Black Democrats, Blacks in third-parties, and non-affiliated Black voters, this study provides one of the few comparative explorations of Black party identification. Using racial formation theory as an analytical tool, my data reveal that across party identities, race serves as a significant organizing mechanism upon which Blacks interpret and act in the social world. Consequently, Black voters often employ racial logics to justify their party identities. They accomplish this by embracing a group-centered politics—that is, Black voters engage in a type of internal policing, by severely critiquing each other for adopting “inappropriate” party memberships. They also critique political parties by examining how well they satisfy “Black interests.” Ultimately, these findings suggest that Black party identification is best understood by examining micro and macro-level pressures on Black political behavior.

ROOT, KARIN

Dissertation Title: *Hightspeed Internet Access for All? Internet Infrastructure Regulation in the US*

Committee Chair: Thomas Beamish, Sociology
Committee Members: Patrick Carroll, Sociology
Stephanie Mudge, Sociology

Abstract:

The internet infrastructure is a 21st century natural monopoly, similar to those critical transportation and utility systems of the last two centuries, like railroads, electricity, and the telephone. The last 20 years of privatization and deregulation have produced a “digital divide” along geographic and economic lines - in contrast to most OECD countries whose citizens typically enjoy faster internet at lower rates than the U.S.

My research is analyzing the 2010 National Broadband Plan that was developed in response to this market failure, the related telecommunications field, and the regulatory system of the FCC. I am looking at the role of the general public and public interest advocates versus technical and industry experts in this field, how split jurisdictions, proprietary data, changing roles of network owners, the redesign of public financing schemes of network expansion, and different regulatory approaches influence policy making and implementation.

The data comes from historical analysis; and I am engaging with literatures in Science & Technologies Studies, public infrastructure and utility regulation, and telecommunications.

RUIZ, MIGUEL

Dissertation Title: *The Ritual Significance of the National Pastime over the Long Duration: Democracy, Racial Progress, and African Americans in Baseball*

Committee Chair: Ming-Cheng Lo, Sociology

Committee Members: Fred Block, Sociology

Bruce Haynes, Sociology

Milmon Harrison, African American & African Studies

Abstract:

The breaking of the color line by Jackie Robinson has been celebrated with increasing regularity by Major League Baseball (MLB), particularly since the 50th anniversary of integration in 1997. Such celebrations exemplify a vision of the national pastime that sees it as an arena for democracy, racial mobility, and integration. In addition, the presence of such values helps to establish the game's role as a ritual for the nation. Borrowing from Jeffrey Alexander's "code approach," which emphasizes how social actors compete over the right to interpret commonly accepted cultural codes and thereby align themselves with the "sacred," my dissertation explains how movement activists, MLB elites, and the American sports media have attached new cultural meanings to baseball's relationship to racial inequality. Although baseball has experienced and been characterized by overt acts of prejudice and, later, institutionalized forms of discrimination, key events in the game's history have still been seen as the manifestation of egalitarian political principles by these key members of the baseball community. The MLB has also recently implemented robust diversity programs and is now recognized by many as a leader in diversity. Historically, the MLB's efforts could be dismissed as being largely symbolic and involving "token" gestures because of the persistence of discrimination, which limited the presence of African Americans in baseball. Nevertheless, a new transformation began with the 50th anniversary of the breaking of the color line as the baseball establishment realized the need to move beyond token gestures. Thus, a key question becomes precisely how baseball has been able to make tangible progress in the area diversity, particularly since the 50th anniversary of integration in 1997. In a similar way, we might ask about the institutional consequences associated with attempts, by a wide variety of movements, to bring greater racial equality to baseball in past decades.