Welcome to the Fabulous 2014 Sociology Graduate Student Association Research Sharing Conference!

The schedule is below. We have 30 minutes for each presenter. We encourage you to leave as much time as possible for discussion. You will be notified at 10 minutes in and 5 minutes to go. Lunch provided at 12:00 courtesy of SGSA, back to presentations at 12:30.

10:00 AM- 10:30 AM
BOBBY WENGRONOWITZ: Enter CSA Lite: The Partial Conventionalization and Dilution of Alternative Agriculture’s Radical Edge

To what extent does the conventionalization thesis—organic growers reproducing conventional practices—apply to farmers using the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model? Using a multi-method approach including interviews, ethnographic work, and surveys, I examine the CSA landscape in New England and find three general forms. “CSA Original” remains true to the model’s ideals and has not conventionalized. “Scaled Up CSA” has not conventionalized like organics, though they have veered away from CSA ideals in important ways. “CSA Lite” represents a similar story as Guthman’s “organic lite.” Here, growers less committed to agroecological principles compete with Original and especially Scaled Up farmers. I argue that such a process dangerously parallels the case of organics (albeit without the coup de grace that was organic certification dealing with inputs only): Lite farms “do CSA,” but with more choice, less commitment agroecologically, and virtually no shared risk and reward. This conventionalized form of CSA, to some extent, appropriates the symbolic value of CSA while it dilutes that value. The full story here is that conventionalization can be held at bay—and one mechanism is farmer and consumer both desiring similar practices—but it requires a commitment to and outspokenness for the alternative practice themselves. In short, CSA’s alterity, part of what built it into the force it is today, is ephemeral unless intentionally developed.

10:30 AM- 11:00AM
JEFF STOKES AND SARA MOORMAN: Neighborhood Age Composition and Adults’ Well-Being

Neighborhood contextual factors such as disadvantage and segregation are known influences on individuals’ health and well-being. This study examined the influence of neighborhood age composition on middle-age and older adults’ social integration and psychological well-being. Data were merged from the 2010 US Census and the second wave of the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II). The sample included 4017 individuals from 3714 census tracts. Using random intercept models and 9 categories of neighborhood age composition, we assessed the influence of neighborhood age composition on adults’ social integration and psychological well-being over and above individual- and neighborhood-level factors. Results indicate that neighborhoods that overrepresent families are significantly worse
for middle-age and older adults’ social integration and psychological well-being than age-
representative neighborhoods, neighborhoods that overrepresent older adults, and neighborhoods
that overrepresent young adults. We discuss the implications of these findings for policy and
future research.

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

LAUREN BROWN: Relational Decision Making in Medicine

Although expert scientific knowledge has been the traditional grounds of professional autonomy
for physicians, research has shown that doctors draw on other forms of knowledge in clinical
practice. Through interviews with obstetrician-gynecologists in the greater Boston area I ask
physicians to explain how they make clinical decisions in labor and delivery. In maternity care
where the reluctance to perform experiments on pregnant women leads to a lack of evidence
based data, doctors rely significantly in other forms of knowledge in decision making. This paper
focuses on the relational decision making; relational decisions are variable as opposed to
standardized and determined through interaction, where perception, interpretation, and the
relationship between provider and patient are factors in medical decisions. I analyze relational
decision making in labor and delivery across the range of doctor patient relationships made
possible in different organizational models of maternity care to reveal how a relationship can
support authentic shared decision making, and how relational decision making in the absence of
a relationship can lead to a range of bad outcomes—from misunderstandings to at worst
coercion. I am exploring theoretical connections between organizational, care work and emotion
management theory in my analysis and look forward to feedback from the department.

11:30 AM - 12:00 PM

ABOLFAZL SOTOUEH-SHERBAF: Detainees of An Invisible Camp: Rule of Exception or
Manifestation of Sovereignty? How Marginalization of A Refugee Can Solidify Nation-
Statehood of The Host Society

Does a refugee need to be detained in a camp to live like a camp detainee? With the breakout of
several wars displacing thousands and millions over the last few decades, mainstream media
have tended to portray the displaced life either as in a camp's squalor or an individual who is
living as a migrant, endeavoring to get integrated in the host society. Along the same line,
theories of globalization have been tried to extrapolate to refugee conditions, characterizing an
erosion of states' power in the face of a jump in international organizations potential to challenge
borders. Based upon 30 interviews with ex- and current Afghan refugees and migrants in Iran -
documented by the UN, by the Iranian government, or undocumented- and two weeks of
fieldwork in Tehran and another week in Mashhad in the late 2013 and early 2014, this article
makes an effort to give a more nuanced account of the construction of refugee vis-a-vis migrant
status in the context of one of the world's largest refugee and migrant populations. I proceed by
demonstrating how a nation-state equipped with modern apparatuses of recognition, oppression, education and labor regulation can challenge UN's extraterritorial leadership role and impose its racialized and classed categories on non-citizens by blurring the dichotomy of legal versus illegal. This, in turn, helps explain fundamental mechanisms through which a nation-state asserts its sovereignty by creating a gray zone of legal, economic and social inclusion and exclusion. Drawing on experiences of refugees and migrants collected through in-depth interviews, I propose that an invisible, or virtual, camp status is what a modern state utilizes to uphold its autonomy in relation to the threat of extra-national powers and its monopoly of legal violence in connection with its citizens and denizens -a phenomenon vividly discernible in refugee/migrant treatment.

12:00PM-12:30PM  Lunch Break

12:30PM-1:00PM

JEREMIAH MORELOCK: Mental Health Professionals and the Discipline of Utilization Management  (class at 3)

ABSTRACT: Utilization Management (UM) – whereby treating professionals report to insurance companies about their work in order to secure continued reimbursement – is intended to monitor that consumers get what insurers consider to be the right care. In this study I interview 33 mental health professionals about their experiences of UM. Drawing on Foucault (1977), I argue that mental health providers practice under the discipline of insurance companies. UM is exercised through disciplinary techniques that monitor consumers and providers simultaneously: examinations in the form of case reviews, and a panoptic system of documentation and auditing of files. However, a gap between insurance discipline and therapeutic practice is sustained through the discursive nature of the disciplinary system. Therapists report and document to insurance what they are doing, in terms that conform to the insurance discourse. Through learning the language of insurance, therapists practice a kind of mild covert resistance similar to Goffman’s notion of secondary adjustment (1961), by which they are able to maintain considerable control over their work with clients. These results call into question the legitimacy of general UM operations, because they reveal insurance requirements to be largely ineffective at influencing treatment. Therapists are controlled by insurance, but primarily in the form of administrative burdens that only marginally translate to the therapy room.

1:00PM- 1:30PM

LIAM MARTIN: How Prisons Create Crime: Prisonization and Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice

Sociologists have explained the rise of mass incarceration in terms of broad social and historical shifts driving punitive penal policy: the growth of populations marginalized from the formal labor market (Beckett and Western 2001), the angst and insecurities of late modernity (Garland 2002), the breakdown of old regimes of racial control (Wacquant 2009). But the current scale of imprisonment is only made possible by processes that create recidivism as a systemic feature of the prison system: the last nationwide study by the Bureau of Justice statistics found that two-
thirds of those released from state prison are back behind bars within three years (Langan and Levin 2002). A growing body of quantitative research suggests that one mechanism driving recidivism is built into the prison itself: the criminogenic effects of incarceration. Drawing on ethnographic research living at a halfway house and life history interviews with former prisoners, I examine the relationship between incarceration and crime by re-framing prisonization (Clemmer 1940) using concepts from Bourdieu’s (1977, 1990) theory of practice. I draw attention to the way imprisonment transforms basic habits and dispositions, and show how the process of prisonization interacts with broader structures impacting the lives of former prisoners to produce the criminogenic effects of incarceration.

1:30PM-2:00PM

PAULINA BONGAY

The research I am conducting for my master’s thesis focuses on the following research question: What are the experiences of male war veterans who have sustained permanent physical injury? The initial target population will be males who have experienced physical injury as a result of war, recently in the war in Iraq, and veterans of other wars as well in the greater Boston area. The embodiment of an injury extends into the social realm affecting how individual may see themselves and others. How do male war veterans’ sense of their social, public world when they have undergone these types of embodied transformations? I am interested in finding the answers to these questions by learning about the day to day experiences of these disabled war veterans and the way in which they view and identify through their injured bodies. Other disciplines have studied embodied injury and disability but within the field of sociology, there are few recent works that attempt to understand embodied injury and specifically disability as a result of war. To fill in the areas lacking by both sociologist and historians, I am conducting in depth, semi-structured interviews with male war veterans to try and better understand the ways in which these men experience their day to day lives through their embodied injuries. Data collected through this research will be beneficial to the world of academia, as well as to individuals experiencing the trauma and the people in their lives. It is my hope that they may find sharing their stories to be a gratifying experience. We have very few accounts of men who received injuries during combat prior to the 21st century. My research seeks to bring personal narratives of recent veterans to light, to better understand the current lived experiences of men who have undergone physical trauma.

2:00PM-2:30PM

SELEN YANMAZ: “Revolution will not be Televised, it will be Tweeted”: Digital Activism During Turkey’s Gezi Park Movement.

This dissertation will investigate digital activism in Turkey’s Gezi Park movement. It will focus on the role of the digital media as a news source, a communication tool and a public space, in providing new potential for a more democratic society with new connections, sharing and
challenging of authority through its transformation of: 1) the construction of the subject, collectivity and relations between individuals; 2) new forms of property and ownership; 3) changes in people’s access to information and knowledge and surveillance practices; and therefore people’s access to, influence on and understanding of decision-making processes affecting the whole society. In discussing digital media’s role for the transformation of the society, the dissertation will concentrate on how the contemporary social movements, as moments of heightened questioning, are influenced by and reflect these transformations. It will then narrow down its focus to the Gezi case asking how Gezi protests reflect these transformations in its collectivity and ideals, analyzing how different forms of digital activism in Gezi are intertwined with these particular ideals.

Through in-depth interviews with the movement participants in Turkey and abroad, as well as with members of RedHack, a political hacker group in Turkey, the dissertation aims to analyze both the forms and meanings of certain acts and the ideals that these depend on. It will also involve content analysis of pictures, videos, memes and jargon circulated online, as part of the humor and creativity embraced by the participants as part of the dominant peaceful attitude of the movement and what is called “Gezi spirit.” Drawing from the literatures mentioned above and the primary data I collect, I will look into if and how the digital media, present a new potential for social change and a new understanding of global democracy, primarily based on the ideals of global commonwealth, multitude and free information, through the new ways of acting and connecting that it provides to the people.

2:30-3:00PM

MONIQUE Y. OUIMETTE: Preliminary Data from My Dissertation Research - Common Scents?: Regulating the Use of Fragrances in Workplaces

Through the use of consumer products in everyday life, people help to distribute industrial chemicals and pollution within their local environments. Many people, however, do not realize that their consumption habits may be polluting the air in their own indoor environments. My dissertation focuses on employees in non-industrial workplaces that have implemented fragrance-restrictive policies. It examines reactions to requests for behavioral changes that are based on claims that people negatively contribute to air quality through their everyday consumption activities. In order to develop an understanding of what happens when fragrances and indoor air quality are made into matters of concern in the workplace (Latour 1993), this project utilizes theories developed in the fields of environmental and consumer sociology that explain how consequences of actions are obscured when there is an epistemic separation of people from such consequences. Specifically, it primarily relies on four theoretical constructs: denial (e.g., Norgaard 2006, 2011; Auyero & Swistun 2009; Opotow & Weiss 2000), environmental privilege (e.g., Gould, Pellow, & Schnaiberg 2008; Park & Pellow 2011), contested illness (Brown, Kroll-Smith, & Gunter, 2000; Phillimore, Moffatt, Hudson, & Downey, 2000; Shriver & Webb, 2009) and convenience (Shove 2003). Using these constructs, I analyze and uncover the social processes that underlie people’s reactions when confronted with a health and/or environmental challenge to commonly-accepted and widely-used chemicals in consumer products. I also identify processes that promote or hinder change under these circumstances.
ELISE LARGESSE: When Places Cease to Be: Ontological Preservation of Communities Threatened by Climate Change

Using Nantucket Island as a case study, via interviews with various historians, real estate agents, locals, old family guard, trust members, and others that I have already engaged with and contacted, as well as documentary research and a qualitative content analysis, I want to investigate how communities that face their own destruction – either by chance event (tornado, earthquake) or inevitable future (sea rise, hurricane flood surges) – either acknowledge or do not acknowledge their eventual fate, and why they remain in those places apart from an inability to relocate – particularly why they choose to stay. What made-meaning is enough to risk their livelihood, their physical possessions, their family, their health, and so on? In places that are nearing erasure – i.e. the Rockaways/Fire Island, where reconstruction is rampant post-Sandy and largely federally funded – how do people rationalize spending either all of their assets or all of someone else’s on a place that will inevitably be destroyed again? How will morphing insurance laws and understandings of probability, as well as new legislation concerning emergency respondents traveling to private property in dangerous locations, change people’s financial or legal ability to live on the coast at all? How real is this problem, and how soon?