

Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

Honours Research Symposium

May 4th, 2020

Emily Alward

The Double Burden of Motherhood: Balancing Maternal Role Expectations with the Pressure of Responsibility to Care for the Self: Self-Care Talk Amongst Mothers on the Online Parenting Forum BabyCentre.ca

Discourses of parenting and motherhood emphasize the ideology of “perfect” parenting and the idealized mother with regards to childrearing. I analyzed Sharon Hays’ (1996) ideology of intensive parenting and its relation to the valued “perfect” mother and Wendy Brown’s (2003) theory of neoliberalism and self-responsibilization as it relates to the self-improvement and productivity within one’s social role; particularly as a mother. This research aims to understand how mothers perceive and rationalize self-care in relation to their maternal obligations. It provides insight on how new mother’s self-regulate and morally regulate each other with regards to self-care practices and maternal responsibilities. The perception amongst mother’s regarding the responsibility to engage in self-care was found to contribute to maternal burnout. I found that self-care itself is morally regulated, based on the responsibility to engage in self-care practices as a means to be productive in one’s maternal role, as well as between mothers themselves, who emphasize the situation and location of their children to rationalize and justify self-care practices.

Mackenzie Cormack

“You Can Curate Your Own Experience”: Individuality and Social Interaction Within the K-Pop Fandom

Within K-Pop fan research there is a distinct gap regarding the study of K-Pop group specific fandoms and fan identity. The K-Pop fandom is a complex system where fans orient themselves through identify as part of fandoms specific to certain K-Pop groups. The fan community surrounding K-Pop is a space where fans come together to share love and support for their favorite K-Pop groups, but also a space that promotes the construction of an individual K-Pop fan identity. This paper focuses on understanding K-Pop fan identity in relation to social engagement in the K-Pop fandom. There are three major themes explored in this paper individualization, cosmopolitanism and sociability. This study is based on semi-structure qualitative interviews with K-Pop fans regarding their involvement and experience in the K-Pop fandom. The argument of this paper is that K-Pop fans build their unique fan identity through learning from one another and they express that identity in conversations with other K-Pop fans. Further, K-Pop ‘biases’ that fans have represent a distinct connection between the individual and social aspects of the K-Pop fandom.

Morgan Herbert

“It’s a Gift and a Burden”: The Non-Patrilineal Surname as an Alternative Representation of Kinship Ties

Surnaming and kinship scholars study the role of our surnames in our social lives and kin-based identities, and they contribute to broader anthropological discourses about kinship, relatedness, and belonging. This study seeks to help fill a gap in surnaming scholarship by exploring the experiences of individuals with non-patrilineal surnames, insofar as their surname represents a “deviation” from the patrilineal norm. In the Euro-American context, the cultural norm around surnaming involves most children receiving their father’s surname, known as a “patrilineal” surname. The dominance of patrilineal surnames in Canada renders alternatives, such as matrilineal, hyphenated, or double-barreled surnames “atypical”. Through the lenses of the “I-we” and “display” theoretical frameworks, this research explores the role of an atypical surname in a person’s self-image and sense of belonging in their kin group(s) by asking: how do individuals see their non-patrilineal surname as having shaped their identity and sense of kinship? This qualitative study employed the method of semi-structured interviews with twelve participants with non-patrilineal surnames to investigate the relationship between surnames, kinship, and identity. Participants’ perspectives were found to be dependent on their style of non-patrilineal surname, as those with matrilineal surnames frequently held different views than those with hyphenated or double-barreled surnames. Those differences aside, analysis of the data suggests that these twelve participants experience their non-patrilineal surname as a symbol that represents their identity and family to themselves, to outsiders, and to institutions, and they assert control over their surname in the present and in their plans for the future.

Kristen Levesque

Madness in the Media: News Coverage of Police Lethal Force on Persons with Mental Illness

Police encounters with persons with mental illness have been increasing since the deinstitutionalization of the 1960s. As a result, persons with mental illness are the most vulnerable demographic to police use of lethal force. Due to the public reliance on the news media to relay information on these incidences, this project aims to answer the question: How has the Canadian print news media presented prominent cases of police lethal force on persons with mental illness to its respective audiences? To answer this question a qualitative content analysis was used to examine three cases across four daily newspapers within six months of the incident. This paper argues that the way in which the media depicts persons with mental illness for the interpretation of its audience perpetuates the discriminatory stereotypes that the media is suggesting to be exclusive to the police and the cause of their ignorance. In this way, the media's condemnation of the police seems to be paradoxical when it is presented alongside its reinforcement of stigmatization.

Victoria Mak

Negotiating Utopia: 'Come From Aways' and the Production of Rural Idylls in Digby County

This research explores the experiences of Digby County rural in-migrants in relation to their envisioned rural lives. In this approach I call upon the concepts of rural idylls and utopia to understand how in-migrants make sense of their experiences and their actions towards the future of their communities. The production of rural space is also considered through a relational approach. There were two themes that resulted from this research: 1) strategies of mediating experienced rural life with envisioned rural life often relies on adopting rural values, skills and practices, while also bridging urban skills of entrepreneurship; 2) bridging envisioned rural life with experienced rural life and future rural life often involves an idea of producing a utopia built off of their rural idylls (physical characteristics, social ideals, economic prosperity).

Victoria R. Michels

"Open Yourself to the World": Reasons for Studying Foreign Languages in University

Canadian universities are constantly promoting the importance of multicultural education. However, the departments that are strongly suited to developing intercultural understanding among students, namely humanities and foreign languages, have experienced steep declines in enrollment over the past decade. Despite the universities' efforts to market these departments to students, enrollment is still decreasing. In order to address this issue of why students are no longer enrolling in the humanities, language courses in particular, it is important to know why students do decide to pursue foreign language education. I conducted this study by interviewing students enrolled in seven of Dalhousie University's ten language courses about their reasons for studying foreign languages and compared their reasons to those presented in Dalhousie's language program marketing materials. Students study languages for a variety of instrumental/extrinsic and integrative/intrinsic reasons but discuss their integrative/intrinsic reasons most frequently. On the other hand, Dalhousie's marketing focuses more on instrumental reasons to study foreign language, which does not resonate well with the students. Interestingly, many students are unaware of the various marketing materials, thereby rendering them ineffective regardless of their contents. Students are largely motivated to study foreign languages by integrative experiences, and this is not being represented in the marketing of Dalhousie's language programs. Fortunately, there are measures that can be taken to encourage integrative motivations and improve the effectiveness of the marketing.