

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR OF *Silicon Valley Notebook*, Volume 13

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The Sociology Department at Santa Clara University is proud to present, in this volume of *Silicon Valley Notebook*, seven research papers written by students from the class of 2015. These papers reflect the substantive, theoretical, and methodological depth of the Sociology curriculum. Originally prepared as part of the Research Capstone course (Sociology 121), the student authors further refined their papers during the following quarter for inclusion in this volume.

Taken together, the authors studied important social issues through the life course of individuals and social organizations. Each conducted rigorous quantitative analyses of national secondary survey data to test predictions grounded in sociological theoretical traditions. Qualitative interviews with sources knowledgeable about their respective topics were used to complement the quantitative findings.

The three student authors in the first section reflected on the social mobility aspirations and health of adolescents. **Laila Anne Waheed**, in "*High School Seniors' College Plans: Gendered Variations in the Effects of Academic Agency, Cultural and Social Capital*," found theoretically meaningful gender differences in social and cultural capital pathways (that included parents, friends, and students' academic agency) to higher education. She used data on high school seniors from the national Monitoring the Future (2012) survey and interviews with eight education professionals. **Kathryn L. Luna** explored adolescent body image issues in her "*Gendered Differences in Adolescent Body Image: Youth Agency, Protective and Risk Factors*" and identified the complexities of female negative body image (in contrast to a simpler male pattern). Her analyses, using national survey data from students in the Health Behavior in School Aged Children survey (2009-2010), commentaries from 6 education/health professionals, and the Iowa and Chicago theoretical Schools of Self Concept, endorsed a wrap-around need for health modeling and protection for adolescents. In the third paper in this section, "*Children's Health: Family, Social Environment, and Child Activity*," **Anna Garvey** revealed that children's physical activities promoted health; but parental control and distressed neighborhoods worsened it. These findings, drawn from the 2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health and qualitative interviews with child development professionals, were theoretically framed within the Ecological and Social Interactionist models and contributed to the sociology of children's health in the digital world.

The next set of papers on the well-being of adults was situated in the later stages of the individual life course; the specific themes were self-concept as well as health consequences of violent crime and cumulative racial disadvantages. In "*Family, Intimate Partners, and Adult Self-Concept*," **Danae Vanessa Dickson**, accessed data from the 2012 New Family Structures survey ( $n=2,765$ ) and interviews with eight helping professionals, to evaluate the "boundary limiting" parameters of family influence on adult

self-concept. Even though romantic relationships, irrespective of early family structure, were the most relevant for positive adult self-concept (reinforcing the Chicago school of symbolic interactionism and self-concept), early family relationships continued to play a role in adult self-concept, but only for those who grew up in traditional family structures. “*Health Implications of Violent Crime Victimization and Resources*,” was the question explored by **Emily Szabelski** in the experiences of a subset of 1059 violence victims who responded to the 2010 National Crime Victimization Survey. Particular “strains” (Agnew’s Strain Theory) associated with the violent events, namely weapons used, medical attention needed, and close relationship with the attacker, led to mental and physical health problems; the ten professionals interviewed for the study reflected on the enduring mental (than physical) injuries resulting from the violence. **Leslie E. Sapon** found health disparities between minorities and non-minorities due to cumulative minority disadvantages in the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health and interviews with eight knowledgeable professionals. The findings were broadly grounded in Durkheim and Merton’s theories of integration, with specific emphasis on Berger’s expectation states and Cockerham’s Health Lifestyle theoretical constructs.

In the final paper in this volume, “Gendered Collegiate Sports: Athlete-Student or Student-Athlete?” **Derek Bradley Eng** shifted the unit of analysis from individuals (be they adolescents or adults) to the sociology of college sports organizations and illustrated the structural conflicts in, and the Mertonian manifest-latent dysfunctional nature of, collegiate athletics. Analyses of the 2003-2012 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) survey and interviews with six athletic professionals showed the following: students of larger male sports programs were athletes first and students second while female sports and private (than public) universities were more likely to adhere to the “student-athlete” model.

As a collection, student research presented in this volume continued to exemplify the evidence-based social science curriculum that the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University offers its students. The social issues explored have important policy implications that resonate with the University’s mission to not only prepare students of competence, conscience, and compassion but who will also help fashion a more just, humane, and sustainable world.