



**The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract**

**“Was Your Mother Counted?”: Political Determination through Motherhood in Early Twentieth-Century Nigeria**

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Mentor(s): Professor Francois Richard, Anthropology; Professor Emily Lynn Osborn, History; Professor Kathryn Takabvirwa, Anthropology

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Representations of native women have been confined to the gaze of liberal, Western feminists who ultimately reproduce the same colonial dynamics in their scholarship that originally subjugated native women to European hegemony and domination. I seek to investigate the dimensions of political determination and agency of native women in order to construct a more nuanced and accurate description of the specific political power of colonized women. My area of subject is Owerri, a village in Nigeria, and a site where the 1929 Aba Women’s Riots occurred. In 1929, for two months, Igbo women were a formidable force against British police officers and soldiers with casualties on both sides. My project studies motherhood as a source of political legitimacy for Igbo women in rural Southeastern Nigeria to assert themselves against colonial administrators. I particularly explore how violence inflicted on Nigerian women under colonialism reveals motherhood to be a cultural practice of kinship that undergirds women’s political power. As motherhood gives women political power, it is also a source for inequality between Igbo men and women. Key terms: Colonialism, Nigeria, Feminism, Women, Politics



## The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract

### **Do You Feel Like a Hero Yet: Military Methods of Dehumanization in Modern Shooters**

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Mentor(s): Professor Patrick Jaqoda, English, Weston Game Lab

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I am researching the military methods of dehumanization that Dave Grossman identifies in *On Killing* and identifying their presence in modern video games, specifically military shooters. To make soldiers effective killers, the US military teaches them to dehumanize their enemies and minimize their innate resistance to killing. Historically, military propaganda and dehumanization techniques have focused on emphasizing the social, moral, and racial difference between “our side” and “the enemy” and modern dehumanization techniques continue this emphasis. The video game industry grew out of the military, and I am examining video games for these military dehumanization techniques by looking at first and third person military shooter games that are 1), designed as military recruitment tools, 2), designed as personal entertainment, 3), designed as a critique of the military shooter genre. My research methodology is a qualitative analysis of the aforementioned games, as well as a review of the military literature surrounding dehumanization techniques and propaganda methods. My research so far has found that social and moral distancing are the primary tools of dehumanization in military shooter games, and that the narrative of justified retribution is one of the most common methods of providing killing motivation. Intergroup bonding is another method that militaries and games use to motivate players to kill. Military shooter games largely fulfill the role of propaganda, creating a narrative where ‘our side’ is blameless and ‘their side’ is evil and deserving of punishment. The implications are far ranging. It is possible that acceptance of the actions of fictional militaries translates into acceptance for real world military action. We are also on the cusp of a new narrative arms race; historically military shooters have been made in the US and tell stories of American patriotism, but as the technology of game making becomes more accessible, Russia, China, Hezbollah, and other entities are creating propaganda games to present their own narratives.



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**“White Bread,” Famines and Sixteenth-Century Italian Dietetics**

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Mentor(s): Professor Paul Cheney, History

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When describing how Medieval dietetics evolved into Early Modern dietetics in the early seventeenth century, food historians have often cited growing social conflict as the driving cause. However, we have not yet analyzed what was the motivation for this turmoil that transformed how Early Modern Italians viewed their dinner plates. This project explores how the series of severe famines in the sixteenth century increased fears of social and political instability amongst urban populations. My research isolates the 1590 famine in Bologna—arguably the most severe of these famines. By exploring Bolognese Senate letters and trial records, my thesis reveals how the 1590 famine seemed to invert traditional food ways and social hierarchies, thus provoking the need for a new dietary theory to address these changed circumstances. These findings elucidate our understanding of the origins of Early Modern Italian dietetics and demonstrate food shortages’ influence on perceptions of food and identity.



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**Native Truths: Co-Curating a Dynamic Native North American Hall**

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Mentor(s): Dr. Alaka Wali, North American Anthropology, The Field Museum of Natural History

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The Native North American Hall at the Field Museum of Natural History has remained unchanged, in large part, since the displays were installed in the 1950s. In the intervening decades, parts of the exhibit have been stripped back as objects have been taken off display at the request of Native communities. Recent efforts, including exhibitions of contemporary Native artwork, have attempted to reinterpret the hall, and the museum began a complete renovation of the hall in 2018. The current overhaul, scheduled to open in 2021, seeks to explore the long-standing connections between Chicago and Native peoples, the complicated history of objects in the Field Museum's collections, and contemporary Native political activity around nationhood and sovereignty. Drawing on curators' field notes and other archival materials dating back over 100 years, the project will shed light on dozens of items from the museum's collections. The hall will also be co-curated between museum staff and representatives of Native communities. In particular, the hall will feature several co-curated rotating displays that will serve to share the perspectives of contemporary Native communities. When the redesigned hall opens in 2021, it will present the public with a forum to learn about Native peoples historically and in the contemporary moment and will work to educate visitors about Native nations and sovereignty. This presentation will share aspects of ongoing archival research which will be incorporated into the exhibit.



## **The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract**

### **Representation of Syrian Refugees in Austrian Newspapers: New(s) Frames Since 2015**

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Mentor(s): Dr. Colin Benert, Germanic Studies

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Framing theory traditionally suggests that what is discussed in the news (and how it is discussed) is repeated by audiences and amplified by politicians who repeat those messages and write policies informed by them. These messages and policies are again picked up by news outlets and discussed by audiences. This feedback loop reinforces the message, granting it a salient, near matter-of-fact status. In 2015, studies of Austrian newspapers found that frames against Syrian refugees tended to be quite negative, infantilizing refugees and criticizing the economic consequences of integrating them into the labor market. Thus, we would have expected a repetitive loop of negative frames against Syrian refugees to continue into future years. My study challenges the conventional wisdom on framing theory by showing that Austrian newspaper frames were less negative in 2019, despite reporting on more anti-refugee policies. Through the use of in-person surveys, quantitative and qualitative keyword analyses of Austrian newspapers, and reviews of Austrian policies, I find that four new frames better describe the ways in which Syrian refugees are represented in Austrian newspapers: Refugee Crisis, Perversion of Refugee, Integration 1 (Unwelcoming), and Integration 2 (Welcoming). The newspapers used these frames in ways which were less negative towards refugees, and instead more critical of the Austrian government and its policies. Rather than working to enforce and support government biases, Austrian newspapers are acting as a check on Austria's nationalist, anti-refugee policies. The findings of this study suggest that the current scholarship misrepresents the relationship between media, politicians, and the public.



**The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract**

**Visibility, Invisibility and Distortion: An Examination of Current Discourses Regarding Animals**

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Mentor(s): Professor Heather Keenleyside, English

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Modern Anglo-American society is characterized by deeply contradictory beliefs and practices regarding animals, where animals receive dramatically different treatment based on their species and social context. In particular, the animals that make up our food system typically face brutal and inhumane treatment, while those that serve as companions are generally treated much better. This divergence persists even when the animals in question are of the same species. In this paper, I seek to understand the seeming paradox presented by our bifurcated treatment of animals through an application of Melanie Joy's framework of carnism, chosen after a literature review of critical animal studies. Joy conceives of carnism as the system of values that legitimizes the consumption of certain animals but not others. Carnism is sustained by the perpetuation of discourses that make the violence of meat production invisible while elevating idealized and inaccurate portraits of farmed animals. In this paper, I explore children's media as an example of carnism in practice, arguing that a subset of children's books perpetuates an idealized conception of farming that contributes to a culture of denial regarding modern factory farming practices. By examining the ways in which individual attitudes toward animals are shaped by inaccurate yet omnipresent media depictions thereof, this research points toward possible sites of intervention in the struggle for more humane treatment of animals.



## **The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract**

### **Hold Up, We're Saying YES to Brujas: A Santería Phenomenon**

Kristen **Izquierdo**, 4<sup>th</sup>-Year, Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies, Visual Arts

Mentor(s): Professor Salomé Skvirsky, Cinema and Media Studies

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Within the last four years, there has been an emergence of the historically secretive Santería religion on a U.S. national stage by way of mainstream music videos. The purpose of my research is to collect an inventory of contemporary music videos by U.S.-based artists that have circulated in mainstream U.S. media and adopt Santería aesthetics and/or reference Santería practices in order to argue that this extremely public visibility is a new phenomenon. I postulate the motivations behind this shift and its implications for both Yoruba tradition and its practitioners by performing a close analysis of three music videos through the lens of visual costuming and lyrics, as well as by conducting interviews about the music videos with practitioners. The three music videos on which I focus my analysis are “Hold Up” by Beyoncé, “Brujas” by Princess Nokia, and “YES” by Fat Joe, Cardi B, and Anuel AA. I hypothesize that this new, high-level visibility of Santería is due to the emergence of what I am considering an age of empowerment in the United States, as illustrated by recent national movements—like the Black Lives Matter Movement, the Natural Hair Movement, and the Women’s March—in which intersectional minority groups (i.e., Blacks, Afro-Latinxs, women of color) are being open about embracing and celebrating their heritage. Moreover, I claim that the intentions behind Beyoncé’s, Princess Nokia’s, and Fat Joe’s use of Santería elements are very similar in that all three aim to celebrate and show respect for Yoruba tradition, although with varying degrees of success according to general receptions. I also argue that their audiences are slightly different in that Beyoncé’s “Hold Up” is an ode to Black women, whereas Princess Nokia’s “Brujas” is an ode to Afro-Latinas, santeras, and practitioners of other indigenous spiritual faiths, and Fat Joe’s sample in “YES” is an homage to Hector Lavoe, Santería, and the Latinx community. Ultimately, I hope my research is able to bridge the gap in knowledge between afro-diasporic culture and audiovisual media, while shedding light on and providing a voice to a resilient spiritual community to which I belong.



**The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract**

**“Try this Experiment:” Empowering Black Female Reformers at Washington’s National Training School for Girls**

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Mentor(s): Professor Adam Rowe, History

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In the early twentieth century, black women were excluded from America's growing juvenile justice system. Few states or local governments funded institutions to aid black delinquent girls, while professional black women could not access influential state jobs like their white counterparts. Washington's National Training School for Girls was unusual in housing an almost-entirely black population, but still operated under white leadership. This paper analyzes an unsuccessful attempt to reform the beleaguered school in the 1930s that disrupted this racial landscape, creating an opportunity for African American women to take positions of power in D.C.'s juvenile justice system. Drawing on congressional and city government oversight records and contemporary newspaper accounts, the paper focuses on three superintendents of the school to chart how black reformers, previously excluded from the state welfare apparatus, were to gain influential positions within it. This acquisition of power challenges prevailing notions of the relationship between black professional women and government institutions, demonstrating their power to leverage support from the African American community, white frustration, and ideas of feminine qualification to enter the public sector. At the same time, the structural barriers that prevented black women from achieving transformative change through their leadership positions at the National Training School evidence the limits of black influence within the racialized state power structure of the mid-twentieth century.





**The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract**

**Tibetan Antelopes in the Bordeaux Vineyard: Chinese Capital and French Cultural Capital in the Wine Industry, 2000 - Present**

Lauren **Pankin**, 4<sup>th</sup>-Year, Global Studies & French Literature

Mentor(s): Professor Francois Richard, Anthropology; Jamie Countryman, Global Studies

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Gastronomy is considered an element of French heritage, or *patrimoine*, since it contributes to the formation of a national cultural French identity. Wine in particular provides one of the most socially, economically, and mythologically indispensable elements of this constructed “Frenchness.” In the past twenty years, the Bordeaux wine economy has been significantly influenced by a staggering surge in Chinese demand not only for wine, but for French vineyards. This paper aims to problematize the popular narrative that an exclusive and supreme French cultural capital is at odds with an influx of Chinese capital that easily comes and goes—which proves problematic for the long timescale of wine production. This is accomplished through several interventions: first, through a genealogy of wine which reveals the construction of a “purely” French wine through the impetus of capital; second, through a discourse analysis of the French wine journal *La Revue du Vin de France* which introduces some of the hopes and anxieties the French wine industry has in relation to Chinese investment; and third, through a comparison of two Chinese billionaires and their differing receptions by the French government. These examples illustrate the precarious narrative of a clash of French cultural capital and Chinese capital, which is ultimately a continuation of the theory of the “clash of civilizations” that posits an inevitable clash between Eastern and Western culture. This paper aims to combat this essentializing and Orientalizing perspective by demonstrating how cultural capital and capital are imbricated in the past, present, and future of the globalized wine industry and culture.



## The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract

### **Attitudes toward LGBTQ+ Persons: (Un)Changing Views among Iranian-Americans**

Sarah **Portwood**, 4<sup>th</sup>-Year, Global Studies, Comparative Human Development, & Spanish  
Mentor(s): Professor Franklin Lewis, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations; Moira O'Shea, Sociology

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Many scholars have studied the history of attitudes toward homosexual and transgender persons in Iran and the United States. Many others have studied the Iranian diaspora in the U.S. However, few have studied the attitudes that Iranian-Americans hold toward LGBTQ+ persons, and no one has examined the cultural and social forces that have formed and transformed these attitudes. Drawing from historical accounts of the treatment of homosexual and transgender persons in Iran and the U.S., as well as from previous research on demographic predictors of attitudes toward homosexuality, this project asks how and why Iranian-Americans' attitudes toward LGBTQ+ issues have changed since moving to the U.S. To answer this question, this project combines data gathered from surveys and interviews with Iranian-Americans and multigenerational Americans. The anonymous online survey asked respondents to agree or disagree (on a scale of one to six) with a series of statements, such as: "Homosexual couples should have the right to marry." Respondents who agreed to an interview were asked to elaborate on their opinions and recount their experiences with LGBTQ+ people and issues. Ultimately, this project demonstrates that Iranian-Americans' attitudes toward LGBTQ+ persons are tolerant and do not differ significantly from the attitudes of their multigenerational American counterparts. Furthermore, this project shows that the attitudes of many Iranian-American and multigenerational American persons have been tolerant for their whole lives, while others' attitudes have become more tolerant over time to reflect evolving notions of the role that choice plays in being homosexual and transgender. Finally, this project suggests that opinions of other people in their lives and exposure to LGBTQ+ people and issues have played a large role in shaping Iranian-Americans' and multigenerational Americans' attitudes toward LGBTQ+ persons. Thus, this project demonstrates that the Western image of the "backward" Iranian is not only unjust, but is, in fact, misplaced. This project further points to some potential policy directions that could help to increase tolerance and acceptance toward LGBTQ+ people across cultures.



## **The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract**

### **Public Outreach and the Community Museum: Engaging Local Communities in Archaeological Conservation and Research**

Iris **Jacobs**, 4<sup>th</sup>-Year, Anthropology & History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Science and Medicine (HIPS), Visual Arts

Mentor(s): Dr. Maria Cecilia Lozada, Anthropology and Romance Languages and Literatures

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In academic archaeology, community outreach has historically been overlooked, and often is still seen as tangential to research goals. This is unfortunate, as public archeology has the potential to forge connections between local communities and visiting researchers, generate curiosity among young people about their own heritage, and encourage stewardship of archaeological resources. On the Corral Redondo Archaeological Project, researchers and students lived and worked at the IE Miguel Grau School in the town of Iquipi, Arequipa, Peru, which provided numerous opportunities to learn from and with the local community. To engage with students, members of the project demonstrated archaeological techniques, co-taught English-language classes, and interacted informally with the community through sports and conversation. Project conservators invested in and contributed to the Luis Guillermo Lumbreras Museum on the school campus to encourage preservation of artifacts. Additionally, a field school student filmed interviews with local people documenting the community's beliefs and stories regarding the archaeology and culture of the area, as well as project archaeologist's perspective on fieldwork in the region. This oral history footage will be showcased at the Luis Guillermo Lumbreras Museum, to contextualize the archaeology of Corral Redondo. These public archaeology efforts created a genuinely collaborative atmosphere between the community in Iquipi and resident archaeologists, and through the museum, this atmosphere of curiosity may continue to promote a sustainable relationship with local archaeological resources for years to come.



## **The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract**

### **Euromaidan: The Sociopolitical History of the Revolution**

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Mentor(s): Professor Malynne Sternstein, Slavic Studies, Fundamentals

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Since the end of the Soviet occupation on the 24th of August 1991, conglomerate oligarchical establishments have taken both economic and political control of Ukraine. These establishments have since maintained covert systems of corruption, which have led to the privatization of large segments of state capital. After President Yanukovich's announcement of Ukrainian integration with Russia in December of 2013, as opposed to the anticipated movement toward the European Union, a wave of increasingly heated protests and violent government counter-actions — referred to collectively as the Euromaidan Revolution — swept across Ukraine. Through rounds of qualitative interviews with acting media reporters and eyewitnesses, a quantitative statistical data gathering, and a review of the current literature, this research analyzes the sociopolitical context of the Revolution. The present work particularly inquires into the socio-political forces that have instigated mass civil agitation as well as the primary driving motives of the protesters during the transition of the Revolution into its more violent stages. The study shows that the protests began primarily as a response to the unpopular integration agreement, deep-seated frustration with the apparent corruption of the incumbent Yanukovich administration, as well as a sense of overall political disenfranchisement. The driving forces of the protesters were a belief in the advent of change, enhanced by popular local and international support and recognition. Thereby, through an evaluation of the causes and sustaining forces of Euromaidan, the work encourages a further study of Ukraine's transition from political quietism to civic engagement, illuminating the underlying trajectory of civil movements and revolutions in Eastern Europe and worldwide.



**The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract**

**Spatializing Kinship: A Socio-Spatial Analysis of West African Immigrant Kinship Networks in Affordable Housing Cooperatives**

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Mentor(s): Professor Kristen Schilt, Sociology

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Scholarship has shown that immigrants form mutual support kinship networks based on the foundations of a shared cultural background, trust, and obligation. Research also indicates that the ways in which immigrants are spatially embedded, namely, the way they engage with urban infrastructure, can create avenues of social and economic integration into the receiving country. However, less is known about how these two processes interact. How do the features of an immigrant kinship network shape how immigrants experience urban spaces? In this paper, I examine this question using interviews and fieldwork with West African immigrants who currently or formerly lived in affordable housing cooperatives on Chicago's north side. Beyond engaging in a "socio-spatial" dialectic, I argue that West African immigrants engage in a kinship-spatial dialectic with their built environment. Just as the physical features of the building impact tenants' spatial patterns and social interactions, the features of an immigrant kinship network impact the buildings' symbolic and systemic characteristics. As a result, West African immigrants transform buildings in Chicago's skyline into representations of family, solidarity, and at times, social and spatial immobility.



**The 2020 University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium Proceedings: Abstract**

**(Re)Orienting Desire: Western Queer Subjectivity under Chinese  
Authoritarianism**

Evan **Zhao**, 4<sup>th</sup>-Year, Sociology & MAPSS, Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies  
Mentor(s): Professor Kimberly Kay Hoang, Sociology

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How does Western sexual identity translate into the context of authoritarian China? This ethnographic and interview-based project examines the shaping of the cultural and political citizenship of queer people who move to China. Contrary to popular civilizational discourses and their global imaginations, this stream of migration of queer people from Western democratic nations to China complicates our understanding of how illiberal sociocultural and political environments can still productively give way to a flourishing Western queer identity. Against the constant pressures of surveillance, censorship, traditionalism, red tape, and state intimidation, queer expatriates still report advantages to life in China compared to life in their liberal democratic home countries. Through two summers of fieldwork in Shanghai, Hangzhou, Chongqing, Beijing, and Chengdu, from which I collected 31 interviews, I argue that the flourishing of Western queer expatriates relies on several mechanisms. First, by escaping the familiar contexts of their home countries where they grew up, queer expatriates were able to generate a newfound freedom in a transient social world where they have the liberty to reinvent themselves. Second, the exceptional position of expatriates in Chinese society grants them a privileged space for difference and eccentricity, exempting them from many normative traditionalist expectations. Third, an attitude of political indifference, ambivalence, or tolerance removes the right-arm pressures of the state from compliant queer expatriates. Fourth, the displacement of disciplinary efforts of the state onto others, criminals and activists alike, leads queer expatriates to perceive themselves as benefactors of the state's protection from homophobia. Finally, a growing narrative of Western cultural and economic regression in the face of Asian ascension also reverses ideals of modernity for these transnational subjects. This case contributes to a growing literature on queer theory and its intersection with political sociology, particularly developing around the transnational traversing of borders and cultures.