

Class/Economic Case Studies – Fall 2017 MCJ 175, Media Stereotypes

The Invasion of Junk Food By Karen Lopez Cornejo

Across the globe, Western food companies have invaded traditional diets, [leading to a pandemic in obesity. A traditional diet would be defined as a diet from one's own tradition that's been carried on from generation to generation.](#) This concept can be viewed through the lens of culture imperialism. [Cultural Imperialism](#) is the way one nation has power over another. As Western food companies' sales growth slows in wealthy countries, companies such as Nestlé, PepsiCo, and General Mills have been rapidly releasing their products in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. [In Brazil, the results of food consumption, distribution, and advertising has taken a shift from its original healthy traditions, towards people becoming overweight and undernourished due to the availability of cheap, nutrient-poor, high calorie foods.](#)

Economically, multinational companies such as Nestlé, are not only marketing and selling to other nations, but are invading other nations' farmers' lands by urging them to crop cash crops. Cash crops are certain crops that are producing the most money for their company, such as sugar canes or corn. Politically, companies are opposing the attempts of health officials in the food industry, to curb the health effects of processed foods. For example, in 2016 New York's health officials attempted to bring a tax on soda legislation to pass, but soda companies, such as Chubby, paid more than 10 million dollars on their Ad campaign to persuade people that the soda tax will be expensive. [This resulted to the soda tax legislation not passing.](#)

In continuation to Brazil as the main example, over the last decade Brazil's obesity rate has doubled, as [Brazil captures the essence of the food industry's' political power, which is the cause of its rise in obesity.](#) Nestlé employs 21,000 people in Brazil. Although Nestlé has reformulated many of its products to be healthier with the addition of nutrients, Nestlé continues to sell high calorie and nutrient-poor foods. For example, [Nestlé vendors in Brazil go around in isolated communities selling junk food.](#)

Philosopher Antonio Gramsci explains how culture and the media exert a powerful influence on society resulting in influencing workers to buy into a system that is not economically benefiting to them. The way Nestle is using culture and media is by advertising and influencing people's way of eating with cheap junk food. This concept is his perspective of Cultural Imperialism in which Nestle is taking part in. Mrs. Da Silva is a Brazilian Nestle vendor, although she struggles with health issues and being aware that the cause is her diet, which includes Nestlé junk food, she is thankful to work for Nestlé because of her low incomes status. Nestle is taking over Brazil's food industry by offering vendor jobs to low income people, selling cheap junk food to both the vendor and the clients, in addition to influencing their traditional ways of eating. This is an example of culture imperialism.

Trump and Hegemony By Debra Perry

At the end of September 2017 tensions were high between President Trump and mayor of San Juan, Carmen Cruz. After Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico was devastated and struggling to restore the country when Cruz criticized Trump's administration's efforts at restoration. President Trump ran to [twitter](#), writing "Such poor leadership ability by the Mayor of San Juan, and others in Puerto Rico, who are not able to get their workers to help", as well as other degrading statements. These statements were made from a hierarchical viewpoint that Puerto

Rico is financially and politically beneath, or behind, the rest of the United States. These types of comments from the president play into the idea of the continental United States as a cultural hegemon and other U.S. territories being less than.

[“U.S. cultural hegemony depends in part on how well media, government, and other dominant institutions popularize beliefs and organize practices that promote individualism and consumerism.”](#) This is significant because when you have a highly publicized figurehead in the media, such as the President of the U.S., his publicized personal opinion of other U.S. territories becomes popularized. Therefore, when President Trump bashes Puerto Rico’s leadership skills and population as a whole, he creates a national view of Puerto Rico as being lesser than the continental U.S, who he did not bash in regards to relief after hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

Be aware of current events, and [educate](#) yourself on political issues, instead of just believing political figures without research. If you know nothing about a topic, you are vulnerable to believing anyone with any power, whether they are right or wrong. Knowledge is power.

A Hierarchical View of the United States

By Hugo Rico

After the hurricane Harvey hit Texas, Mexico and other countries offered to aid the United States. After the catastrophic earthquakes in Mexico, [United States president Donald Trump has yet to send aid](#) and was slow to tweet about the incident. The president is trying to put the United States into a hierarchical state against other countries by ignoring them and making the United States more superior. This is an example of hegemony and power, showing other countries that the United States doesn’t need aid from anyone. However, the Trump Administration is more than just a political issue, class/economic issue, or a hegemony issue. The Trump Administration has become more of a race issue. The Trump administration only targets groups of people that causes concerns to the United States. The Trump Administration also put a hold on many Middle Eastern visas because of high levels of terrorism coming into the United States. President Donald Trump [bans muslim refugees coming](#) into the United States and several other incidents where the United States has a specific target audience. Overall the United States is being put into a hegemonic state by the president and his administration.

Have You Thanked a Farmer?

By Ashley Baggs

Did you buy groceries this week? How many of those items were brought to you by a farmer, or rancher? Yup, most every item you purchased has been brought to you by a farmer, or a rancher. Why are these providers of goods so belittled and poorly recognized then? Mike Rowe asked these same things in his 30 second video from 2017 [Attn: Farmers Deserve Our Respect](#).

Farmers and ranchers have been stereotypes as “dirty”, “stupid”, and “lazy” by many Americans who do not understand the job farmers do and the product they give us. For instance, the crappy [John Deere](#) tilling the ground costs more than five brand new Mercedes. According to an article on [AgWeb.com](#), almost 60% of farmers work 10-14 hours a day, seven days a week. Yet, because of EPA, real estate, and energy challenges, incomes are declining and farmers are making less than they have in decades yet face the [costs of diesel fuel in California](#).

What can we do? 1) Media could help explain the value of agriculture. Consumers can start by [buying local](#) to increase the profits that farmers can make, because the product is not being shipped long distances. Thus, you keep a fresher product on your table and you also keep a farmer in business. 2) Understand what a farmer/rancher goes through to get you fresh

produce, cotton, meat, and nuts (just to name a few). From the moment this person gets out of bed, they are watching the news for weather and stocks (yes, the stock market affects them greatly), preparing for their busy day in the fields, and making sure that all of their employees have everything they need. These people may look unintelligent and dirty, but they work with their hands and carry a heavy mind load. Last, you can [thank a farmer](#).

These human beings do so much for you, me, and everyone on the planet as their daily job. They struggle as new laws are passed and urban sprawl encroaches upon their land. The wrinkles on their face tell a stereotyped story of hard work and hard times, but they pray for the good times to come. So, when you lay your head on your pillow tonight and rest easy with a full belly, remember to ask yourself "Have YOU thanked a farmer?"

Weinstein's Settlements Paid for 3 Decades **By Nathalene Vang**

As widely reported, Harvey [Weinstein is accused of sexually harassing](#) more than 60 women and over 27 sexual assaults. These sexual assaults date back to 1980's and continued until recently, underpinning stereotypes of powerful men discriminating against people of a lower class.. Why is it that these crimes were unreported or if they were, what happened to the reports?

Many of the sexually harassed victims stated that they did not report the sexual assault because they feared retaliation by Mr. Weinstein. Recently Zelda Perkins, an assistant at Miramax London speaks up about how she was sexually harassed by Harvey Weinstein for 19 years. No one knew of this because Harvey Weinstein and lawyers gave [Perkins a settlement](#) to be quiet about Weinstein's sexual assault towards her. Perkins told the media in October about the settlement between her and Weinstein's lawyers. She finally broke the non-disclosure agreement after 19 years. She states in one of her interviews,

"My entire world fell in because I thought the law was there to protect those who abide by it. I discovered that it had nothing to do with right and wrong and everything to do with money and power."

This is not just some sexual abuse we can take slightly. This is a man who is using his power and status to take advantage of others. Not only that, but because of his name and reputation, he is able to get away with it for decades. Power and money steps over anyone under it. This crime is more than just sexual assault but unequal opportunities and discrimination in the workplace.

Trump Tax Reforms **By Joe Gomez**

The tax reforms that trump has been proposing shows the misunderstanding of the current climate between the rich and poor. Race is also coming to the forefront as the gap between the rich and poor is ever increasing helping to create more and more tension between the two. These tax reforms being proposed has done nothing to ease the minds of the people in need of financial help either. In an article by Vice news called "[We asked members of the One Percent who would benefit most from the president's huge tax cut to weigh in. Spoiler alert: It's bad.](#)" the article helps to explain what it all means.. The reforms seem to benefit only the rich and does little to nothing for the poor and middle class people. America is the mixing pot of culture and race, yet there are blatant forms of cultural racism and claims of the minimization of racism. The White House as well as [police](#) departments have been seen as white washed, old, and out of touch with the people they govern and protect. Some can apply systematic racism to the White House and how it runs itself with very little representation for any other race. The divide between classes and race will continue to grow

Trump, Obamacare, and Hegemony By Corbin Roache

Did you know that nearly 32 million people in America are dependent on Obamacare? [Obamacare](#) gives Americans access to quality and affordable healthcare. But now that Obama is out of office everything is going to change. On October 16, 2017 President Donald Trump declares that "[there is no such thing as Obamacare anymore](#)". This would result in millions of people losing health insurance coverage completely and would cause premiums to rise 20- 25% within the first year after it is repealed.

All over the nation people tried to fight for the Affordable Care Act but have given up after Trump officially decided to repeal Obama's signature health care law. Trump has noted that lawmakers are trying to create some sort of "short-term fix" for the health-care market. Trump has recently signed an executive order that is making federal agencies look into making many changes. These changes could possibly increase the enrollment in other health care plans.

Until Trump finds a better option for the people, Obamacare will continue to be the law of the land. Obamacare's goal is to encourage low-income people to sign up for its coverage. Almost all Americans will still be required to pay a tax penalty or have some sort of health insurance coverage. Trump has told reporters that he finally thinks there are enough votes to pass the Obamacare repeal but after many fails of trying to repeal he has yet to prove it. For now, Trump will continue to try to [repeal Obamacare](#) in hopes he can come up with an alternative health care plan, one that perhaps will be called "Trumpcare". But until then, Obamacare will continue to be the #1 health care plan offered in America.

Hegemony is the dominance of one social group over another. Higher class citizens, who may not be enrolled in Obamacare, are still being affected by it since they still have to pay taxes for those that are enrolled. However, even without Obamacare they would have to pay taxes. Their taxes are going towards a good thing and is actually helping people of lower-income that might not be able to afford any health coverage without Obamacare.

Puerto Rico: Living in an Hegemonic World By Anyssa Garza

The recent hurricane in Puerto Rico has caused a lot of damage to the country, but Trump's response has been muted. Hurricane Relief has been sent to Puerto Rico, but the damage is so severe that the hurricane relief doesn't relieve the country of their problems. The question is, why was Trump's response rate to the damage in Puerto Rico low, if Puerto Ricans are American citizens?

Society has this idea that in order to be a "[true American](#)" [you had to have been born in the U.S., know how to speak English, and believe in some sort of God](#). This **stereotype** perpetuates societies view of those who do not conform or deviate from this **stereotype**. This **stereotype** illustrates the **hegemony** in American culture, wherein a social group holds the power or dominance over another social group. In this case, American society has created an image for what an American looks like; however, Puerto Rico is an American territory.

According to [Section 302 of the Immigration and Nationality Act](#), Puerto Ricans have the same birthright as Americans, but because they were not born in or are part of the contiguous United States, they are treated differently than those who are. America lives in a **hegemonic** society where people believe that they are superior to others just because of the fact that they were born in America. This is evident in the way Trump responded to Puerto Rico because he had the control as to whether Puerto Rico was helped.

Let's not forget the fact that Puerto Ricans have the birthright of an American citizen, but they also use [U.S. currency, they are able to join the armed forces, use the postal service, and the](#)

[American flag hangs over Puerto Rico's capital](#). Puerto Rico also pays [majority of federal taxes including payroll, Social Security, and Medicare taxes](#). However, because Puerto Rico is not a state it is not able to vote and pay federal income taxes, but this does not mean that they are more or less American than those who do.

[Another factor that may have led to the low response rate to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico is the fact that Puerto Ricans are Latinos](#). The recent events; such as the riots in Charlottesville, Virginia and Trumps ideas of building a wall may be a factor to the low response rate in Puerto Rico. It is still not clear if **racism** could be a factor to the slow response rate. Americans should know that Puerto Ricans are American, and by knowing this fact the aid to help will become more prominent. The **stereotype** that a true American is someone who was born in the United States, speaks English, and is a white man or woman illustrates how the American culture may dominate the view of Americans and how they view others.

Jail the Poor and Free the Rich?

By Kelly Blichfeldt

As you read this post, 450,000 Americans sit in jail awaiting trial because they cannot afford bail. Our justice system was designed to provide equal treatment under the law to all, but overwhelming numbers of poor Americans remain in jail simply because they cannot afford bail. More often than not, personal wealth and social connections determine whether or not someone stays in jail. How is this fair?

Targeting the Poor

The bail system that the United States currently has targets low income communities and communities of color directly. Historically, [lower class communities](#) consist mainly of minority groups such as low income people of color. Many issues arise when a low income person remains in jail due to a lack of funds. Examples include the risk of losing a job, home, and in extreme situations- custody of children. Work is currently being done to enact change specifically with sentencing and mandatory minimum laws, but no real change can happen without reforming the bail system.

Statistics

9 out of 10 defendants who are awaiting trial in jail cannot afford their bail. This significantly impacts black and latino men who on average pay 19-35% more than their white counterparts for the same crime. It costs roughly \$38 million a DAY uphold current imprisonment for those awaiting trial. Taxpayer money is being wasted on low income non-violent offenders who are there simply because they cannot afford their bail.

What Can Be Done?

A new bi-partisan bill has been introduced by U.S. Senators Kamala Harris and Rand Paul called the [Pretrial Integrity and Safety Act](#). This bill would reform bail by changing it to reflect a risk assessment of the offender. This means offenders will only await trial in jail if they are deemed a risk to themselves or society. The bill would also allow states to reform the system themselves to fit their own personal needs instead of creating a single system under the federal government. The states would be held accountable in making sure that their risk assessment of offenders is not biased based on race or class and would be done through analysis of trends and data instead. This bill would ensure that people do not remain in jail simply because they do not have the ability to bail themselves out and would also save the American taxpayers money upon its passing.

Ban On The Homeless

By Connor Matteson

On August 17th 2017 the [Fresno City Council](#), 4-1 vote, agreed upon terms where it will be “illegal for homeless people to camp in tents or lean-to shelters on public or private property across Fresno.” Even though this act has to go through a second vote, by looking from the previous rule it seems as it will pass again.

The only thing harsher than their act is the backlash from the community itself. People have been rallying in [support](#) for the overturn of this act because of the negligence of it. “The law would make camping on public or private property without the owner’s permission a misdemeanor punishable by a \$1,000 fine or by up to six months in jail, City Attorney Douglas Sloan said.” There are a couple things wrong with that and the first one is that how are they supposed to pay the fine? They are homeless and most are without a job or income... Hopefully they see what they have done wrong and the voting goes differently in this second round. “Nobody ever aspired to be homeless. ... It’s a multidimensional problem,” Jenkins said. “You can’t paint every homeless person with the same brush. They are individuals, individual stories, individual reasons.”

This just isn’t happening here in Fresno, a great example is the [Seattle Jungle](#). It is a whole community that is run by homeless and they have their very own culture that they practice. The thing about it is that it is located outside of the city because it is so dangerous to be there. This is a huge example of [class bias](#) because the ones voting want to make the downtown area nicer and the only way to do that in their eyes is to get rid of the homeless population. The homeless do not have a voice at all in this whole case and it is only affecting them. Great example of class biased **hegemony**. This definitely creates tension between the community and the homeless population and Fresno is now in the middle of this war.

#MeToo: Giving Voice to the Voiceless

By Richard Chang

Behind the glitz and glam, there’s an equally darker, horrendous side of Hollywood that has been kept well behind the curtains. With the surge of the [Harvey Weinstein allegations](#), actress Alyssa Milano brought millions together on Twitter with the tweet [#MeToo](#) to bring awareness of how huge sexual harassment and assault is, not only to celebrities in Hollywood, but to everyday people as well.

The [MeToo movement](#) started a decade ago by activist Tarana Burke. Distraught by the confession of a young girl being sexually abused by her mother’s boyfriend, Burke felt helpless but knew there needed to be something done. In 2006, Burke started her own campaign called [Just Be Inc.](#) and soon MeToo was born. It was to give voice to those who were sexually harassed, assaulted, and/or exploited and to let others know that they are not alone.

Since Alyssa Milano’s tweet, some have criticized the movement as a witch-hunt in which Barbara Walters claimed, “[was] destroying the entire [film] industry.” With comments like these, it hinders the victims of not wanting to share their stories as if they should feel guilty about destroying someone’s career that was built on sexual misconduct.

The larger problem isn’t people coming out with their stories. It is the American public’s [slut-shaming attitude](#). “What were you wearing?” “What were you drinking?” These questions lead to the larger picture of blaming the victims; shutting them down and letting the predator get away which is why the overall movement of #MeToo is to let victims know that they are not alone.

Burke does not want the overall message to fade out because #MeToo has brought millions of people from every background together to bring awareness to this national problem of sexual harassment therefore she hopes that the movement will continue to allow victims to share their stories.

Lady Gaga sang, "You won't know until it happens to you" but why wait when we can all just help each other by standing up for what's right?