

## SAYING MERITOCRACY AND DOING PRIVILEGE

Shamus Khan

Columbia University

Colin Jerolmack

New York University

This article describes the relationship between saying and doing. It argues that focusing on the discrepancy between participants' accounts and their actions is one of the greatest analytical strengths of ethnography. We make this case by drawing upon an ethnography of an elite boarding school. We also reflect on the way that two ethnographers worked together to better understand the social significance of accounts that are incongruent with situated behavior. We conclude by arguing that qualitative researchers must be more sensitive to the different kinds of claims that can be made with interview versus observational data.

For the past several years, my colleague and fellow ethnographer Colin Jerolmack and I (Shamus Khan) have been thinking through the methodological implications of the fact that what people say is often different than what they do. In this article, we address this issue with empirical material I gathered while conducting fieldwork at the elite preparatory boarding school of St. Paul (Khan 2011),<sup>1</sup> and that I analyzed with Jerolmack. The saying–doing relationship that we outline here is a perennial problem in sociological research (Deutscher, Pestello, and Pestello 1993). However, it was not something that I was particularly interested in when writing *Privilege*. Indeed, as an ethnographer, I simply decided to put the most stock in claims that I could verify through direct observation. However, as I worked with Colin, who read my notes and provided me with constructive feedback, I realized that focusing on the discrepancy between my participants' accounts and their actions was, in and of itself, one of the greatest analytical strengths of ethnography.

This article describes the relationship of saying and doing in ethnographic accounts by providing direct evidential support from a single ethnographic study. At the same time, we reflect on the way that two ethnographers worked together to better capture the knowledge of social life gathered in fieldwork. We conclude by reflecting on our own work process to provide a guide for others to overcome such challenges.

For ease of presentation and readability, we draw upon *Privilege* (Khan 2011) to show some of the challenges of relying upon actor's verbal accounts when trying to explain what they do in the world. We could have just as easily drawn upon *The Global Pigeon* (Jerolmack 2013) and had Khan help analyze empirical material gathered by

\*Direct all correspondence to Shamus Khan, Department of Sociology—MC9649, Columbia University, 606 W 122nd Street, New York, NY 10027; e-mail: sk2905@columbia.edu

Jerolmack. And we note that this article is written in a somewhat unconventional way—moving between “I” and “we” in the narrative form. When we write “I,” we are using Khan’s voice alone; “we” includes both of us. This is for reading ease, since as the reader might note from the previous sentence, there is something jarring about authors referring to themselves in the third person.

A quick note on method and data: I was permitted to conduct my study of St. Paul’s School in the 2004 to 2005 academic year, during which I worked as a faculty member and lived at the school (located in Concord, New Hampshire). This position allowed me to observe the school’s workings and talk to its faculty, students, staff, and alumni. My project was public knowledge. I was interested in getting a broad sense of the life of the place—namely how its 500 students, its faculty, and its staff experienced their lives there and were formed (or transformed) by their experiences at the institution. I suspect that my status as an alumnus of St. Paul’s School (the class of 1996) helped me gain access to the site and build rapport with people.

Of interest when looking at a place like St. Paul’s—a place that vigorously embraces the importance of being an “open” or representative institution—is making sense of how such moral commitments to a kind of equality (racial, and to a degree, economic) can be so tightly coupled with a context where inequality is increasing.<sup>2</sup> From a research perspective, this meant asking students how they made sense of their lives, the world around them, and what their lives were like at a place like St. Paul’s. And then it meant watching how they actually lived.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

I sat across from Evan Williams, a boy I had gotten to know very well in the early months of my fieldwork. I was interviewing him about his experiences at the school. The purpose was to get a sense of the life of boys at the school and to help me with my research. Evan was cognizant of that research project and eager to help me understand his school. During the interview, Evan spoke of his brother, who two years before had walked the halls of St. Paul’s. “My brother was in this play, a take on *Billy Budd*. . . .” As the conversation progressed, he regaled me with countless stories about the school over the past six years—none of which he witnessed. Evan spoke not in fits and starts, but in paragraphs, almost as if he were working off a script. He seemed terribly prepared for this interview, as if his life were a prelude to it. With an assurance that belied his years, this 14-year-old boy proclaimed authoritatively, “The thing you have to know, Mr. Khan, is that there are fewer seated meals now. Things have changed. It’s less formal. It’s a different school.”

Over the course of an hour and a half, it became clear that Evan’s knowledge of the school was vast, particularly for a ninth grader who just arrived on campus. Evan cited obscure traditions, spoke with intimacy of “campus characters” he had yet to meet, and knew the noteworthy personalities of the past and the fine, important details of the school that could only have come from the most intimate of knowledge of the place.

Evan was from a wealthy, well-established family at the school, and he knew the “hidden curriculum” that was the key to success. In this interview that he seemed to control more than I, Evan ostensibly confirmed what Bourdieu (1996) had theorized years ago: within these elite institutions, it is those students from advantaged backgrounds who are most likely to succeed because throughout their lives, before ever crossing the threshold of these spaces, they have developed the dispositions and cultural capital that give them an advantage over others. They feel at home within the institutions that reward them for exactly the type of behavior that is “native” to them (Bourdieu 1996).

Interview subjects like Evan are a qualitative researcher’s dream. Many students at St. Paul’s come from advantaged backgrounds, and all have gone through a grueling application process that only takes about 15 percent of applicants. One of the primary evaluative criteria is their capacity to express themselves and interact with an adult interviewer. Those who make it through are highly skilled at answering questions and at conveying “who they are” through their answers. They have a confidence around adults that few high schoolers share. Indeed, they have been training for “interviews” their entire lives.

In contrast to many other social groups, where extracting information is often a challenge, it would seem that if researchers want to know about the lives of these students, they simply have to talk with them. For the most part, these kids are incredibly willing to talk about their lives. What more could one ask from a research subject? They are chatty, eloquent, and practiced in discerning and answering questions.

Nevertheless, there are limits to what we can glean from these verbal accounts. In this article, we argue that the ideal interview subject provides less than ideal data, particularly if you are trying to explain what people actually do in the world. This is not because students from St. Paul’s are manipulative, deceitful, or confused. Instead, it is because the narratives that they construct in an interview are at odds with situated behavior. My interview with Evan was not unique; it encapsulated his personality. He often spoke to other students with the kind of authority he demonstrated to me. And yet for this, his peers treated him with contempt and abuse. Evan’s displays of confidence and knowledge of the school were relentlessly challenged by older students. As an alumnus of St. Paul’s and an ethnographic researcher at the school, I knew Evan’s problem: He needed to stop posturing as a learned old head and build experiences of his own.

New students like him were broken down harshly by their older peers: a quick punch in the arm when no one was looking; flushing the toilets while they were in the shower, resulting in extremely hot water; the disappearance of their keyboard and mouse; or being ignored for a day. New students learned that their ability to claim knowledge of St. Paul’s would only come with time. In this way, older students challenged the entitlements of the younger ones. They privileged what people had lived through, what they had seen with their own eyes—rather than the knowledge inherited from the kinds of lineages of nobility that Bourdieu suggested were so important.

This was a radically different lesson than what I could glean from an interview. In our conversations, all of Evan's familial authority was on display, and it would lead the researcher to believe it was how Evan lived his life. However, in his lived experience, Evan learned that such verbal displays were aggressively challenged, and he eventually learned to act differently.

Our argument here is that observational data are necessary to understand how the new elite inhabit privilege. Elites are often spoken to (interviewed) but rarely observed. But when we analyzed data from a yearlong observation of St. Paul's School, we routinely found discrepancies between what students said and what they did. Had I chosen to write *Privilege* based solely on the accounts gathered in interviews, a very different story about adolescent elites in America would have been presented—a story that would not accurately reflect their everyday lives. The final account would have depicted an idealized, well-crafted performance of the values students thought they should hold. It also would have been a fairly strong confirmation of Bourdieu's thesis (Bourdieu 1996).

It was in sharing my data with Jerolmack that I recognized how analyzing the disconnect between the students' narratives and their actions could be a productive platform for understanding the social world of elites. We see how their posturing is at times an exquisite art—in this case, a *learned form of capital* that comes from years of preparing for interviews with strangers. The fact that we could arrive at this understanding is itself evidence of the central methodological strength of ethnography and the Achilles' heel of those who must rely on interviews alone: namely ethnographers ground explanations of social action in firsthand observations of that action, whereas interviewees must construct explanations of social action without actually having witnessed it.

But, as we have intimated, fieldwork alone does not guarantee that researchers will critically assess the accounts that subjects give. On the one hand, some fieldworkers treat accounts and action as equivalent forms of data and construct “quote-driven” rather than “context-driven” ethnographies (Duneier 2007). On the other hand, the researcher must recognize that the meaning and significance of the accounts gathered through interviews vary depending on the characteristics of the participant. For instance, while the elites we describe were comfortable with the interview format and used it as a platform for posturing, some scholars have found that the urban poor appear more likely to fear the interview and meet many questions with distrust or silence (see Venkatesh 2002; Young 2004).

Below, we provide accounts of what students at St. Paul's say about the world and juxtapose these with what they actually do in the world. In interviews, most students construct a narrative of having achieved by dint of their hard work; meanwhile, observations reveal that most students seldom work hard and actually marginalize the few that do. The reason for this discrepancy between their words and actions, we contend, is that in a world marked by greater openness, students recognize the importance of rhetorically embracing meritocracy—even as they work in practice to protect the advantages they have most often inherited. The combination of rhetorically embracing openness while practicing protection is what I have termed “Privilege” (Khan 2011).

We conclude by arguing that the discordance between saying and doing that we have described at St. Paul's School is not unique to these students but rather is illustrative of a general—and neglected—problem in sociology. This leads us to close with a provocative question: Why should we do interviews or gather attitudinal data at all?

## SAYING MERITOCRACY AND DOING PRIVILEGE

Students at St. Paul's School were forthcoming and almost universally consistent about how they made sense of their success. Stan, who was from a wealthy but not particularly established family and who seemed well liked by other students and faculty, gave a typical answer when asked how far he would come since he started at St. Paul's. "I worked hard to get here, I learned in class, I worked to make the varsity team. And it was hard. But I earned it. We all earned it. And I feel good when I [. . .] see how far I've come. . . . I've come a long way. It wasn't easy. . . . I mean . . . it's still not easy. It might even be harder . . . but I did it. . . . Not everyone does this, gets this far. It takes a lot. I know I'm not done," he added cheerfully, "I've sorta just begun. But now I know that I can do it. I've got what it takes."

Stan's framing of his achievements as the result of hard work—whether conscious or not—works against our very common, age-old suspicion of entitlement and the nagging feeling that the rich succeed just because of who they are. St. Paul's students seek to replace that frame with one that is based on merit.

Stan is not alone in talking about how hard he worked to earn what he has achieved. For example, there is a set of couches on campus that only seniors are allowed to sit on (this is not an official rule but is nonetheless an accepted practice). When the senior class graduated, and the rest of the school remained to take their finals, the juniors began aggressively taking over these couches to mark themselves as the new seniors on campus. I asked them why it was so important for them to immediately occupy this space. A junior, Emily, said, "This is going to sound ridiculous. But life here is tough. And this place, this was a goal for me. I mean, I would walk by every day and see seniors sitting here. And at first I thought, 'I'll never get there. . . . I don't think I can do it.' But that motivated me. It's not just some 'forbidden fruit' for me. It was a goal. Something I could work toward. I'd see it every day and think to myself, 'I am going to get there. . . . I can do it.' And guess what? Here I am. I've done it. I honestly don't care about the couch. But this is important for me. It proves that I did it. That all that work got me somewhere. That it was worth it."

Emily deploys the same frame for the couches as Stan. Her ascension was a goal that came through work, not a deserved acquisition that came from time logged or inheritance. And in achieving their newfound status, Emily and Stan both appeal to their own capacity: Emily finds that she "can do it"; Stan notes that he can achieve tasks he sets himself to in a way that not everyone can.

Such students are not completely naive. They know that not everyone who works hard gets ahead. They see many at their school who suffer this fate. These people are

the staff, the men and women who make the school function day in and day out. I sought to bring up this contrast in conversations, knowing that “good interviews” mean not just collecting transcripts of narratives but also challenging and interrogating those narratives. Not surprisingly, students spoke fondly of staff members. They are the caretakers and cheerleaders for students while parents are away. Jessica, who praised a cleaning woman in her dormitory for her demeanor, her seemingly limitless memory, and her work ethic, could only come up with “bad luck” as the reason for the cleaner’s station in life. Another student explained, “Forty years ago, women weren’t allowed into places like this. We’ve come a long way. Things are different now.” Gathering all of the students’ interview responses together, we learn that staff are unlucky, have different priorities, or—most commonly—are casualties of an unjust era that we have since overcome. Importantly, students maintain a belief in meritocracy throughout these accounts.

Students also know that being talented and hardworking may not make them the best at everything. In fact, students consistently bring up other students who are better than they are. Students told stories about a violinist on campus who might soon have a premier at Carnegie Hall, a mathematician who would win one of the greatest prizes in that discipline (the Fields Medal), an artist who would sell paintings for millions, and a squash player who would soon take home gold in the junior Olympics. There is, no doubt, a certain teenage mentality to this—students assume that the school is the whole world. But still, it was not simply that the students thought of themselves as having a sense of potential—that the world was theirs to contribute to; they also recognized that certain people had extraordinary talents, skills that far exceeded their own. At St. Paul’s School, the students believed that they were surrounded by such talents; as a result, that which was extraordinary became a part of their ordinary reality. Their school was a collection of some of the hardest working, most talented kids in the world.

Talking to students, I overwhelmingly heard about their hard work, and how much they earned their success. The students similarly expressed a commitment to social justice and a narrative of just how far the world had come. The lessons from their accounts were of past injustices, present opportunities, and the necessity of work, discipline, and talent to make it. The world is a meritocracy. This does not mean that it is equal—some people are better than others, and these talents are important to recognize. Yet such inequalities are increasingly acquired by the action of individuals and decreasingly ascribed by belonging to a class, race, or gender. The narrative accounts of students can be categorized as “saying meritocracy.”

However, observations showed something quite different in the day-to-day life of the school: namely that despite their verbal commitments to “hard work,” rarely did students seem to be working. They would seldom be found with books in their hands (or if they had them, they were usually closed). Yet curiously, they appeared prepared for classes. Nonrequired lessons were almost never done. In classes where homework was required but not graded, students seemed to never have homework ready when a teacher would surprise them and ask for it to be handed in.

I decided to gather together the syllabi of an average 11th-grade student and do all the work that was required of that student. What I found was that I was working constantly—I could not really keep up. How was it that I (a graduate of the school himself) could not manage the workload that most students seemed to perform comfortably?

I made further observations only to discover that students seldom did their readings. Instead, they relied upon online summaries (Sparknotes, Wikipedia, etc.) to understand readings. To complete math exercises, they invariably chose those odd-numbered questions with attached solutions in the back of their books. Such findings are consistent with survey research that has found that student work hours have declined radically in the past 30 years (Arum and Roksa 2010; Babcock and Marks 2010). Students certainly kept themselves busy with activities (visiting each other, being part of clubs, etc.). But this was not the same as the disciplined academic work so many of them professed to be undertaking.

Further, although students often *expressed* a commitment to hard work, those who *actually* worked very hard were socially shunned. For instance, Mary was a student who, like all others, expressed a commitment to work. In response to a comment about her hard work, she replied, “I mean, I bet a lot of people die wishing they’d had a better life. How else are you going to get one? We’ve gotta work for it.” Yet one of the main differences between Mary and other students was that she did not just talk about hard work, she actually manifested it. She could often be seen darting across campus, a heavy backpack on her shoulders, off to do work on a lab or in the library, or to meet with a faculty member. One could literally see the burden of her work—that heavy bag; this was made all the more notable when compared with the ways in which other students seemed to casually stroll across the grounds.

Rather than being celebrated for her virtuosic performance of “hard work”—a value that every student expressed the deepest commitment to, Mary was somewhat of a social outcast. In fact, she was often openly mocked for working hard. While most students expressed a commitment to work, just as Mary did, perhaps the only thing they actually did work hard at was appearing at utter ease, like everything was simple for them and like they had what it took. Mary was a reminder of the distance between the values expressed by the community and the way the community actually acted. And those rare students who worked hard and were popular often took pains to hide their work. They might talk about it, but they knew never to show it.

Mary helps us see that “hard work” is mostly a form of talk—but important talk nonetheless. It is a rhetorical strategy deployed by students in a world of “new elites.” At St. Paul’s School, the world is presented as a kind of blank canvas, ready for students to seize. Thinking of the world as an open horizon (rather than, say, a stacked deck of cards) is consistent with the meritocratic frame: the world is yours; all that is required are hard work and talent. Students, in turn, believe that they work extremely hard and are exceptionally talented. They generally do not work hard, although they are adept at performing a kind of busyness that looks and feels like hard work. Yes, there is certainly a lot of talent at St. Paul’s—although not of the meteoric variety

that the students often believe about themselves and others. This vision of self and the world—both inculcated by the school and eagerly promoted by the students—has important ramifications.

Yet observations show the instability of this vision in practice. In my book, I develop an argument for the importance of “ease” to the new elite (Khan 2011); this argument is based upon the physical embodiment of students and therefore grounded in observations of actions rather than accounts of interviews. The students who enter the school with the presumption of ease are aggressively confronted and challenged, as we saw with Evan. Ease is not simply inherited from experiences with families; it is made in interactions at the school.

However, knowledge of how to carry oneself within the world is a very challenging resource to acquire. Take eating a meal, something we do every day. Knowing how to eat is in many ways more challenging than knowing what to eat. The latter requires cognitive knowledge that can be learned by anyone, particularly as barriers to knowledge have been confronted and collapsed in recent decades; the former requires corporeal knowledge that is developed through experiences within particular settings. The nearly ingenious trick is that corporeal ease is anything but easy to produce. What appears a natural, simple quality is actually learned through repeated experiences in elite institutions. The apparent easiness of these characteristics implies that if someone does not know how to embody ease, it is somehow their own fault—they do not naturally have what it takes. This allows for inequitable outcomes to be understood not as the result of the odds being stacked in the favor of some but as something that simply “happens.”

If the elite truly embraced hard work, they could be outworked (particularly given their present habits). Ease is both an obscure thing and hard for the rising classes to master. Mary misrecognized the frame of hard work as being what she should “really” do, and therefore was the subject of scorn. And so Bourdieu is not completely mistaken: It is easier to be at ease at an elite institution the more time you have spent in such places; if you are wealthy, that is simply more likely to be the case. Those who have not spent as much time at places like St. Paul’s must work hard to achieve the feeling of ease, and it is nearly impossible for this hard work not to leave its mark on them.

The advantaged have embraced the accoutrements of the open society with the rhetorical deployment of the frames of talent and hard work. But through their marks of ease, they have found ways to limit advancement within such openness, protecting their positions. We see the elite saying meritocracy but doing the ease of privilege; to see this requires field research that goes far beyond asking questions.

## WHY DO WE INTERVIEW?

In this article, we have used the arguments in *Privilege*, a completed ethnography, to identify—ex post facto—the dynamic of talk versus action as two independent, although interrelated, forms of qualitative research data. As noted, this was not

something I initially paid much attention, in part because standard ethnographic practice presumes that observations will be gathered in such a way as to permit ready validation of speech. But this posture overlooks the ways in which informants can strategically use particular forms of speech for particular purposes. My subjects used interviews as social signaling opportunities—that is, as tools to demonstrate ease and privilege. I had been thinking primarily of the content of interviews, not the interview as a social gesture—as long as the study subjects were truthful, I was satisfied.

But, by working in pairs, it became clear that the interview as an interactional event—which includes the information transmitted—could differ radically for different social groups. In his study of working-class men who bred domesticated pigeons in New York City, Jerolmack (2009) found that his ordinarily brash and garrulous participants often became soft spoken and tentative when he interviewed them. He also observed that the men interacted affectionately with their birds but claimed in interviews not to “give a fuck” about them—a narrative that Jerolmack interpreted as a performance of masculinity. He brought this knowledge into the analysis of Khan’s data. Immediately upon hearing Khan’s recollection of fieldwork, Jerolmack noticed that the process of interviewing itself was a subject worth considering in terms of what it meant to elites. His research on working-class men ended up, perhaps counterintuitively, as an opportunity to reflect on the modality of interviews for gathering data on the elite. More specifically, it enabled one of us (Khan) to open up the structure of this speech event as another means by which to understand the reproduction of social status among emerging elites. Specifically, we saw together how the interview was an accepted means by which elites demonstrate their social standing. In the context of schools, it was a site by which young people “practiced” elitism.

Such opportunities for reflection in fieldwork, built around toggling between speech and everyday behavior, are common in ethnography. We need only think of how Eliot Liebow (1967) set up his arguments in *Tally’s Corner*. Each chapter began with what people said about a situation, after which Liebow demonstrated that this was not what they actually did every day. Liebow’s ability to recognize and reflect upon this discrepancy led to theoretical insights such as the “value stretch” concept. Another instance arose for Venkatesh (2002): The informants in his research saw his fieldwork as a form of “hustling” similar to their own survival strategies; this interpretation opened up new possibilities of gathering data because informants would consciously trade information for services that Venkatesh might provide, and in so doing, they began contradicting the statements provided to Venkatesh when they felt that he could offer them nothing in return.

Our collaborative efforts in reading and analyzing each other’s fieldnotes have led us to conclude that the verbal accounts researchers gather cannot stand in for action; rather, they are themselves a form of action often aimed at social signaling. While a few other scholars have made similar points, it is most certainly the case that the problem is usually glossed or ignored (Deutscher et al. 1993; Pager and Quillian 2005). If we take this problem seriously, then it is not a laughing matter to ask why it is that we interview people at all. Given space constraints, we can only speculate here.

The simplest answer is that many sociologists do not really care what people do, but instead only care about what they say they think and do—their cultural frames or interpretive schemas that they reportedly bring to situations, the values they claim to hold, their self-reports of behavior, and so on. This is a perfectly reasonable, if myopic, position; but, as we show in a companion paper that we are preparing for publication, interviewers who *say* they are primarily interested in sense making nonetheless *do* make inferences about situated behavior from self-reports. In other words, while we agree with interviewers that understanding how actors make sense of their world is important (all competent ethnographers gather verbal accounts in addition to observations), it seems that in the end, interviewers are seldom interested in verbalized frames or schemas *per se*—rather, they usually consider actors' sense making and self-reported behaviors to be representative or predictive of social action. As the case of St. Paul's makes apparent, however, accounts may not accord with behavior and may in fact contradict it. Thus, we have learned to be wary of verbal accounts as representations of "real"—that is, everyday—life.

Our critique has mainly been leveled at qualitative work and pointed to the importance of observations to get beyond the challenges of interpreting interview data. However, our critique is just as relevant for other kinds of attitudinal data, particularly data from survey research that have been shown to have similar problems predicting behavior (Pager and Quillian 2005). All researchers, regardless of whether they are ethnographers, interviewers, or survey methodologists, should avoid presuming that the attitudinal data they gather from verbal accounts indicate a behavioral intention—if they wish to say something definitive about situated action, they must observe it.

This is not to say that cognitive frames, values, attitudes, and so on are useless. Most ethnographers subscribe to Thomas and Thomas's famous dictum that people act toward the world based on their understandings of it, and interviews are a means of obtaining information about how actors think. In this article, we sought to demonstrate that the verbalized values of hard work and meritocracy matter to the new elite; they are particularly important as a kind of "rhetorical cover" of inherited advantages within a world that is more open yet more inequitable.

A caveat to the Thomas dictum that has methodological consequences, however, is that interpretive frames are seldom constant or context-free; rather, the definition of the situation is often worked out *in situ* and through interaction (Blumer 1969). This suggests that one central task of the ethnographer is to compare interview accounts with observed activity and explain how and why they differ. This is the approach we have tried to demonstrate in this article. To take verbal accounts of hard work and meritocracy on their own would have led us to unjustified conclusions. The accounts must be placed in the context of situated behaviors, which in this case leads us to see the importance of interactional ease. Such an idea could not be gleaned from verbal accounts, or from other methods that ignore situated (inter)action.

By itself, talk is often cheap (Duneier 2007). If we are going to learn from data generated from verbal accounts, we must have a better accounting of what this class of data is actually saying.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Founded in 1855, St. Paul's School is one of the top preparatory boarding schools in the country. It has one of the largest endowments of any educational institution in the world (nearly \$1 million per pupil), and in recent years, 30 percent of graduating classes attended an Ivy League University. If one takes a cursory look at the student body of this coed institution, there can be no doubt that the school is a place where privileged youths spend their adolescent years—although a quick glance will also show a fairly racially diverse student body.

<sup>2</sup>The student body is 30 percent students of color. It is much less diverse in terms of class background. While 33 percent of the students receive a significant amount of financial aid, the cost of \$51,795 (2012) for tuition and accommodations combined makes it clear that 66 percent of the students are from families capable of paying what for almost all American families would be unfathomable for high school. Like elite colleges, though, St. Paul's School provides full financial aid to any student admitted whose family makes less than \$80,000/year. The school became coed in the early 1970s.

## REFERENCES

- Arum, Richard and Josipa Roksa. 2010. *Academically Adrift*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Babcock, Phillip and Mindy Marks. 2010. "Leisure College, USA: The Decline in Student Study Time." *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research* 7:1–7.
- Blumer, Herbert. 1969. *Symbolic Interactionism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1996. *The State Nobility*. Translated by L. C. Clough. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Deutscher, Irwin, Fred P. Pestello, and Frances G. Pestello. 1993. *Sentiments and Acts*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Duneier, Mitchell. 2007. "On the Legacy of Elliot Liebow and Carol Stack: Context-Driven Fieldwork and the Need for Continuous Ethnography." *Focus* 25(1):33–38.
- Jerolmack, Colin. 2009. "Primary Groups and Cosmopolitan Ties: The Rooftop Pigeon Flyers of New York." *Ethnography* 10(4):435–57.
- . 2013. *The Global Pigeon*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Khan, Shamus R. 2011. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Liebow, Elliot. 1967. *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.
- Pager, Devah and Lincoln Quillian. 2005. "Walking the Talk? What Employers Say versus What They Do." *American Sociological Review* 70(3):355–80.
- Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2002. "'Doin' the Hustle': Constructing the Ethnographer in the American Ghetto." *Ethnography* 3(1):91–111.
- Young, Alford A. Jr. 2004. *The Minds of Marginalized Black Men*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.