SOCIOLOGY 2011 SENIOR THESIS WRITERS

FROM CATASTROPHE TO CHANGE:
HOW THE OBAMA CAMPAIGN FUNCTIONED AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT AND GALVANIZED HURRICANE KATRINA VOLUNTEERS TO POLITICAL ACTION

ALEXANDRA NICHOLE ALVES

ADVISOR: LAWRENCE BOBO

ABSTRACT

My thesis examines the Obama campaign and presidency as it can be illuminated by social movement theory, and specifically tries to answer the question of whether individuals involved in the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts were galvanized by the Obama movement in 2008. Ultimately, I argue that the Obama campaign did function as a social movement and that the unique experiences of those involved in the Katrina relief efforts who went on to support Obama in 2008 help to explain both the tangible and intangible ways in which it did so, drawing a distinct connection between the two phenomena. I first use social movement theory, particularly the theories of collective action, collective identity, and mobilization, to describe how the structure and strategies of the Obama campaign differed from presidential campaigns of the last 50 years and made it an atypical campaign within the contexts of campaigning in America in the 20th and 21st centuries. I also discuss how the changing nature of politics, political parties, and campaigning in America created a situation out of which the Obama campaign was allowed to emerge and have an unprecedented and revolutionary effect on the American political landscape. I then introduce my ethnographic methodology, in-depth interviews with Hurricane Katrina relief effort volunteers in an effort to make tangible their subjective experiences and to identify those characteristics that transformed the Obama campaign into a movement, substantiating these responses with sociological theories and literature. I find that the catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina and Bush's poor supervision of the recovery, Obama as a person, and the historical and cultural significance of Obama's election are some of the key reasons that the Obama campaign was transformed into a social movement for his supporters. I go on to explore how sentiments among Obama supporters have changed or remained the same over the last two years, and the impact that Obama's movement will have on political grassroots movements in the future.

'THE SOCIAL ELECTION':
THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE 2010 MIDTERM ELECTIONS AND WHY IT MATTERS

JACQUELINE MARIE BOLTIK

ADVISOR: ALICIA SIMMONS

ABSTRACT

Over the last 15 years, internet technologies have played an increasingly larger role in political campaigns. The role of these technologies in campaigns has changed over the years. In the 2010 midterm elections, political candidates widely adopted social media as an integral part of campaign strategy. This thesis investigates the role of social media in 2010 senate campaigns. To understand the role social media played, qualitive data was obtained by interviewing 26 new-media directors and consultants about the role of social media in the senate campaigns on which each worked. Quantitative data was collected by building a web-scraping program to track the daily number of campaign Facebook fans, campaign Twitter followers, and campaign YouTube visits and views for individual senate candidates. The findings reveal that in the 2010 election, social media were used in campaigns primarily as broadcast tools to elicit online engagement such as signing a petition, commenting on a post or sharing content with others. The number of people engaging on campaign social media sites was positively associated with the number of campaign YouTube visits and YouTube views but was not associated with candidate vote share. One interpretation of these results is that social media were used primarily to elicit online actions they failed to build social capital through face-to-face interactions, and were thus unable to mobilize some online supporters to vote.

THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN DIGITAL LIFE

LAUREN SOPHIE BROWN

ADVISOR: KEVIN LEWIS

ABSTRACT

Today, the average American sends and receives 30 text messages per day and receives more than 500 emails per week (Sternewald, 2010; Miller and Washington, 2010). This suggests a fundamental change in the way people interact and implies that traditional microsociological theories of face-to-face interaction—in particular, Goffman's dramaturgy—may no longer be universally applicable. In digital communication, we perform in the absence of body language, facial expressions, tonal cues, and physical setting. How do people communicate effectively without these supposedly essential elements of human exchange? More broadly, how do the unique constraints and opportunities embedded in digital communication alter the very structure and strategies of the human interaction? To answer these questions, I use a mixed-methods approach consisting of content analysis of 2,004 digital communications provided by 15 young adults, as well as in-depth interviews about their usage patterns and perceptions of digital communication. First, I develop an empirically-driven framework for characterizing and understanding contemporary text message and email exchanges. Second, I explore participants' perceptions of these communications and how they shape relationship dynamics. In addition to interpreting some results in light of Goffman, I also discuss findings that go beyond the limits of his framework, ultimately finding that digital communication is changing modern human interaction in three basic ways: Interpersonal performances are now "portable and permanent"; distinct patterns of communication are largely predictable based on the three relational dimensions of intimacy, personal difference, and physical distance; and contemporary social networks are now "broader and deeper," but more fragile.

REDEFINING CULTURAL COMPETENCE:
SWITTING PERSPECTIVES IN LATINO AND ASIAN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

KRYSTAL VICTORIA CANTOS

ADVISOR: MARY RUGGIE

ABSTRACT

This senior thesis explores the perceived barriers and some potential ways that practices to delivering culturally competent care in federally qualified community health centers (FQHCs) serving Latino and Asian immigrants can be improved. I begin with the following question: Is there any way we can contest the perceived barriers and best practices in this case study to improve the culturally and linguistically appropriate service standards to better serve patients? To address these questions, I interviewed 12 staff members, including CEOs, directors, and nurses, at Federally Qualified Community Health Centers in both Latino and Asian immigrant communities of New York and Boston. In thirty to forty-five minute interviews, I asked respondents about their views on cultural competency at their centers, what barriers they faced, and what practices they believed their centers implemented well. I supplemented interviews with detailed observations on the centers. To some degree, my findings support the conclusions of previous research. Yet, I also find that the perceived barriers to delivering culturally competent care and practicing culturally competent practices. The health centers I researched, however, did tend to have a more efficient set of cultural competency practices than the literature reported in other health care settings across the US. The most important findings to come from this project relate to how health centers define cultural competency, and therefore, how they may use alternative approaches to achieve their own definition of cultural competence. Some centers considered the delivery of culturally competent care to be a matter of providing patients with culturally appropriate services, while others focused their definition on providing care to and being knowledgeable about diverse cultural populations. Often, centers' best practices of cultural competence reflect knowledge about their patients and the community, but it is not the usual way we think about "cultural" knowledge. Therefore, because it is so difficult to pinpoint exactly what cultural competency is on the ground, it seems to be evolving into a more patient-centered and community-centered approach that takes cultural norms and health beliefs into consideration. I argue that in moving away from an attempt to standardize the ambiguous idea of cultural knowledge and sensitivity, the alternative approach of patient-centered and community-centered care may allow for comprehensible guidelines that will help providers to deliver better-tailored care to the people of their communities.

CRIME, RACE, AND URBAN YOUTH:
A CAUSAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE UNCORRELATED FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DELINQUENCY RATES AMONG YOUNG BLACK MALES

MICHAEL DEAN CLARKE

ADVISOR: LAWRENCE BOBO

ABSTRACT

Criminologists and other social scientists look at many things when trying to explain what causes criminal behavior and contribute to juvenile delinquency and adolescent crime. Some of the factors that have been extensively researched and found to be significant are: Broken families, poverty, low IQ, low educational achievement, and the presence of peer influence. Although these factors are all indicators of a high rate of delinquency among African American men in the United States, there are hazardous life paths, exhibit criminal behavior, and experience higher incarceration rates. Taking into account all of the relevant pieces of evidence I examined and the data I obtained, structural causes appear to have a more resounding impact on delinquent behavior and criminal actions among young black males in urban environments. The data obtained in this study supports two theories: (1) delinquency is in part spawned by broken homes, unsupervised family life, and ineffective neighborhood organization (Matsueda, 1987:835) and (2) structural factors are more important than cultural variables in accounting for delinquency among young black males. The data also supports the conclusion that "culture matters" in explaining delinquency (Harding, Jencks, Lopez, Morgan, 2009:131). It appears that cultural values conducive to delinquency emerge from structurally disorganized communities that provide the basis for becoming involved in crime and deviance. The presenter explanation from the evidence I obtained suggests the most proximate, influential factor that contributes to criminal deviance among young black males from urban areas is the absence of parental supervision.

WATER AND ONIONS IN EKUMDIPE:
A FIELD-BASED CASE STUDY OF AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION IN A POOR AFRICAN COMMUNITY

ADAM KWAJO DEMUYAKOR

ADVISOR: RICHARD FREEMAN AND DAVID AGER

ABSTRACT

Ekumdipe is a poor, rural town located in northern Ghana. The economy of the community is heavily dependent on agriculture. However, due to the arid nature of the dry season (October to March) many farmers are unable to farm year-round. As a result, poverty is perpetuated as many of the farmers in the area lack a means to increase their incomes. Project Rural Irrigation System for Ekumdipe, a self-sustainable development project I created two and a half years ago, is an initiative aimed at fixing this problem. Through the utilization of an irrigation system, Project RISE was created with the intention of allowing the Ekumdipe farmers to farm in the dry season and subsequently augment their incomes. However, the launch of the Project (Phase 1) was largely unsuccessful and resulted in underperforming crop yields in the first dry-season. Eventually, significant changes were made and a second attempt (Phase 2) was made. Although Phase 1 of Project RISE did not do well, Phase 2 has been a success thus far. This paper aims to explore the reasons behind the significant improvement between the two phases. In addition, developed recommendations for the most influential and related variables contributing to the improvement are explained. Utilizing the data from my field-based case study, I extensively discuss the impediments of innovation diffusion in the context of a third world development project focused on fighting poverty and how to overcome them.

I REMEMBER SOUTHIE. IT'S NOT LIKE IT USED TO BE:
HOW PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS LABOR AND THEIR CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD IN SOUTH BOSTON

BORA FEZGA

ADVISOR: EVA ROSEN

ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I explored how indigenous residents of a transforming neighborhood interpret the changes that occur in agency. However, due to the arid nature of the dry season (October to March) many farmers are unable to farm year-round. As a result, poverty is perpetuated as many of the farmers in the area lack a means to increase their incomes. Project Rural Irrigation System for Ekumdipe, a self-sustainable development project I created two and a half years ago, is an initiative aimed at fixing this problem. Through the utilization of an irrigation system, Project RISE was created with the intention of allowing the Ekumdipe farmers to farm in the dry season and subsequently augment their incomes. However, the launch of the Project (Phase 1) was largely unsuccessful and resulted in underperforming crop yields in the first dry-season. Eventually, significant changes were made and a second attempt (Phase 2) was made. Although Phase 1 of Project RISE did not do well, Phase 2 has been a success thus far. This paper aims to explore the reasons behind the significant improvement between the two phases. In addition, developed recommendations for the most influential and related variables contributing to the improvement are explained. Utilizing the data from my field-based case study, I extensively discuss the impediments of innovation diffusion in the context of a third world development project focused on fighting poverty and how to overcome them.

CHILD WITCHES AND WITCH HUNTS:
NEW IMAGES OF THE OCCULT IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

DANIELLE GRAM

ADVISOR: JOCELYN VITERNA

ABSTRACT

Traditional witchcraft belief in the Congo Basin primarily targeted elders and resulted in stigmatization of the accused. Since the 1990s, children have become increasingly vulnerable to witchcraft accusation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and are currently the primary targets of a witch hunt that has affected more than 50,000 youth. Scholars have argued that witchcraft belief in DRC is child witches may encourage a variety of physical abuses including beatings, whipping, and burning before being sent to a church for a deliverance ritual or being cast from the home. Why have accusations of witchcraft increased in DRC and resulted in severe punitive measures taken against those accused? Why have children become the primary targets of witchcraft accusation in DRC today? This thesis explores the key social and religious contributions to the child witch crisis by examining historical and contemporary Congolese spirituality and life. This study considers broad trends in witchcraft belief, how the image of the Congolese witch has been constructed over time, and the contemporary context for the child witch crase in DRC. This thesis contributes to the development of sociological theories of witchcraft by fusing cultural and structural explanations with a focus on interactive aspiration formation process. Ultimately, I find that a woman's cultural beliefs interact with the institutional arrangements, patterned social relations, and network structure of the consulting industry in both formal and informal ways to shape and negotiate her career aspirations.

WHAT WOMEN WANT:
THE NEGOTIATION OF CAREER ASPIRATIONS AMONG WOMEN IN THE CONSULTING INDUSTRY

KATHERINE JULIA GUNN

ADVISOR: KIM PERNELL

ABSTRACT

Women are disproportionately underrepresented in the top leadership positions of professional careers, despite their similar levels of college attainment and post-graduation entry rates into the workforce. To understand this gender gap in career attainment, we must explore both the content and formation of women's aspirations. My research seeks to uncover how young women in the consulting industry form and negotiate their career aspirations in response to the pressures that they face in the workplace. Specifically, I aim to explore the underlying mechanisms through which these aspirations are shaped and adjusted. I conducted 26 in-depth interviews with young women working in the consulting industry, asking them about their career and family desires, focusing specifically on how their concerns for work-life balance affect their career aspirations. I found that the career aspirations of these women are shaped through interactions between cultural beliefs, structural realities, and interpretation of their experiences. Each woman's cultural beliefs about being a "good mother," the definition of work-life balance, and of the sustainability of a career interacted with her perceived structural realities and social constructionists—in a way that helps illuminate the existence of a witch crase, the involvement of specific actors, and the selection of accusation targets.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:
THE EFFECTS OF BOARDROOM DIVERSITY AND DYNAMICS ON COMPANY PERFORMANCE

KARA M. HOLLIS

ADVISOR: FILIZ GARIP

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the effects of different forms of corporate board diversity on company financial performance. Specifically, the study considers whether types of informational and demographic diversity, as well as the level of familiarity among board members, lead to improved functioning of the board. To determine the relationship between board diversity and firm performance, the thesis combined quantitative and qualitative data. First, I employed statistical analysis to determine the relationship between various forms of board diversity and firm financial performance of Fortune 1000 corporations, as measured by return on assets (ROA) and return on investments (ROI). Second, I conducted interviews with eleven Fortune 500 board directors to gain insight into the dynamics behind the boardroom doors that could facilitate or discourage the contributions of different forms of diversity. By combining insights from these two data sources, I found that gender diversity enhances firm performance, while diversity in board experience (measured by the number of boards directors have served on during their career) has a detrimental effect. Educational diversity is strongly related to increased company performance, as measured by higher rates of return. This pattern is supported by evidence from interview data. According to my respondents, educational diversity signifies differences in expertise and viewpoints, which aids the board in strategic thinking and decision making. These findings add to our understanding of how boards can fulfill their role in providing oversight and strategic advice to companies. In so doing, they can affect company performance and prevent calamities such as Enron or the falling of banks that led to the most recent global recession.

SWIMMING THE RIVER:
THE EXPERIENCES OF FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS AT HARVAD UNIVERSITY

FRANK J. LANASA

ADVISOR: MARY BRINTON

ABSTRACT

In the spirit of social mobility, recent history has some enormous efforts to increase access to higher education. As a result, today's college campuses are more diverse than ever before, naturally featuring an ever-growing population of first-generation students. However, while this diversity has been the result of tremendous intellectual efforts to understand and eliminate the achievement gap, there have been relatively few studies on the experiences of this new population of college students. Theories of capital deficiency would seem to suggest that first-generation students might arrive at college with relatively little of the resources necessary to develop personally beneficial college experiences. The specific focus of this research was threefold. First, I attempted to understand if first-generation students enter college with different attitudes regarding the college experience, and if so, how these attitudes influence their behavior. Second, compared how these students engage with Harvard's social environment, and how they stand to benefit from this exposure. And finally, I sought to understand how different networks provide guidance and influence to students in designing a fulfilling, developmental college experience. Through fifteen interviews with first and continuing-generation Harvard students respectively, I was able to demonstrate how students' social backgrounds influence their expectations of the college experience, and how social networks developed during college may serve to reinforce or modify these conceptions. I find that the "Harvard Experience" is a phenomenon that is influenced by the "Harvard Brand" and relationship selling and able to customize their college experience. However, through accumulated social capital after matriculation, these students were able to draw from the experiences of their peers to help develop personally beneficial social and academic experiences. Understanding how first-generation students engage with the social and academic institutions on college campuses provides important insight into the effectiveness of policies aimed at increasing access to higher education.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF CORROBORATED KNOWLEDGE:
HOW INTERNET PORTALS IN KOREA ENABLE THE EXTREME OPINIONS TO GAIN GROUNDS

SEONGMIN LEE

ADVISOR: OANA DAN

ABSTRACT

A plethora of knowledge gets constructed on the Internet. By allowing everyone to construct knowledge freely, the Internet allows even the most unconventional, extreme opinions to be heard. In South Korea, where it is known to be the "most wired country in the world," its inherently network-oriented culture combines with the Internet to create a very active Internet culture. Vigorous activities on the Internet form through communities, blogs, and portals. South Korea has seen several incidents where extreme opinions have gained tremendous grounds through the Internet. This study, using Web 2.0 platforms, strive to find an explanation for how these types of niche and extreme knowledge gain ground on the Internet. I explore through literatures on sociology of knowledge, construction of knowledge on the traditional media, and the possible changes anticipated in construction of knowledge on the Internet. Many predict that the Internet would open more opportunities for people to write and hence would be exposed to more diverse opinions. However, I find that although the opportunity for people to construct knowledge expands, only a selected few who tend to occupy extreme views participate. Moreover, on the Internet, it becomes easier for these few people to find others who share similar knowledge. As a result, they meet to create knowledge together. In the end, the "Internet" allows the extreme opinions to gain grounds. People who share the same choose to believe what a lot of people seem to be believing. Corroborated knowledge from the extreme view are the few information that they find on the Internet as consistent. Hence the extreme views gain support. In short, by providing grounds in which people can meet and interact with those with similar opinions, Internet portals facilitate consideration of knowledge which allows the niche and extreme opinions to gain significant ground. I employed in-depth interviews to gain deep understandings and opinions of the four actors involved in the construction of social knowledge on the Internet: the writers at newspapers, the people working at Internet portals, the government officials as information providers to the media, and the students as Internet users.

SHARING THE PLAYING FIELD:
MAKING SENSE OF THE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF BALTIMORE'S MARYLAND SCHOLASTIC ASSOCIATION (1919-1993) AS A FORCE OF INTEGRATION

SAMUEL BENJAMIN NOVEY

ADVISOR: JOSH WAKEHAM

ABSTRACT

From 1919 to 1993 the Maryland Scholastic Association (MSA) governed boys' high school sports in the Baltimore area. It was a nationally unique high school sports league that consisted of public, private, and parochial schools and bridged racial and socio-economic lines. The league's original purpose was to enable schools to work together to overcome shared obstacles to interscholastic athletic competition. While this remained the primary responsibility of the MSA for 74 years, it also explicitly embraced a public role as a force of ethnic, socio-economic, and – after 1956 – racial integration in a deeply segregated border city. I analyzed 5,000 documents and conducted 43 interviews to study the history of the MSA. I draw on Karl Weick's notion of "sensemaking" in organizations to understand the causes and consequences of the meanings people gave to the work of the MSA. In order for organizations to take collective action to address shared problems, they must agree on the nature of these problems. Thus the diversity of the MSA also left the organization unable to exert that challenged this sense of shared purpose. In these cases, differing backgrounds and experiences precluded a collective sensemaking process that could have resulted in an updated and invigorated shared purpose. The loss of trust and misplaced priorities that emerged from this sensemaking process after the violence of the early seventies resulted in decreased practical incentives for schools to remain in the MSA. It was this decrease that eventually led to its demise. Thus, because the collapse of sensemaking in the wake of Dunbar-St. Joe riot, Baltimore lost a generator of intergroup social capital – a precious and rare resource in a segregated city.

COMING OUT OF THE SHADOWS:
THE IMPLICATIONS OF ACTIVISM AMONG UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH

ELIZABETH CATHERINE PEZZA

ADVISOR: MARY WATERS

ABSTRACT

Recent estimates put the number of undocumented young people who have been residing in the United States since childhood at 2.1 million, with more than 1 million of those people now in adulthood. Members of this so-called undocumented 1.5 generation were brought to the United States as children with their parents and lack the legal status of their peers. Although undocumented immigrants are excluded from most U.S. institutions, undocumented youth are guaranteed access to a public K-12 education. The 1982 U.S. Supreme Court case, Plyler v. Doe, ruled that undocumented youth were guaranteed this right, considering them "people" under the Equal Protection clause of the 14th Amendment. Undocumented students attend the same public education system, however, they lose this protection and must face a transition from an inclusive to an exclusive context as they come of age. In recent years, there has been an increasingly visible social movement for and by undocumented youth, fighting for legal rights and access to mainstream institutions. This thesis analyzes data from in-depth interviews with 22 undocumented individuals between the ages of 19 and 28 to explore how this growing social movement has developed as a response to the difficult transition from inclusivity to exclusivity that undocumented youth face as they come of age, and how this social movement is affecting incorporation patterns. I find that the social movement is a reaction to the cut-off from normative pathways to successful adulthood, and that this movement has created a national web of socially-connected undocumented youth activists. Their involvement with the social movement provides an outlet for undocumented youth to express purposeful, meaningful action. In doing so, they build cultural capital through their civic engagement while developing social networks that provide fungible resources, thus pushing back against a legal context that threatens to file them into a disenfranchised underclass.

"BECAUSE WE'RE CATHOLIC:"
CONFLICT AND CHALLENGE IN URBAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

KELLY QUINLAN

ADVISOR: ALISON DENTON JONES

ABSTRACT

In 2007, the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., announced that it planned to close eight of its poorest schools, all of which served largely African-American, non-Catholic student populations, and replace the institutions with charter schools. This "charter conversion" would be the first of its kind in American Catholic history and quickly became the subject of intense debate. One key source of this debate can be traced to different understandings of the fundamental mission of Catholic schooling held by opponents, born of different historical and personal experiences.
This project seeks to examine the conflict surrounding the D.C. charter conversions by situating the debate in the context of American Catholic educational history and applying a neoinstitutional lens to examine key differences in the way those involved understood the proposals to be a betrayal or a violation of the mission of Catholic education. By doing so, the case presents a useful framework for analyzing the disenfranchisement experienced by many African-American Catholics involved in the debate.

POLITICS AND THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY:
HOW REGULARIZATION POLICIES AFFECT THE SOCIAL INCORPORATION OF COLUMBIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES

JAZMINE VANESSA RAMIREZ

ADVISOR: VAN TRAN

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This thesis examines the role of regularization policies in the process of incorporation of Colombian immigrants residing in the United Kingdom and the United States. Social, economic, and political reasons have driven thousands of Colombians to engage in international migration. Consequently, thousands of Colombians have transitioned from living in their home country as full citizens to living abroad as undocumented immigrants, documented immigrants, and citizens. Thus, subjecting them to the variable immigration policies of their host countries. Method: To explore the link between regularization policies and the social incorporation of Colombian immigrants in the United Kingdom and the United States, this thesis analyzes 32 semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with undocumented, regularized, and refugee immigrants residing in London and in Boston. Findings: The presence of regularization programs in the United Kingdom offers Colombian immigrants a sense of security that encourages a sense of comfort and thus, involvement in the mainstream society of the country. On the other hand, the absence of regularization programs coupled with a negative public attitude toward undocumented immigration in the United States results in greater sense of insecurity and thus, less involvement in the mainstream community. Conclusion: In studying immigrant incorporation, it is important to consider the context of reception, especially in terms of the overall attitude of the public and the immigration policies of the host country. Accordingly, in creating policies targeted at immigrant populations, it is important to evaluate the possible implications of those policies on immigrants' incorporation process, because as this thesis argues, an important relationship exists between policies and immigrants' social incorporation.

GOOGLE AND THE GREAT FIREWALL OF CHINA:
GOVERNMENTS, CORPORATIONS AND THE NEGOTIATION OF CYBERPOWER TODAY

ALEX ROUX

ADVISOR: OANA DAN

ABSTRACT

In recent years the Internet has been heralded as a potent agent of social change by those who see its potential to organize and to nearly limitless supply of information as inherently destabilizing to authoritarian regimes. Beginning earnest during Iran's 2008 Twitter Revolution' and continuing through the present 'Jasmine Revolutions', services provided by Internet companies like Twitter, Facebook and Google are being credited with helping to organize and catalyze protest and revolution around the world. With The Wall Street Journal declaring that dissidents have used "technology to do more for the regime change in the Islamic Republic (of Iran) than years of sanctions, threats and Geneva-based haggling put together" and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton launching an Internet Freedom agenda to lift the 'new information curtain [that] is descending' around the world, it seems that the conception that technology and the Internet in particular, is a force for democratic change is now firmly entrenched in both popular and political scholar Evgeny Morozov calls this popular conception that media technologies, and Internet services in particular, are inherently liberating weapons of democracy "The Google Doctrine", defined as the "fervent conviction that given enough gadgets, connectivity and foreign funding, dictatorships are doomed" (2011). This work is a critical evaluation of the validity of The Google Doctrine asking, What effect do Internet technologies have on power relationships and social control within the modern authoritarian state? I look at Google's relationship with the government of The Peoples Republic of China as a case study in order understand the role of Internet technology in creating or resisting authoritarian social control. I find that, far from being an inherently liberating engine of democratic values, the Internet can also be used to create and enforce authoritarian social control in technologically savvy states like China through surveillance, censorship and the dissemination of propaganda online. I conclude that, while the Internet may not be the inherently democratic or authoritarian, it does create greater transparency leading to increased Governmental accountability and more spaces for critical deliberation in authoritarian states.

CONSTRUCTING THE PROVIDER-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP:
HOW PROVIDERS' IDEALS INTERACT WITH SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINTS TO SHAPE PRACTICES

MICHELLE EVELYN SESLAR

ADVISOR: MARY RUGGIE

ABSTRACT

In the wake of reform that sought to deliver large-scale change to the American health care system, I was interested in how policies and systemic constraints interact with the way health care providers view their roles and responsibilities in relation to patients to determine how they actually practice. I examined this through the lens of diabetes care, since diabetes is an increasingly prevalent chronic condition that necessitates a long-term relationship between providers and patients. To study this relationship, I conducted in-depth interviews with 35 providers, both doctors and nurses, around the greater Boston area. A provider's training and degree of specialization played a large role in determining how that provider viewed his or her role in relation to patients, in part by cementing the prevalent dialect in the hierarchy of the health care setting. While the way providers approached their patients was based on personal preferences, the ability to practice in accordance with these preferences was constrained by time, money, and the political scene Evgeny Morozov calls the popular conception that media technologies, and Internet services in particular, are inherently liberating weapons of democracy "The Google Doctrine", defined as the "fervent conviction that given enough gadgets, connectivity and foreign funding, dictatorships are doomed" (2011). This work is a critical evaluation of the validity of The Google Doctrine asking, What effect do Internet technologies have on power relationships and social control within the modern authoritarian state? I look at Google's relationship with the government of The Peoples Republic of China as a case study in order understand the role of Internet technology in creating or resisting authoritarian social control. I find that, far from being an inherently liberating engine of democratic values, the Internet can also be used to create and enforce authoritarian social control in technologically savvy states like China through surveillance, censorship and the dissemination of propaganda online. I conclude that, while the Internet may not be the inherently democratic or authoritarian, it does create greater transparency leading to increased Governmental accountability and more spaces for critical deliberation in authoritarian states.

FACEBOOK, FOURSQUARE, MINT AND BLIPPY:
EXPLORING THE PROCESS AND FACTORS AFFECTING THE ADOPTION OF INTERNET APPLICATIONS

JASON YOGESH SHAH

ADVISOR: DAVID AGER

ABSTRACT

Internet usage has soared in recent years, catalyzing a proliferation of Internet applications for numerous different purposes, from social networking to personal finance. This proliferation has spawned a competitive landscape; some applications are adopted and others are not. Indeed, innovation adoption literature helps to address inconsistencies. The relevant research posits the importance of a five-stage adoption process, rational factors, and to a lesser extent, social factors. Prior research claims that individuals experience a significant persuasion stage, prioritize usefulness as the dominant factor, and express an insignificant relationship between social influences and adoption. This study is based on data collected through surveys of nearly 200 individuals. I examined the relationship between the adoption of four unique Internet applications (Facebook, Foursquare, Mint, and Blippy) and survey respondents' backgrounds, prioritization of rational factors, and prioritization of social factors. My thesis argues that the persuasion stage is still salient, usefulness is not the dominant factor, and social influences have a significant relationship with adoption. Moreover, social influence has a significant relationship with adoption. The results largely corroborate the prevailing knowledge in the field. Despite declined friction between awareness and adoption for Internet applications, individuals still deliberate, rather than adopting first and then adjusting. While usefulness is significant, factors unrelated to usefulness such as privacy were just as significant. Lastly, social influences alone were not significant, suggesting that sex effects may be embedded in rational factors such as usefulness. Women, with family or friends, Social benefit, ranging from improving education to mitigating cyber-bullying, would be possible with a practical understanding of how to best affect adoption.

"SEMPER GUMBI", ALWAYS FLEXIBLE:
SOCIAL IDENTITY AND THE ARMY SPOUSE

ELIZABETH CARYL SPIRA

ADVISOR: DAVID AGER

ABSTRACT

This senior thesis attempts to explain the informal social system of civilian spouses of US Army personnel by exploring the characteristics of social identity and group behavior. Army wives do not consider themselves private citizens and yet they are not Army officers. Their lives are dictated by military demands, and they live on military bases, but their roles are not clearly defined or largely socialized. Through interviews with a variety of current army wives, I identify the social identity groups into which army wives categorize themselves within the salient social context of day-to-day army life. Using data analysis based in social identity theory, I reveal a set of criteria that are the fundamental of social identity for the army wife community. Social identity theory systemizes three behavioral responses of an ingroup toward an outgroup, depending on the perceived status of each group. A high status group, such as officer's wives, reacts with individual mobility, acknowledging their high status and accepting the outgroup's inferiority. Higher-ranking enlisted wives perceive that they are lower status than officer's wives, but higher than lower-ranking enlisted wives. They react with social mobility, attempting to use a strategy of social competition, often speaking badly of officers' wives and challenging their superiority. Lower enlisted wives accept their low position as legitimate, but attempt to change the dimensions on which they compare themselves with women of perceived higher status. These observations lead to a deeper understanding of the army wife social system and the criteria by which individuals establish their position in it. This system is separate from the formal ranking system of the army, but influential in shaping the army wife's informal identity. Moreover, the three criteria are a woman's ability to sacrifice for her husband's position, her leadership role in the army community, and her husband's military rank. Women who are able to sacrifice for their husbands, who take on leadership roles, and whose husbands are ranked high, are able to place themselves in the upper-middle status of military groups. Women will credit themselves for their husbands' ranks, with family or friends. Social benefit, ranging from improving education to mitigating cyber-bullying, would be possible with a practical understanding of how to best affect adoption.

PUBLIC SERVICE WITH A RETURN:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRO BONO SERVICE IN LAW, MEDICINE, FINANCE, AND MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

CLAIRE AYALA TOTTEN

ADVISOR: DAVID AGER

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to examine professional service organizations that participate in pro bono efforts—or leverage their core competency to give back to society. The fundamental question is why does pro bono work manifest differently in different professions? I looked at 4 distinct professions—Law, Medicine, Finance, and Management Consulting. Interviews were my primary method of data collection. I interviewed two to three individuals across all levels of tenure in three or four ranked organizations in each sector. By aiming to understand how professional service organizations decide to participate in pro bono programs, we see that these organizations form a unique subset of the economy given their reliance on skilled labor, for example a lawyer or doctor. The data and theory revealed that firms develop pro bono programs to the extent that they will see a return. Organizations look for two distinct types of returns—"talent and client benefits." Firms use returns to gauge if a strategy of social competition, often speaking badly of officers' wives and challenging their superiority. Lower enlisted wives accept their low position as legitimate, but attempt to change the dimensions on which they compare themselves with women of perceived higher status. These observations lead to a deeper understanding of the army wife social system and the criteria by which individuals establish their position in it. This system is separate from the formal ranking system of the army, but influential in shaping the army wife's informal identity. Moreover, the three criteria are a woman's ability to sacrifice for her husband's position, her leadership role in the army community, and her husband's military rank. Women who are able to sacrifice for their husbands, who take on leadership roles, and whose husbands are ranked high, are able to place themselves in the upper-middle status of military groups. Women will credit themselves for their husbands' ranks, with family or friends. Social benefit, ranging from improving education to mitigating cyber-bullying, would be possible with a practical understanding of how to best affect adoption.

FOREVER FOREIGN?
THE STRATIFICATION OF BELONGING FOR IMMIGRANT DETAINEES

CECELIA VENEGAS

ADVISOR: MARY WATERS

ABSTRACT

Scholars have studied many of the social dimensions of United States immigration, yet the issue of immigrant detention in the United States has only recently begun to receive attention. Preliminary research has shed light on the racialized criminalization of immigrant detainees. I seek to build on this research and these findings by introducing alternative theoretical models that bring about new conceptual frameworks with which we can view the immigrant detention system. I draw on the theories of social control and Michel Foucault's concept of "governmentality," and begin to link these concepts to Symbolic Interactionist theories involving the interpretation and creation of meaning at the individual level. In doing so I begin to answer the following questions: How have we gone about detaining such a large segment of the would be immigrant population, and more importantly, why? How varied are the experiences of these individuals upon entrance into the system? Last, but certainly not least, how does engagement in the process and experience help us understand the ways in which detention affects civic integration? This thesis is the result of an in-depth qualitative study involving semi-structured in-depth interviews with respondents in Texas and California, participant observation, and a review of the literature. I find that detention operates as a stratifying force for the women therein. I find significant evidence that the circumstances of detention work in conjunction with one another to stratify detainees into three groups: those who can easily assimilate, those who can assimilate with some difficulty, and those who cannot assimilate. Students will use these findings to lend a stratification of belonging among an already vulnerable population which threatens to complicate prospects of future incorporation.

"IT'S YOUR CHOICE"
HOW YOUTH ARTICULATE VALUES AND INDIVIDUALISM

RACHEL LYNN WAGLEY

ADVISOR: TIMOTHY NELSON

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to understand how school communities, cultural messages of individualism and personal happiness, and deeply internalized beliefs influence the moral discourse and motivations of youth. I interviewed twenty-two high school juniors at Allenhurst Christian Academy and Allenhurst High School(1) in small town Allenhurst, Massachusetts, during the end of the 2009-2010 school year. I also interviewed three education leaders in Allenhurst. I find that students are influenced by three distinct institutions, and cultivate three distinct justifying their moral beliefs. But students are more influenced by internalized beliefs, or moral schemas, than school culture. I categorize students into four different moral schemas, which predict students' attitudes toward non-behavioral, non-consequentialist justifications. My study engages with the most prominent theoretical controversy in culture in scholarship by assessing Vaisey's (2008) theoretical dual-process model. This thesis contributes to this literature by contending that students' moral schemas often influence which discursive tools they utilize and which cultural messages they iterate. I find that certain cultural messages straddle the schism between the four moral schemas. Themes of individualism, values-neutral classical liberalism, and personal happiness saturate student discourse. Students frequently utilize the language of individual values. They ma