

2016

Letter from the Editor

Marilyn Fernandez

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/svn>

Recommended Citation

Fernandez, Marilyn (2016) "Letter from the Editor," *Silicon Valley Notebook*: Vol. 14 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/svn/vol14/iss1/4>

This Front Matter is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Silicon Valley Notebook by an authorized editor of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact rscroggin@scu.edu.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR OF
Silicon Valley Notebook, Volume 14
Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, Professor of Sociology

The Sociology Department at Santa Clara University is proud to present, in this volume of *Silicon Valley Notebook*, six research papers written by students from the class of 2016. As in the past years, these papers reflect the substantive, theoretical, methodological, and applied content of the Sociology curriculum at SCU. Originally prepared as part of the Research Capstone course (Sociology 121), the student authors further refined their work during the following quarter for inclusion in this volume.

Taken together, the authors investigated important contemporary social issues in the areas of political engagement, juvenile delinquency, adult deviance, and transitions in the lives of immigrants and children. Each student used a sequential mixed methods research design. They conducted rigorous quantitative analyses of national secondary survey data to test predictions grounded in sociological theoretical traditions and reflect on their potential social applications; narrative interviews with sources knowledgeable about their respective topics supplemented the quantitative findings.

Political activism was the theme in the first section, *Political Agency and Digital Movements*. **Bowen Shi**, in his “Success of Digital Activism: Roles of Structures and Media Strategies,” combined analyses of the 2013 Global Digital Activism survey data with six case studies and interviews with four digital activists to find that digital activist movements were least successful when they targeted “structural inequalities.” But, strategic and “value-added” deployment of digital tools enhanced success probabilities of digital social movements.

The authors in the second set, *Risk-Taking and Drug Use by Adults and Adolescents*, examined the social environments that posed strains and protected against adult deviance and juvenile delinquency. **Eryn Olson**, in her “Relationship Connectivity” Counts: Lifetime Relationships, Family Structure, and Risk-Taking in Adulthood,” used data from the 2012 New Family Structures Survey and interviews with eight health professionals. “Supportive” relationships with parents in childhood and romantic relationships offered the best protection against “strains” and associated risk-taking in adulthood. On the other hand, childhood bullying and healthy relationships with parents in adulthood were associated with adult risk-taking, but only if they were raised in non-conventional families. Transitions from legal to illegal drug use by twelfth grade students surveyed in the 2013 Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth study, with feedback from eight helping professionals, was the research question that Jenna R. Harrison addressed in “Adolescent Transitions from Licit to Illicit Drug Use: Impacts of Protective and Risk Factors.” The “social control” exercised by and “support” offered by families and academic engagement reduced the likelihood of licit drug, and only indirectly illicit drug, usage. However, being “differentially associated” with peer drug culture increased the risk of both legal and illegal drug usage; pro-drug opinions and accessibility to drugs indirectly did so through licit drugs.

The third set included two papers that examined **Life Transitions and Rebuilding** of the lives of immigrants and children. Milenna Smith in “The Search for the American Dream: Interpersonal, Cultural, and Structural Constraints on Immigrants” identified constraints that hindered immigrant progress towards the American Dream. Data from the 2004 survey,

Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles, with qualitative interviews with immigrant professionals, illustrated how “systemic racism” was a “fundamental cause” of the constraints immigrants faced in rebuilding their lives in their new environments. Children who were transitioned from their natal families into non-parental care, and ways in which their emotional and academic lives of children can be rebuilt, were the focus of Juliet Heid’s “Natal Family Disruptions and Lives in Non-Parental Care: Impacts on Children’s Emotional Health and Academic Success.” She used data from the 2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care and interviews with five child care experts to document that while “strains” generated by natal family disruptions negatively affected the emotional, and indirectly their academic, health of children in non-parental care, their bruised “self-concept” can be repaired through healthy supportive relationships with their caregivers.

We end this volume with a research note by **Alec Kwo** who studied political moderates, the forgotten middle. In his “The Ideology and Praxis of Political Moderates: More Liberal than Conservative?”, using the 2014 Chicago Council Survey on American Public Opinion and two professional interviews, moderates were closely aligned with liberals on most foreign and domestic policy issues but were more conservative on their praxis ideologies. The symbolic “partisan sorting” model did not fully capture political moderates, whose ideology did not often match their praxis.

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