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Title: The Facebook Project: Social Capital and the Chief

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Abstract: In light of increasing racial tensions in recent years on the University of Illinois campus, the Ethnography of the University Initiative and Diversity Research Project have called for new assessments of campus climate in regards to race. This paper explores a new but crucial space of race related discourse that plays an important role in the everyday lives of undergraduate students: Facebook.com. Social networking services extend social capital by impacting individuals and groups and Facebook in particular has amplified student support of Chief Illiniwek, the now deposed symbol of the University of Illinois. The pro-Chief social movement is a powerful example of the way Facebook can potentially be abused for a misguided cause. The Chief represents a myriad of issues relating to racial tensions, including disrespect and inappropriate representation of a racial minority group as well as a topic that provokes responses exemplary of colorblind racism or discrimination. Therefore Facebook is an environment where we need to establish sufficient and effective advocacy and empowerment as a method of social change. This paper draws upon previously established survey data (Ginger 2008) and exploratory qualitative content analysis (manifest and latent) to paint a picture of the contemporary and historical usage of Facebook related to the Chief. Student perceptions in regards to campus climate, actions taken in accordance with the Chief are examined in parallel with the character of groups surrounding the topic. Ultimately the findings and discussion render the suggestion to include more administrative and educator awareness and utilization of the same digital venues for social capital in Facebook for social change as well as a call for better communication processes (dialogue) between participants. Given the

necessity to alter preferences in order to cause lasting effects on perceptions of race and the high caliber emotional content encountered in Chief-related groups it would seem these digital spaces are an crucial tool and context for actors leading social movements to understand and engage.

See www.thefacebookproject.com for more details. The Moodle listing only contains excerpts. Please see the Facebook Social Capital FINAL.pdf attachment.

Initial Exercises: The content analysis material is available upon request.

- Question:**
1. What do people think about the campus climate? What actions have they taken in regards to the Chief?
 2. What is the character of groups surrounding the topic? What do we notice about group purpose, composition, and activity?
 3. What does this suggest about social capital ? How might we best frame and inform future social movements?

Plan: Study Design and Methodology

This study takes a two pronged approach by drawing upon data from a previous survey on Facebook and blending it with new specific content analysis. This combinational approach was selected in part because of its convenience but also to help establish both a broad and focused understanding of the events that have transpired on Facebook. Unfortunately time limitations prevented in-depth interviews or true digital ethnography work so the findings are constrained to be mostly surface-level and quantitative-feeling in nature.

The Facebook Project 2007 Survey

The second in a series of yearly surveys on Facebook, the survey used for this paper was sent out over the summer of 2007 to a formal randomly selected portion of the undergraduate student population. All respondents were full-time degree-seeking students over the age of 18. The decision was made to exclude part-time and non-degree seeking students after it was determined they were statistically more likely to be of a significantly older age and only comprise a minimal, outlier population at UIUC. Students under the age of 18 could not be

included for ethical reasons. In total the official university statistics department, the Division of Management Information [1], pulled an 1100 person sample randomly from the entire undergraduate student population. The response rate to this survey was very poor due to a survey response limit mistake [2] as well as the sheer length of the survey and technological limitations that prevented collection of partial or specific responses. [3] All told only 75 students (a pitiful 7%) fully completed the survey, which effectively means the data is not generalizable to the overall student population to a statistically significant degree. Despite these shortcomings the survey, when paired together with content analysis, presents a number of interesting findings about the student populace that can be easily confirmed via more in depth qualitative study. It is best to consider it a sort of scout work to inform future investigations and inquiries.

Content Analysis

This study employs a rather exploratory method of content analysis, being that the researcher is entirely new to the method in general. Pertinent data was organized and reduced to uncover patterns of human activity, action and meaning through both simple conceptual and introductory discourse analysis. Though deductive in nature the methods were not purely social-anthropological, as the researcher does command a certain native perspective but cannot claim to extensive specific ethnographic experience. The analytic task as always, however, remains to both identify and explain the ways people perform in the Facebook setting; how they've come to understand things, account for, take action, and generally relate to the pro-Chief Facebook cause in their day-to-day life. In order to avoid misunderstandings and ensure reliability only two small and particularly volatile Facebook groups, "Don't Like the Chief? Go Somewhere Else... fuckin Idiots!" and "Pro-Chief People Wouldn't Know Racism if it Bit Them on the A\$\$" were closely coded and studied, but in total 17 Chief-related groups were overviewed and scouted out. The validity of the text observed from these groups is obviously bias but aptly demonstrates the emotional fury surrounding the issue amongst students. This study does not seek to suggest that these groups are by any means representative of the whole student populace, the same way the survey is only a sampling. Quotes were not taken out of context and the research attempted to best consider all relevant aspects of messages in question, which necessitated the extension of analysis to include latent content beyond the obvious manifested

content.

Two levels of content analysis were conducted for the extent of this study. The first dealt only with high level, non-complex units of analysis consisting primarily of obvious features gathered about the 17 groups selected for overview. These original 17 were subjectively selected based on a query return of several hundred Chief-related groups. The criteria for consideration consisted of both group size and prospective emotional engagement. Non-serious groups, like being pro-Master Chief from Halo, were disregarded, as were most smaller groups. The exception came in regards to anti-Chief groups, as their relative scale was minute in comparison to the pro-chief giants. A 70-some person pro-chief group is tiny but pretty darn big for anti-chief groups. All in all only 4 anti-chief groups were picked (there were so few and this number was about proportionate to their rate of occurrence) as compared to 13 pro-chief groups. Sadly this analysis did not include several 500-800 person pro-Chief groups, which shows the sheer severity of the cut-off line for selection. The information cataloged for the high level analysis included basic identification information such as the group name, URL, the date observed, classification category, and other inconsistent information such as website or location. A summary of the groups' written purpose was recorded for reference purposes. Special attention was paid to group composition [4], which included the number of members, officers, administrators, and listings of relevant related groups. The relevance of related groups was once again a subjective judgment as massive joke groups like "When I was your age Pluto was a planet" were disregarded but political, sporting, and race-related cultural groups were noted. This set the stage for the second level of content analysis.

To effectively uproot some of the strong attitudes surrounding the issue of the Chief research took to an intense study of two of the most volatile pro and anti chief groups on all of Facebook. Other large groups would have also been an excellent field for observation but unfortunately would have taken too much time to adequately dismantle. Instead sociological-style coding was applied to the wall and discussion topic posts to capture rudimentary understandings of topic, tone, issues of identity, and potential connection to social capital. Due to the subjective nature of this method and inexperience of the researcher, however, this analysis is really best considered exploratory.

[1] See www.dmi.uiuc.edu for more details.

[2] An ambiguous category for the number of responses was embedded amongst questions pertaining to per respondent limitations – I initially mistook it to be the number of times a single respondent could fill out the survey.

[3] The DMI requires the use of the University built survey builder application which does not allow for skip logic or multiple user pathways, nor does it capture responses of partially filled out surveys.

[4] This originally included group racial composition, but due to limitations in the reliability of collection was abandoned in favor of a dependable simple analysis. Instead it paved the way for suggestions pertaining to future research.

Data: It may or may not impact my work for this class but I did observe some campus climate related statistics while doing work on the [Facebook Project](#). The statistics come from a 73 person response set taken as a random sample from the full-time degree-seeking UIUC undergraduate population. The racial demographics did not match the campus exactly - about 11% were non-white, whereas the remaining 89% were white. Interestingly enough no respondents identified themselves as Asian. Since numbers were so small in regards to minority response statistics dealing with Race may not be reliable. Nonetheless it's a good place to start.

81% of survey respondents felt Facebook at least somewhat safe for racial minorities (if not very safe), which nearly matched the 84% who thought the campus is at least somewhat safe for minorities. In contrast only 6% thought Facebook was somewhat hostile (or worse) for minorities, and only 8% thought campus overall was hostile for minorities.

62% of respondents said Facebook was at least somewhat friendly for Native Americans, compared to 60% who felt campus in general was at least somewhat safe for Native Americans. On the other side of the fence 12% felt Facebook was hostile for Native Americans and 14% felt campus was at least somewhat hostile for Native Americans.

Chi-square tests revealed the potential for a positive relationship between Pro-Chief students and opinion on campus climate / Facebook climate (If a person is pro they think the campus is safer for minorities/Native Americans).

Interestingly enough I could find no relationship between Greek membership and Pro-Chief status.

White/non-white and Pro-Chief status came out like we'd expect - potential positive relationship between white students and pro-Chief and potential negative relationship between non-white students and pro-Chief.

I might be able to pull more relevant information from this data later.

Discuss: Findings

For the sake of time, space, and interest this paper only includes a summary of some of the pertinent findings amongst the data. A full report and analysis is available upon request [\[1\]](#).

Establishing context – Individual Perspectives

Two sections of the 2007 Facebook Project survey applied specifically to gauging campus climate as it relates to race. The first included a simple series of paired questions relating to safety in the general college atmosphere. Respondents were asked the following questions:

1. Do you believe Ullinois Facebook is a friendly or hostile environment for minorities?
2. Do you believe the University of Illinois campus in general is a friendly or hostile environment for minorities?
3. Do you believe Facebook is a friendly or hostile environment for Native Americans (Indigenous Americans)?
4. Do you believe the University of Illinois campus in general is a friendly or hostile environment for Native Americans (Indigenous Americans)?

Answer choices were given on a spectrum going from very

friendly, somewhat friendly, not friendly but not hostile, somewhat hostile and not at all hostile. As it turns out most respondents in general felt both the campus and Facebook were somewhat friendly for minorities (median and mean around 4 with 5 being very friendly) places to be. When filtered to just pro-chief respondents the mean response favoring a friendly view of campus went up, but not to a significant degree. When only anti-chief respondents were selected the mean average dropped almost a full point bringing the average opinion to be somewhere between somewhat friendly and not friendly but not hostile. The true contrast comes when examining perceptions of feelings of hostility towards Native Americans. Pro-chief respondents scored about the same as they did in regards to atmosphere for minorities in general, whereas anti-chief participants felt Facebook was somewhere between not friendly but not hostile and somewhat hostile and campus in general was actually somewhat hostile. The survey did not receive any responses who identified as Native American and very few racial minorities (about 11%), which were almost all Black or Latino/a. So on the whole most Facebook users thought it wasn't a hostile environment for minorities, but anti-chief users did believe it was potentially hostile to Native Americans. What's perhaps interesting here is that despite the threats and powerful exchange of feelings on Facebook most survey recipients thought the face to face world was a more potentially hostile place of exchange.

Personal Actions

A later section on the survey then inquired into user actions in response to the Chief issue. They were asked about their overall stance on the issue, group membership, and if they took part in the picture-change resistance. The results were a bit staggering, as nearly two thirds (48, 65.8%) of respondents identified as pro-chief. A mere 11 (15.1%) professed anti-chief views and the remaining 14 (9.6% each) were split evenly between undecided and no opinion. Of the 73 active members examined only 4 (5.5%) belonged to anti-Chief groups and 37 (50.7%) professed membership in pro-Chief groups. Active protest was less common, however, as only 13 (17.8%) changed their picture to one of the Chief to protest the removal and 3 (4.1%) put up a 'Racial stereotypes dehumanize' icon in response. No respondents took part in any of the joke/fictitious pictorial reactions such as 'Support the chef' or 'Shoop Da Whoop.' As figure 1.1 dramatically displays the proportions below, based on this data we can surmise Facebook is utterly dominated by pro-

chief sentiments and pro-chief users. This confirms the previously assumed notion that Facebook is reflective of face to face world pro-chief views.

Group Behaviors

This paper establishes only an introductory analysis of 17 Facebook groups and excerpts two, highlighted in blue:

- 1. Pro-Chief People Wouldn't Know Racism if it Bit Them on the A\$\$! (anti)**
2. I'M anti anti-Chief People (pro)
3. If you hate the Chief then I hate you (pro)

4. F*** the Chief (anti)
5. Do "It" For the Chief (pro)
6. RIP Chief Illiniwek, Forever in Our Hearts (pro)
7. The Native Americans Almost Had Their ENTIRE RACE Taken From Them. (anti)
8. Chief Illiniwek Forever. (pro)
9. Signatures for the Chief (pro)
10. When I went to U of I we had a Chief (pro)
11. Bring Back the Chief (pro)
12. You took our Chief but you will never take our money (again)! (pro)
13. Anti-Chief (anti)
- 14. Don't Like the Chief? Go Somewhere Else... fuckin Idiots! (pro)**
15. Chief Illiniwek, We Will Never Forget (pro)
16. Save the Chief (pro)
17. We'll Never Forget Chief Illiniwek (pro)

Surface-level content analysis reveals some immediate trends in even just the names of the groups here. Several contain high-powered, strong-sentiment words, such as those of explicative (swearing) nature (1, 4, and 14), overt hatred or disdain (1-4, 14), remembrance and nostalgia (6-8, 10-11, 15, and 17), and potentially resistance (5, 9, 11-12, 16). The descriptions of the groups also follow similar trends, with anti-chief groups voicing concerns about respect and representation (1, 4, 7, 13) and social damage or racism (4, 13). Pro-chief groups profess dislike for anti-chief people (2, 3, 14), resistance to or disagreement with the removal decision (5, 6, 9, 10-12, 16, 17), school pride, honor, and memory (8, 15, 17).

Though it cannot be formally statistically backed at this time initial estimates of group membership suggest (and this will seem

obvious to most) more white members belong to pro-chief groups and more people of color belong to anti-chief groups. Corresponding to this potential link the largest anti-chief groups (Anti-Chief and F*** the Chief) have only around 250 members each, where as just the biggest three pro-chief groups dominate the largest groups in the Ullinois Facebook scene with Chief Illiniwek Forever (7,900+ members), Save the Chief (5,300+ members which surged to this amount in under a year), and We'll Never Forget Chief Illiniwek (4,300+ members) and numerous other groups numbering over a thousand or high hundreds. The big pro-chief groups often shared each other in common on the related group listings, as well as Illinois Basketball, the Bears, and Illini Pride. Anti-chief groups had common references to racially themed groups like America's Nightmare: Young, Gifted, & Minority and political affiliations, such as promoting Barack Obama. People in both groups seemed to really like Colbert. Videos and posted items were almost never used by any group (may have been added after the inception and most active periods for many of them) and pictures really only ever consisted of pictures of the Chief or protest. The discourse in operation in each group is where the true findings are to be had.

Facebook as a Digital Space

First, a word on Facebook groups as digital spaces. In any face to face world ethnography researchers carefully observe their environment becoming a sort of unit of measurement. They take into account the collage of noises, aromas, textures, lighting, and tastes of the atmosphere. The digital landscape is a considerably collapsed context but still contains pertinent environmental features. Just like in advertising when sometimes the presentation of a product even alters how customers think it tastes (Gladwell 2007), the interface, layout, demeanor, and interaction mediated by the systems of Facebook plays a crucial role in fabricating the space for participant actors. Some of the automated and unintentional functions in the ecology even have their own sort of agency and might further influence this already complicated web of interaction (Ginger 2008). Luckily for the scope of a Facebook group this is mostly limited.

Facebook group web pages feature the same sort of interconnectivity that is found everywhere else on Facebook. Many components are linked and menus are limited to clean easy to read typefaces and separators. They have a main central column and a side column. Upon visiting a group an observer will

quickly notice its title at the top of the central column followed by the main information below, including name, type (such as common interest, used for categorical searches), description and other contact information. Below this resides recent news in short text format, then photos, videos, and posted items all with potential thumbnail previews, a compressed view of the discussion board with a preview of three topics and post data and then the wall, a sort of simple guest-book like form that users can fill out to leave their remarks publicly on the page. Sitting neatly between the wall and discussion board section is a member listing area, with 6 linked thumbnail previews of random [2] members and the total members listing, which is linked to a search return for all members in the group. Each wall post contains the poster's name, time and date information, response options, and linked thumbnail picture preview, giving a robust impression as users glance about the page. Really just about everything is linked and tied to the face to face world with pictures. The right column has perhaps the most noticeable element of the group profile, its picture, which is generally pretty limited in size. Right beneath this are navigation and action options, such as the ability to view the discussion board, join the group, or if you are an administrator recruit or manage members and edit the group. Officers are listed below this, with linked names and subtitles pertaining to their position in the group. In the case of most chief related groups these titles are indicative of member sentiments and not actual real-world positions related to an organization. Related groups are found beneath this, with a link listing and category subtitle. Finally at the bottom comes the official group-type information and administrator(s). The layout is both organized and friendly, and adheres to sound principles of graphic design, information retrieval and display, and human-computer interface (HCI). The group architecture is both dedicated to linking people together, but preserves the normal separation of profiles and privacy seen on the rest of Facebook.

The ways users engage with this space and interact with each other within it should be a crucial component to building a user typography, should a researcher take this sort of task on. The actions taken in response to or use of the interface can sometimes reveal a great deal about the interest, capabilities, and preferences of a given user. Even the decision to create or administrate a group in itself (as well as get the group to become popular) suggests something about a given member. With these intricacies and a general idea of the space in mind, we turn to some discourse analysis.

Discourse Analysis

In the case of the most volatile and provocative Facebook groups often people who oppose the group will join it in order to engage in argument or discussion. The two groups chosen for this study involved a number of these such exchanges, making them a virtual battle grounds for the Chief debate.

After some significant multi-stage coding of both of the selected Facebook groups consistent trends began to emerge in the data. Unfortunately since only two groups were analyzed the findings here must be considered only preliminary and may not (probably do not) accurately represent the feelings of the masses, but instead a particularly passionate group of people on either extreme of the spectrum. “Don’t like the Chief? Go Somewhere Else... Fuckin Idiots” was a much larger group with around 800 members, whereas “Pro-Chief people wouldn’t know racism if it bit them on the A\$\$” hovered around 80 at the time of observation. The content on group walls and forum postings provided sufficient material for the analysis. Though topics varied consistently several became reoccurring *conceptual themes* (in no special order of importance):

1. What is referred to here as **homage** – occurrences of reference to the Chief as a figure of honor, loyalty, respect or courage, typically in a pro-chief valorized fashion.
2. **Validity** – instances where topics tackled issues of truth, right and wrong, validity of measure, reliability, and the divide between the sides necessitating a winner or answer.
3. **Hostility** – signified by variance in the responses from the average tone many topics themselves were actually on retribution, hostility, abuse, threats, and the hurtful nature of both exchanges between respondents and the role of the Chief.
4. **Rights** – including discussion of the rights over imagery and portrayal, freedom of speech, the jurisdiction of authorities such as the NCAA, religious freedom, and when jokes and fun have gone too far.
5. **Power** – which could include racism, dehumanization, mockery, and privilege of groups and individuals.
6. **History** – which often came in the form of tradition, calling out

to the historically documented memory of the Native American experience or on the opposite end, the way the Chief might help people to learn about and remember Native Americans.

7. **University Representation** – just who or what should represent the university – symbols, mascots, school pride, majorities, minorities and questions of group identity.

8. **Meta-dialogue** – several times posts were created depicting or interpreting the discussions being made, with special attention given to attitudes and behaviors as well as open or close-mindedness.

Obviously just the introductory findings communicate a rather complicated and multifaceted debate. Several of these areas were often found together and in some cases may be somewhat arbitrarily separated. They do, however, stand as a testament to the full range of issues that ought to be addressed by researchers considering the Chief in relation to student concerns and campus climate. What's more is that nearly all of these topics are potentially politically and emotionally charged – these aren't kids trying to solve math problems or insisting Oregon Trail was the best game ever. They're grappling with intense issues and in many cases need to be educated in both the arguments they're making and also become conscious of the process of communication they're taking part in, which leads to the next level of analysis.

As a researcher new to the method of qualitative content analysis and conducting observations without a previously established and tested formalized system of measure it's hard to say assessment of *tone* could be anything but subjective. Regardless, based upon the ideas gathered from other studies and the psychological based measurements employed by John Gottman featured in Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink* (2007) the following qualifications for conversant tone were drafted:

1. **Anger/bullying** – which could include disgust or blatant criticism with a connotation that would make it seem insulting.

2. **Condescension** – similar to anger at times but not always, the key point being a sort of criticism that places the accusing party on a higher, superior level than the criticized. Perhaps the hardest to qualify by technical means or single signifying words, it was teased out through certain combinations of topics and tone

and formations of sentences.

3. **Sarcasm** – also comparable to condescension but without the required difference in relative ranking, sarcasm typically involves a sort of lying or deception poised in an insulting manner.

4. **Gratitude/praise** – overt and sincere reception and acceptance of a group or individuals.

5. **Open-minded** – as difficult to detect as condescension this tag was scribed for participants whom seem genuinely interested in alternative perspectives and didn't wish to appear all-knowing or arrogant. It can often be denoted by the use of 'I' statements and mindful open-ended questions. Modesty was key in qualifying these statements.

6. **Thoughtfulness** – both in general consideration and criticism or dialectic, marked most by an intellectual and inquiring tone, not seeking dominance or victory but instead conveyance and interpretation of ideas. Paraphrasing and clarification would most often fall under this category.

7. **Diminishing/downplay** – a defensive mechanism or active strategy, sometimes covert and often evident through the use of adaptable words this tone assignment was a common sight amongst more educated individuals seeking to establish dominance through subtler means.

Readers will be quick to notice the many tones that would normally indicate a negative communication process – and they're right, most of the exchanges going on between members in the groups were hostile and argumentative. On rare occasions exceptions could be found, but much akin to the quiet professor in a room full of loud arguing lawyers those employing dialogue and questioning techniques seemed to be listened to less on the whole.

Though originally targeted for identity and social capital analysis neither group on its own revealed anything remarkable enough to build themes or a major typology. Group members placed a great deal of emphasis on personal racial identity and ethnic heritage when determining legitimacy in regards to racism and discrimination and more often than not it seemed to be the object of prejudice or serve as special qualification of legitimacy amongst participants. Though the research suggests colorblind overtones to the pro-chief group there wasn't enough reoccurring

material to allege this claim. Social capital, on the other hand, was most notably of the networked capital type in both of the groups examined. Occasional advertisements for organizational movements populated the walls and message boards as well as news updates related to pertinent Chief issues. It is unknown as to how much administrators orchestrated leadership in the groups or disseminated information to members. Mostly the groups seemed more bent on doing battle and making outlandish statements, and finding allies and alike thinkers at the same time. Rather, the Facebook coverage seems to evidence a level of pre-established community commitment and networked social capital between members. It is unclear as to how much it may have extended or enhanced these connections but certainly suggests to a certain extent the availability and utilization of such ties. The fact that so many pro-chief groups are linked together by the related groups area implicitly propounds a rather massive and connected web of supporters and latent weak ties, despite the lack of explicit talk about such avenues for mobilization among participants. In the end these two Facebook groups appear to be a terrain best suited to solidifying community commitment through argument and opposition.

Discussion

This study only really begins to answer the aforementioned inquiries, as one half semester worth of time would not permit enough opportunity to thoroughly investigate Facebook via qualitative-based content analysis. Nevertheless, it provides some solid evidence with which we can begin to formulate answers.

So what do students think about race in the campus climate and Facebook climate? In general they feel it's a friendly place for people of all colors. According to the data gathered about the only time a group that felt anything was hostile was when people who identified as anti-chief were asked about the hostility of the face to face world campus atmosphere for Native Americans. How about their actions? On the whole there's a lot of showcasing of support of the Chief but on some digital action. Though thousands of students signed petitions to save the Chief online and hundreds changed their pictures to protest it's unclear just how much these actions translated to effect and deeds or achievements in the offline world. Further studies ought to individually trace impacts through interviews and more in-depth

analysis.

As for the character of pro-chief related groups research suggests that they are far reaching in their membership, but only among certain populations. College students have historically been predisposed to racial separation, and in the case of the Chief issue it's unclear (but suspect) if these affiliations and separations were founded before college and if they are diminished in any way over its course. Looking to the [only] research on the subject, Mayer and Puller (2007) suggest that social networks are highly segmented by race and they found by running counterfactual simulations that this is largely driven by preferences rather than institutional features that affect meeting (more minorities doesn't mean integration or friendship). Programs like affirmative action only have limited ability to reduce the segregation and as such policies should be aimed at impacting preferences. Anti-chief groups seem to have little support and even less community mobility. Both have become battle grounds for argument and house members with strong feelings, however. While they might be built for a number of functional purposes their activity seems to center more around what the members themselves really truly care about. **Given the necessity to alter preferences in order to cause lasting effects on perceptions of race and the high caliber emotional content encountered in Chief-related groups it would seem these digital spaces are an crucial tool and context for actors leading social movements to understand and engage.** This paper concludes with a few approaches to utilizing social capital and social change on Facebook, but first a few notes.

Limitations

As was previously mentioned this study took place over the course of about half a semester. Most of the data analysis is limited to first runs and summaries and severely needs to be double-checked. Many theories ought to be followed up on and the rather rich analysis can easily present more answers and in-depth analysis in the future. The impartial social work theory is a result of the loss of the co-author Elena Chiappinelli who had to step down half way through the process due to personal reasons and family concerns. Nevertheless the work here stands as an exciting start and exploration into just what can be done by researching on Facebook.

Future Research

Originally this project was to include a full composition break down of all surveyed Chief groups. This would include racial statistics on all members. Furthermore the research plan originally included the possibility of giving surveys to Chief Facebook administrators be distributed to their member populace. The hope was to acquire the variance in perspectives on the Chief within given pro and anti Chief groups. Potential interviews with key players and leaders in the Pro-Chief movement were also on the drawing board, but were the first thing scratched off when efforts became busy.

Furthermore the coding method employed on only two groups in this study could easily be expanded to code all seventeen groups selected, or even more. In fact such a comprehensive analysis would truly adequately answer the research questions and present enough material to motivate large scale policy changes at the University. A collaborative social research approach might also be taken with content analysis. Researchers could easily work with their subjects, presumably anti-chief, in a given setting to accomplish social change or action. Data would be gathered by stakeholders, which would allow for an efficient division of labor, and the same assistants could be reflexively give feedback to inform action, resolve problems or suggest solutions, or answer research questions.

And lastly, an ideal collection of race demographic data could involve two main aspects. A pair (or more) of researchers who could cross-compare race assignment results (and throw out mismatching classifications) or a formalized list of students from the Division of Management Information (DMI) that would include official school racial records that could be used to verify identities. This kind of study would of course provoke a full IRB review and likely take years to complete and as such may not be feasible. This data, however, once acquired, could be tested in the same ways Mayer and Puller (2007) did to project the effect of new policy changes and alterations in the student population.

Connecting Social Capital to Social Change

It is our wish to leave you off on a positive note, so breaking with character and form this next section discusses two strong social work born methods that can be combined to instigate social

change: advocacy and empowerment.

Advocacy

By changing social norms and etiquette in the performative realm of Facebook policy makers and teachers can help to reinforce change. Clearly the communication process that takes place on Facebook too often resembles debate and not dialogue.

Communications and dialogue classes could begin to teach students how to employ the dialogic process online by starting with face to face training and then later challenging students to migrate discourse to blogs and message boards. In stride with this author's previous stance on Facebook, adults, especially educators need to be the change they wish to see and fully understand and participate in the digital realm, including Facebook. The recent influx of older adult and global populations that use the site for social networking, marketing research, and application development is a testament to the possibility. Late adopters need to face up to the challenge and get out there because every moment they spend avoiding it puts them at a greater disadvantage. Education ought to include cutting edge technologies and communication tools, and this doesn't mean the fastest hardware or operating system. Social technologies like wikis and social networking have countless potential beneficial uses in the classroom. Sociology in particular, a discipline that prides itself on the study of social movements and social capital, ought to take heed of Facebook's popularity and shift time and research to consider its impacts.

Administrative policy changes present another avenue for advocacy on Facebook. The Facebook company itself has become a sort of governing authority that maintains a mostly friendly relationship with its users. The revolts against the newsfeed and Beacon made it quite clear – with enough momentum Facebook users can really alter the fundamentals of the system. Facebook has already taken a positive step in banning hate speech, and allows users to active enforce it through easy to find reporting modules. Administrators and educators, once immersed and involved in the system, can use these same mechanisms to encourage proper behavior while remaining anonymous. Facebook itself could also take a stance on the importance of racial identity in its interface and introduce a race/ethnicity category. Finally, publicity efforts such as Inclusive Illinois could adopt Facebook systems in some of the same ways advertisers have. Just like old generations had to learn how to use computers it's now time the current late-adopter remainder

learns how to properly use social computing technologies.

Empowerment

Empowerment, or the act of enabling of persons to the point where they have the power to act and enable others on their own, is another viable method of social change. Clearly Facebook doesn't have enough friendly and familiar spaces for anti-chief members. Perceptions are one of the strongest agents of prevention when it comes to dealing with the digital divide, and Facebook will increase in perceived usefulness and ease of use the more it becomes friendly for people of minority identification. Really this sort of change can include implicit institutionalized alterations, like the addition of a racial category, or also individual motivated methods, like classes that teach students how to create Facebook applications to fuel their social causes. More than anything the anti-chief side of student life needs a stronger representation online – not one bent on domination but one founding on education and opportunity that stands a chance at truly altering attitudes and teaching others how to pass on what they learn. The Networked Capital side of social capital lies in the personal connections between friends and families – and the more of this on Facebook the better chance it has of facing off against the powerful hegemonic mass. Groups could also use Facebook's networking capabilities to unify their causes, political and otherwise, in ways never really accomplished before. The May 5th protests remain a solid proof of concept but organizations could place more emphasis on such tasks. Facebook offers a great way to challenge traditional authority arrangements as well as provide resources for self help. Stakeholders and adaptive management (leaders) can work simultaneously together to achieve satisfactory results. Groups, especially ones related to social justice, are often in sore need of technical persons like web designers [3] and this is where empowerment comes in. Groups and individuals have to empower each other to know how to use the SNS and properly engage with one another, as well as the opposition, in the space.

Lastly these efforts must be continuously evaluated for effectiveness, sustainability, scalability and diffusion, accountability, and stakeholder involvement (*everyone* who benefits from the change). Leaders should pay special attention to the role of individuals including innovators, idea generators, and carriers and overall remain effective at integrating and deploying resources. Typically this means starting small and growing from there – only involving the most motivated. And of

course, on a final note of the importance of sociology, we must understand our audience from an ethnographic perspective and build respect (credentials) all while listening carefully to their views to best take into account opinions and establish solutions.

Facebook is a powerful and important space. Educators and anti-chief advocates can use this power too. Here's to being the change...

[1] Contact Jeff Ginger at www.theFacebookProject.com to inquire.

[2] Well maybe not random. My personal observation has lead me to believe these random return queues give priority to returning people you happen to know. Such a feature would make sense as it would encourage more connective use of the system. I haven't conducted a test on this yet

[3] Even though management of a Facebook group is really something a trained monkey can do... the barriers to entry are almost non-existent, all it takes are good content management and communication skills plus a little dedication.

EUI Links: Causes for Persisting Discrimination on the U of I Campus
Hemann, Andrew
<http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/1811>

How Can an Anti-Chief Fan Exist in a Pro-Chief World?
Dangoy, Eric
<http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/2312>

Reflect: My discussion section should cover my reflections in regards to limitations and future research. This project will be archived with IDEALS and open to the entire public. I will also publish it on my own personal project website, www.theFacebookProject.com.

Recommendations: Recommendations can be found in the discussion section.

Uploaded File:  [FULL PAPER](#)

Second File:  [CONFERENCE PRESENTATION](#)

Third File:  [CONTENT ANALYSIS ABRIDGRED](#)



For those who are interested, the quotes sheet I passed around during the conference presentation that provided a good slice of the material studied:

Powerful Excerpts From Group Discourse

A few notable quotes.

Don't Like the Chief? Go Somewhere Else... fuckin Idiots!

(pro) "Apparently honoring the chief was wrong, we should probably burn a set of chief clothing at halftime games instead. we should completely forget about native americans. to tell you the truth the chief only reminded me of their existence. we took their land, they took our mascot, we should take away their citizenship!"

(anti) "Those who are sincerely loyal to UofI should be willing to sacrifice or challenge antiquated traditions to make our school a place where differences and cultures of all students feel respected. The hostility of this group make a mockery of the what the chief should represent and the people who support the chief. It gave me a glimpse of the true attitudes of some people who support the chief. Because I respect the opinions of all I make a distinction between groups like this who attempt to dehumanize and divide and groups that simply disagree with decision to retire the chief."

(pro) "I believe we have made a lot of compromises and have done a lot to change the way things are. In some cases, "non-caucasians" have become the minority. We no longer have the rights we once had. If we say anything at all that is of opinion..even if in a fun, joking nature...we are instantly hit down and sometimes even trapped in legal consequences...simply for using our freedom of speech."

(pro) "If everyone keeps swearing and threatening eachother, then you really are showing good reason for why they got rid of the Chief. While the Chief is not racist, hostile, or abusive, both sides of the argument are being extremely hostile and abusive toward eachother. I assume that this is the main reason (besides the stupid NCAA overstepping their bounds) that the Chief is finally gone."

(pro) "hey [previous poster], take a rake from your native country, most likely mexico, and shove it up your ass...the chief IS the university of illinois, and getting rid of him is like getting rid of let's say altgeld or grainger...theyre important to the campus and the university...we should move on?? why should we move on?? people like you want to move on by getting rid of him...we wanna stay by keeping the chief...so, take my advice, and leave the university because people like you are evil in chambaba...CHIEF!!!!!"

(anti) "This whole group is ridiculous. How about: "Don't mind the Chief? How about "The Illinois Fighting [n-word omitted]" " All the same logic applies, but something tells me people would be offended by it. If you just got offended by reading that because you're African American, it makes no sense for you to support this group."

(pro) "No, but there is something wrong with that unnecessary comma in your reply. Maybe you should learn English before coming to our country! That was a racist statement. That's not how I actually think. It's probably purely coincidence that someone with a Hispanic last name made a typo, and you were probably born and raised in the United States, but I used a slight error combined with your heritage to cause an emotional response. In my opinion (note that this is my opinion, not an absolute statement of fact) the Native Americans who are complaining about the Chief are doing the same thing."

(pro) "fUCK people who don't like the chief ! they're just bored and looking for some kind of cause to fight for...morons...they've interviewed native americans...REAL LIVE CHIEFS have said they are not even the slightest bit offended...they've even felt FLATTERED by the Chief mascot...however ignorant people feel the need to make nonsense arguments and analogies for why the chief is such a horrible thing...find a NEW CAUSE freaks"

(pro) "THerere is nothin wrong wit desroying a desrcnibitory and rasict mascot az long as u get him WAYYYYXZZZTED@!@!!!! FU ANTI CHEF FAGZ@!@!!!! UR GAY STEREOTYPES ARE WRONG BUT 9/10 PEOPLE IN DIZ GRUPE ARE WITE!!!! I STEREOTYPICALLY KNOW DIZ!!!!"

(pro) "Others suggest that the Pope as a mascot would be a good metaphor for the offensiveness; however, if the Pope was our symbol and he was treated the same as the Chief is treated at Illinois, I doubt many would have a problem with it."

Pro-Chief People Wouldn't Know Racism if it Bit Them on the A\$\$

(anti) "I do think it's a bit of a generalization to say that all white people can't recognize racism. I have fought for the retirement of Chief Illiniwek, but I am also white. I think that a lot of the time, white people do not realize the white privilege they have. White people are capable of recognizing racism and discrimination, but many pro-Chief advocates may not see racism where racism does truly exist because of their white privilege. Because of their privilege, many haven't been the object of discrimination."

(undetermined) "This is really a very close-minded and hurtful group. I can't believe you really think that just because I'm white that I have no idea what prejudice is about. Unbelievable."

(anti) "OMG "HURTFUL"???????????? [name omitted].....HURTFUL???!!!! NOW YOU KNOW HOW THESE INDIAN TRIBES HAVE FELT FOR MANY YEARS NOW.....PLEASE SOMEONE EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT THIS DANCE MEANS TO YOU????? IN FACT IT IS ONLY A DANCE.....WHY WAS A GIRL CRYING HER EYES OUT ON ESPN.....WHY????? ITS A DANCE!!! AT HALFTIME.....AND DONT GIVE ME

THIS BULLSHIT OF HONOR, COURAGE, etc.....IF YOU NEED A GUY DANCING IN A COSTUME AT HALFTIME SHOWS TO GIVE YOU "COURAGE"...THEN YOU GOT PROBLEMS.....”

(anti) *“Who are you to say that just because someone is white they have never experienced racism?”*

A generalization about a cultural group would be considered racial prejudice, not racism. What I said would not even be considered a generalization since racism in America entails relations of power. White people hold the most power (politically, economically) over any group in America. Since white people are not an oppressed group, their so called "experiences of racism" are merely due to racial prejudice and stereotyping.”

(anti) “Thank God there are some open-minded considerate people on this campus... I can honestly say that yes I am sad to see the tradition end, but compared to the alternative I am happy to be part of the student body to bid the Chief an honorable farewell. The issue is not one of numbers of supporters vs numbers of opposers, it is about the fact that a group of people (no matter how small) feels personally attacked by the tradition, and personally the mild discomfort caused by the retirement of the chief is irrelevant compared to the goal of overcoming racist attitudes and behaviors.”

(anti) “I think that this group is awesome. This type of discussion is important for all. we get the rare opportunity to see everyones side and make educated decisions for our selves. I, for one, am keeping an open mind to this whole issue. I understand this is a hot issue and ppl feel very strongly one way or another.

My only complaint would be the title of this group. by making broad generalizations (however true they might seem) still harbors the same hatred that anti-chief supporters are trying to fight against. This is a great group and it brings up several good points to the table, but its validity gets lost in its title. The issue over the chief is a problem, yes..., but how we handle the situation tells a lot about ourselves and our decision making process. I urge everyone to treat this situation w/ the respect and maturity that it deserves.”

(pro) “I'm trying to be civilized here and yet you continue to throw everything I say down in the dirt. I was trying to compliment the Native Americans for still being strong. But obviously there is no pleasing you anti-chief people. I try and try to compromise, but you just don't give a shit. I see now why people are so angry at you...you are way too hostile.

I was trying to be supportive of both sides, but you've proven to me which side I need to continue supporting and it is obviously not yours. Forgive me for trying to compliment Native Americans...fuck me...beat me down. I'm nothing but a fat white racist bastard anyway. Doesn't that pretty much sum up the way you feel?”