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EDUCATION

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, Stanford, California

Ph.D. candidate in Sociology, expected completion: June 2010

Dissertation Title: *Intra-organizational Diffusion of Innovations and Sentiments: An Analysis of Enron*

Committee: Walter W. Powell (Chair), Karen S. Cook, Mark Granovetter, Henning Hillmann

Dissertation Abstract: I explore how information content interacts with social networks of relations to affect communication patterns, social influence, and group formation within multinational corporation. When studying how information spreads from one person to the next through social networks, past research has largely treated information as homogeneous, focusing mainly on the social structure that surrounds an individual as a determinant of such processes as social influence or diffusion. Little is known about how the content of the information being shared through social relations interacts with and possibly alters the social structure. By applying typologies to information content, I find differences in not only the content-specific sub-structures, but also in the conditions that lead individuals to participate in the sub-structures. I look specifically at two different types of information. First, I examine organizational innovations, focusing on who participates in them and how they spread through social networks. Second, I consider different types of sentiment or attitudes in terms of how they are transmitted and how they affect group formation. This dissertation uses a large organizational communication network comprised of employee emails taken from Enron Corporation over a five-year period from 1998 to 2002. With this unique dataset, I am able to couple social network analysis with qualitative coding of the individual messages to examine the underlying process of social influence and the emergence and reproduction of social structures.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY: M.A. Sociology, May 2004

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES: B.A. Sociology, May 2000

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Organizational behavior, entrepreneurship, social networks, social psychology, diffusion, and innovation.

PAPERS & PATENTS

The Network Structure of Corrupt Innovation: The Case of Enron (Job Talk Paper)

Abstract: In this paper, I contrast legitimate innovations and corrupt innovations to examine whether the content of an innovation changes the way individuals mobilize to accomplish a goal within an organization. I find that communication within legitimate networks is far more reciprocal than communication in corrupt networks, where information flow is asymmetrical. Additionally, individuals are more likely to participate in a legitimate innovation if they have large sparse networks of informal ties through which they acquire information. This finding is contrasted against corrupt network involvement, in which greater closeness centrality or shorter distances to other organizational members determine participation in corruption. This study examines longitudinal email data taken from Enron Corporation between 1998 and 2002. The dataset provides a unique opportunity to study the social network structure of the organization's employees as well as analyze the messages shared between them. In contrast to previous studies, which have assumed the transmission of information along network ties, this dataset allows for actual observation of information transfer between organizational members. I couple social network analysis and qualitative coding to explore how the content of information affects communication patterns and the spread of information within an organization.

Brandy Aven. *Karma or Caste Economy? An Analysis of Reputation and Status in Online Exchange*.

Karen Cook, Coye Cheshire, Alexandra Gerbasi & Brandy Aven. 2009. "Assessing Trustworthiness in Online Goods and Services" in ETrust: Forming Relationships in the Online World, edited by Karen S. Cook, Chris Snijders, Vincent Buskens & Coye Cheshire. New York, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Henning Hillmann & Brandy Aven. *Fragmented Networks and Entrepreneurship in Late Imperial Russia*. Manuscript under revision for resubmission at the *American Journal of Sociology*.

Brandy Aven, David Burgess, Jonathan Haynes, James Merino, & Paul Moore. *Using Product and Social Network Data to Improve Online Advertising*. U.S. Patent Pending: 11/965,509 (12/22/07).

WORK IN PROGRESS

The Value of Friends' Histories in Target Marketing (with Wesley Hartman).

Birds of a Feather Get Heavier Together: An examination of norms versus behavior spread in social networks (with Elizabeth McClintock).

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

Graduate Research Opportunity Award, 2008

Sociological Research Opportunity Award, Department of Sociology, 2008

La Piere Second Year Paper Award, Department of Sociology, 2005,
for *Karma or Caste Economy? An analysis of reputation and status in online exchange*.

Graduate Award Fellowship, Department of Sociology, 2003

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate School of Business 203 *The Global Context of Management* (MBA)
Course Assistant, Fall 2009

Sociology 381a *Sociological Methods* (graduate)
Course Designer and Instructor, Fall 2006 & 2007

Sociology 153/253 *Game Theory for Sociology: The Games People Play* (graduate & undergraduate)
Course Designer and Instructor, Summer 2006

Sociology 142/242 *Sociology of Gender* (graduate & undergraduate)
Teaching Assistant, Fall 2005

Sociology 123/223 *Sociology of Sex and Love in Modern Society* (graduate & undergraduate)
Teaching Assistant, Winter 2005

Sociology 127/227 *Bargaining, Power, and Influence in Social Interaction* (graduate & undergraduate)
Teaching Assistant, Fall 2004

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Communication Patterns of Innovations: An Analysis of Enron. (2009)
Organizations, Occupations, and Work Section, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. San Francisco, California.

Communication Patterns of Innovations: An Analysis of Enron. (2009)
International Sunbelt Social Network Conference. San Diego, California.

Entrepreneurship in Fragmented Networks. (2007)
University of Chicago Graduate School of Business: Conference on the Emergence of Social Organizations. Chicago, Illinois.

Reputation and Organizational Foundings: Evidence from Tsarist Russia, 1700-1914. (2007)
Economic Sociology Paper Section, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. New York, New York.

Reputation and Organizational Foundings: Evidence from Tsarist Russia, 1700-1914. (2006)
International Sunbelt Social Network Conference. Vancouver, Canada.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

SOCIAL SCIENCES DATA AND SOFTWARE, Stanford University, California
Methods Consultant, October 2005 – Present

Consultant to Stanford faculty, staff, and students in research and statistical methodology for the social sciences, including data collection, preparation, and management; appropriate statistical procedures; and interpretation of results.

YAHOO, INC., Sunnyvale, California

Social Network Analysis Intern, June 2007 – September 2007

Conducted a study on the social networks and behavioral characteristics of influencers and brand advocates and presented recommendations based on social network analysis for improved product and property adoption and greater reach of users. Authored a patent for identifying social network attributes of individuals in the product adoption cycle.

STANFORD INSTITUTE FOR THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF SOCIETY (SIQSS)

Consultant, May 2007- July 2007

Consulted for a joint project between SIQSS and Knowledge Networks to develop and program a new version of a time diary survey deployment.

THE EXETER GROUP, INC., *San Francisco, California*

Consultant, September 2000–August 2003

Served as Team Lead for the University of California at Santa Cruz on Financial Aid Academic Information Systems Project. Developed New York-based Hedge Fund Firm ‘end-of-day’ positions management system.

STATISTICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE

APPLICATIONS AND STATISTICAL PACKAGES: R, Stata, SPSS, Pajek, UCINET, NetworkX, SPSS Text Analysis for Surveys, Remark Web Survey 3.0, and Opinio.

PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES: PERL, Python, XHTML, XML, PL/SQL, Javascript, and MySQL. Familiarity with C++ and JAVA.

REFERENCES

Walter W. Powell. Professor of Education and Sociology (by courtesy), Organizational Behavior, Management Science and Engineering, and Communication. Stanford University. woodyp@stanford.edu, (650) 725-7391

Karen S. Cook. Ray Lyman Wilbur Professor of Sociology and Director of the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences at Stanford. Stanford University. kcook@stanford.edu, (650) 723-1194

Henning Hillman. Professor of Sociology, University of Mannheim. hillmann@uni-mannheim.de, +49.621.181.3942