



Public Policy

Engaged Analysis

Public Policy Capstone Fair

Tuesday, May 5th, 2020 12pm-3:30pm

(by Zoom) <https://brown.zoom.us/j/95612081226>

12:00 - 12:10 Greetings & Introductions

Prof. Tony Levitas, Director, Public Policy, Watson Institute

12:10 – 1:00 Panel One: Electoral Politics

Moderator: Prof. Edward Steinfeld, Political

Andrew Castillo, Public Policy

Power, Race, and Electability

Advisor: Prof. William Allen, Public Policy

The notion of electability can propel or derail political campaigns. As such, the idea of electability in American politics has changed over the past decade. From the 2008 Democratic Presidential Primary to the 2018 Midterm Elections to the 2020 Democratic Presidential Primary. I delved into how the electability discussion propelled Barack Obama to the White House, nominated a record number of women and people of color to the United States House of Representatives, and spurred the rise of de facto Democratic nominee Joe Biden. I also analyzed other related trends, including how the American people losing faith in government correlated with excitement to change this very sentiment, the increases in recent voter turnout rates among different groups, and how the Democratic primary system's decision to choose states such as Iowa and New Hampshire favors mainly white, male candidates, painting them as the most electable.

Ellen Cola, Public Policy, Africana Studies & Economics

A Seat at the Table: Voting Rights, a Ward System, and a Case Against the East Ramapo Central School District

Advisor: Prof. Tony Levitas, Public Policy

In November 2017, the New York Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit against the East Ramapo Central School District for denying Black and Latino residents an equal opportunity to elect school board candidates of their choice. According to the lawsuit, an at-large voting system for electing members to the East Ramapo school board, which has been long dominated by Orthodox Jews whose children attend private yeshivas, has prevented public school parents who are largely Black and Latino from electing candidates of their choice. The election system violates the federal Voting Rights Act by denying "minority citizens an equal opportunity to have a voice in the future

of their community’s public schools.” Plaintiffs in the case — the Spring Valley branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, parents of public school students, district residents and candidates who have run unsuccessfully for a seat on the board — are calling for the current system to be replaced with a ward election system that would give minorities “an equal opportunity” to elect their favored candidates. This capstone project will investigate whether or not the ward system is a viable option for the district and if there is a better option for the students of East Ramapo.

Noah Klein, Public Policy & Economics

Reframing the Debate Surrounding Money in Politics: Meiklejohn as an Advocate for Campaign Finance Reform

Advisor: Prof. Corey Brettschneider, Political Science

Contemporary debates surrounding the current polarized political climate often lead to questions regarding the role that money plays in politics. In *Buckley* and *Citizens United*, the Supreme Court ruled that limits on political spending violated both individuals’ and corporations’ First Amendment Rights. As opposed to previous justifications for campaign finance restrictions, like the prevention of corruption, this paper seeks a new argument grounded in constitutional principles by applying Meiklejohn’s *requirements for true democracy*. By doing so, it reframes the discussion of free speech around a citizen’s *right to be fully informed*. This framework takes the ownership of speech away from the individual speaker and repurposes it as a public good. After an introduction of both the judicial history surrounding this issue and Meiklejohn’s works, this paper develops the theory as applied to restrictions on spending by individuals, corporations, and foreign entities, as well as the enforcement of strict transparency requirements.

12:45 - 1:00 Discussion

1:00 - 1:50 Panel Two: Gender Politics

Moderator: Prof. Susan Moffit, Political Science & Public Policy

Marie E. Lachance, Public Policy, Engaged Scholar

Optionless: An Exploration of Responses to Gender Based Violence at Brown

Advisor: Prof. Alan Harlam, Public Policy

This paper evaluates Brown University’s resources and policies surrounding gender-based violence, in regards to how the institution serves survivors’ needs. I first conduct a policy analysis of Brown’s Title IX office, specifically focusing on four key policy areas: Timelines, Evidence Collection & Communication, Witness Protection, and Accommodations for Survivors. I then discuss the potential for Transformative Justice processes to be used as an equally valid and effective response to gender-based violence at Brown. I conclude that while the Title IX office is doing its best to accommodate survivors’ needs, there are infinite conceptions of what justice and healing look like, and the Title IX process is only one conception, primarily suited for individuals seeking punitive measures and who are able to relive their trauma in hopes of

achieving justice. I argue that what we need is not reform, but rather, the creation and dissemination of options for survivors.

Sarah Shapiro, Public Policy, Engaged Scholar
Implementing “Revenge Porn” Legislation in New York

Advisor: Prof. Susan Moffitt, Political Science

“Revenge porn,” also known as nonconsensual pornography, is the act of sharing or publishing intimate images of someone without his or her consent. Revenge porn often results in significant emotional distress, impairment in social and occupational functioning, and increased stalking and harassment. This brief evaluates the implementation of recently passed New York legislation criminalizing “revenge porn” and creating a civil right of action. Numerous public and private entities will likely be involved in the process, and New York should anticipate several implementation challenges, including limited data, difficulty designing and delivering training, reluctance of law enforcement to participate, and limited resources and technological expertise for law enforcement to investigate cybercrimes. This brief finds that the state should invest in technological tools to support law enforcement and recommends that New York create an implementation taskforce, develop evidence-based training for relevant personnel, collect additional data and conduct frequent evaluations to ensure successful implementation.

Radhika Rangarajan, Public Policy & Applied Math and Economics
Fostering Diversity on Venture Capital Investment Teams

Advisor: Prof. William Allen, Public Policy

Venture capital funding is a strong indicator of future business success. Almost half of all businesses are female-owned, yet all-male companies received 82% of VC dollars in 2019. This bias extends into venture capital investing teams, 80% of which have never employed a woman. When women break into the venture capital industry, they tend to fund more female entrepreneurs, and their teams generate greater returns. Women are well-represented in other elite and highly-educated fields, but due to hesitancy to enter an inhospitable environment and social bias against women investors, qualified female candidates rarely enter the industry. This paper uncovers the barriers female VC investors face and proposes firm-wide, industry-wide, and state-wide policy to support diversity in venture capital investment positions.

1:35 -1:50 Discussion

1:50 - 2:20 A (Publishable) Medical Interlude

Emily Rehmet, Public Policy & Cognitive Neuroscience
Did Patent Expirations for Generic Antipsychotics Lower Medicaid Expenditures?

Advisor: Prof. Theresa Shireman, School of Public Health

In the last decade, nine atypical antipsychotic patents have expired, paving the way for lower-cost generic antipsychotic drugs. Projections from a study based on 2011 data forecasted that

market entry of generic antipsychotics would reduce Medicaid expenditures to \$1,882 million by 2016, a reduction of 48.8% in expected costs. We analyzed publicly reported Medicaid prescription expenditures and found that antipsychotic expenditures actually increased 41% (\$1,525 million) to \$5,201 million resulting in expenditures 167.1% higher than projected. Across four years, this difference amounted to an additional \$11.7 billion spending. There are several possible explanations for the vast difference between projected and actual expenditures, including newly approved brand antipsychotics and pharmaceutical manufacturers' evergreening practices through patent protection litigation and reformulation of brand products. These practices have substantial implications for continued public expenditures for antipsychotics and other medication classes.

Discussant: Prof. Robert Hackey, Public Policy

2:20 – 3:15 Panel Four: Education and Prison Reform

Moderator: Prof. Tony Levitas, Public Policy

Patience Adegboyega, Public Policy & Africana Studies

Decolonizing Education Through Teacher Training

Advisor: Prof. Allen Harlam, Public Policy

Education occupies great space in the minds and discussions of United States leaders, as many of them recognize it as one of the pillars of society. In the instances that reforms to the education system have been pursued, they have not been effective in addressing educational disparities and closing the achievement gap between minority and majority students. Decolonization is a movement that is gaining traction in both academic and activist spaces. As the world grapples with the effects of the global pandemic COVID-19, it is clear that things will never be the same. It is increasingly clear that a conversation around goals and values of different institutions is necessary. For that reason, this capstone is engaging in a current and pertinent discussion. The main question I am asking is how can United States state governments initiate the decolonization of education in a way that fulfills the intended purposes of education?

Alexandra Steinberg, Public Policy

Community Organizing for Reform in the Rhode Island High Security Center, Before and During the Covid-19 Outbreak

Advisor: Prof. Alan Harlam

Stemming from my work with a local law center, I helped organize a community coalition focused on reforming the Rhode Island (R.I.) Department of Corrections' Adult Correctional Institute High Security Center. This facility is R.I.'s supermaximum prison, where most prisoners are held in long-term restrictive housing or solitary confinement. In this paper, I provide an overview of solitary confinement and supermaximum prisons in the United States and in R.I. and summarize my work with the coalition. I then examine several conversations that demonstrate the role of inclusivity, identities, and affiliations in our work. The outbreak of COVID-19, and the response to it, affected our organizing. I discuss how we shifted our approach to reacting to correctional responses to

COVID-19 by writing letters and supporting other local prison reform efforts. Rhetoric around how to handle carceral facilities during the pandemic illustrates currently dominant narratives around those incarcerated in High Security.

Jourdan Smithwick, Public Policy, Engaged Scholar

Successful Post-Incarceration Educational Transitions and College Degree Completion in Rhode Island

Advisor: Prof. Ross Cheit, Political Science & Public Policy

In 2008, only about 4% of formerly-incarcerated Americans held a college degree – as compared to 29% of the general public. However, data like this doesn't indicate whether students attended college before, during, or after incarceration. It also doesn't indicate how many students complete "some college" without attaining the economic signaling value of a degree. This leaves them at risk for employment discrimination based on past convictions, which leads to economic instability, and often recidivism. Why might some students who take college courses while in prison not finish a degree-granting program upon their release? And how can existing adult education providers in Rhode Island, like College Unbound, best support the post-incarceration educational transitions of these individuals? With this in mind, the present research seeks to identify the perceived and actual barriers to completing a college degree that students begin while incarcerated in Rhode Island. It builds on the theoretical concept of a "prison-to-school pipeline," which promotes *access*, and explores a framework for college *completion*. Here, I outline a proposal for qualitative research based on my work as a teaching assistant with College Unbound at the Rhode Island Adult Correctional Institute through the Petey Greene Program. This research was unfortunately interrupted when the COVID-19 pandemic restricted access to site-based interviews at the prison. However, other interviews and engagement with relevant literature suggest preliminary barriers and recommendations.

3:00 – 3:20 Discussion

3:20 – 3:30 Closing Remarks, Prof. Tony Levitas, Public Policy