

# INTERRUPTED SILENCE

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Actively Engaged Intellectuals ~ Intellectually Engaged Activists

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## FROM YOUR EDITORS

Letter from your editors,

Is it just us, or does the Winter Quarter always seem to drag on forever? Maybe it's the blizzards, or the sub-zero temperatures, or perhaps it's just the grueling repetition of gray day after gray day that makes it so hard to get out of bed in the morning. Regardless, one thing that Winter Quarter can teach us is the value of perseverance. If you can survive a Chicago winter while also being an INT student, what can't you do?

As we look forward to spring's arrival, we at INTerrupted Silence want to remind you that the struggle is mutual, and you don't have to go through the daily grind alone. Look for support from your colleagues and classmates, form a study group, reach out to an older student for guidance. We talk a lot about communities in INT, and we want to do our part in making the INT community strong, supportive, and inclusive, and we hope that the content within this newsletter reflects that.

Sincerely,

The INT Newsletter Committee



# REVIEW OF THE PANEL ON CUBA/US RELATIONS (2/11/15)

By Connor Kreger

On Wednesday Feb. 11 the INT department hosted a panel on US-Cuba relations. The discussion was led by INT professor and economist Dr. Antonio Morales-Pita and History professor Felix Masud-Piloto, with Dr. Rose Spalding from the Political Science Department moderating. The panel was largely a response to the announcements of Dec. 17, 2014 that the US and Cuba are restoring diplomatic relations after more than 50 years of distrust and hostility.

Professor Masud-Piloto began the talk by tracing the historical trajectory of US-Cuba relations back to Cuba's war for independence from Spain, at the end of which Cuba found itself being encroached upon by US neo-imperialism. While Cuba enjoyed some economic benefits while under the sway of the US (they were the largest exporter of sugar to the American market), this was at the expense of Cuba's autonomy, and most of the profits fell into the pockets of US firms and a select group of privileged Cuban elites. Naturally, many Cubans came to resent both the US and the corrupt Cuban government that protected the interests of foreign investors over those of Cubans; Fidel Castro and his band of revolutionaries fell into this camp. As we all know, US-Cuba relations have all but disintegrated since the Castro regime took control in 1959, and from the botched Bay of Pigs to the 500+ failed attempts on Castro's life, the US has forgone diplomacy and sought to remove Castro from power by force.

Professor Morales-Pita talked about recent developments in the Cuban political landscape, describing a shift in which the Cuban state seems to be slowly moving away from authoritarianism and towards tolerance of opposition voices. This point is of particular importance to Morales-Pita, who has experienced firsthand the oppression of the Castro regime and was forced to flee his country as a result of it. As an economist, he expressed his hope that Cuba will finally begin to integrate economic policies reflecting liberal interventionist ideology rather than strict socialist practices, which continue to damage the Cuban economy's potential for growth and full employment. At the end of his presentation Dr. Morales-Pita posed an unanswered question to the audience: Who will be more affected (economically, politically and socially) if this agreement doesn't pan out, Cuba or the US?

Both speakers indicated that, while there is certainly reason to be hopeful about future of Cuba-US relations, the current situation is still less than ideal. Masud-Piloto pointed out that the US embargo on Cuba is still in effect, there continues to be disagreement over the US's control of Guantanamo Bay, and Cuba is still on the US-curated list of countries that have sponsored terrorism (although there is no evidence to suggest they have). Morales-Pita predicted that the thaw in relations would lead to some mild political change (albeit cosmetic) in Cuba and a slightly improved economic situation. Both speakers agreed that there is much more work to be done, but that's not to say that there's nothing to celebrate, because the events of Dec. 14 will surely go down as a milestone in the troubled history of US-Cuba relations.



# APPLE ADVERTISEMENT EMPIRE

By: Michelle Escobar

Apple Inc. is a leading company in technology and many of their products can be found in a plethora of homes and businesses. Apple started with computers, but has branched into a variety of different products, one of its most popular being the iPad and improved iPad Air. Even though the company has become a worldwide sensation, it has controversies that should have hindered its climb to popularity; however, it has gained more attention and was able to market itself more profitably. The company's advertisement has been able to build Apple in a high-class persona. Because of this, consumers have raised the standard in which Apple Inc. is held to and identify it with luxury goods. The brand has integrated itself into people lives' and has had a profound affect on culture, technology, music, politics, and much more because of advertisement.

Apple has been associated with major human rights violations due to their outsourcing of production to the company Foxconn. Foxconn is a large corporation that deals with the production of many different devices, including the iPad Air. The Apple brand has been defined as one of the least environmental friendly technology company by Greenpeace. Apple has been cleaning up their image and uniting with Foxconn in order to improve worker's rights. The company has also launched their own Green Movement in response to Greenpeace's statement. Even still, Apple's iPad Air has been breaking sales records and earning Apple millions in revenue. Advertisement is a major contribution to distracting consumers from Apple's bad press and into the idea that Apple is a sleek and futuristic brand that anyone can trust and utilize. Through advertisement, Apple has not only created a higher demand for the iPad Air, but also influenced how people interact with technology.

When Apple was associated with worker rights violations, they immediately took action in trying to mitigate the situation; however, it was not in time to stop a string of worker suicide in Foxconn factories. Longhua is home to one of Foxconn's largest electronics factory with at least 400,000 employees (Chakraorty, 2013). This factory produces thousands of electronic devices from a plethora of top selling brands – Samsung, Sony, Dell, and Apple – that eventually are found in prominent western states. Longhua can make up to 180,000 Apple products a day, but an employee works must work more than 12 hours a day, 6 days a week in order to keep up with the quota. Due to the extraneous working conditions, in the year 2013, 18

Foxconn employees attempted to commit suicide by jumping off the building, 14 died (Chakraorty, 2013). These workers were not older than 25 and were tasked with the role as caregiver for their family. After the incident, the FLA conducted an extensive inspection of Foxconn factories that produce iPad Airs and found excessive overtime and problems with overtime compensation; several health and safety risks; and crucial communication gaps that have led to a widespread sense of unsafe working conditions among workers.

Advertisements can greatly effect whether a company will obtain a new customer or not. Through advertisements, brand loyalty is created, which is essential in securing customers. Through Apple's advertisement, people are given a story of how the iPad Air fits into the lives of anyone. There have been two major advertisements that show the uniqueness of the iPad Air. One is centered on how the iPad Air is sleek and thin, something that can be used anywhere and has been used everywhere, even in space.

Apple creates an interactive environment in which they encourage for their customers to share their stories on how they interact with the iPad Air. Not only getting the customers more involved, but those of famous actors, athletes, etc. and how they have utilized the iPad Air in order to make their lives easier. Apple has also commodified the world at the touch of a button with the new apps people are able to utilize in a plethora of countries.

Because of an extensive commodity chain like the iPad Air's, there has been a disconnect between the consumers and production. Production taking place thousands of miles away helps Apple to create any persona they wish; thusly, Apple spent a billion dollars on advertisement to create a high-end brand that is invested in the future and making the lives of people easier.

The iPad has a polymorphous perversity to it, in which it incites desires across various surface, portals, avenues for making and marketing fun. These characteristics clearly define as to why the iPad has been a worldwide sensation.

People are excited by the multiplicity of an iPad and after they finally have enough money to buy an iPad, they wonder how they could have lived without one. "Flexibility and portability" are two aspects that the new age of technology has come to emphasize and in the end, covet. (cont. on page 4)



Because there are so many products in the market, Apple products have had to stand out. In the end, Apple has created fetishes on not only upgrades, but also fetishism of commodifying that of slim and thin qualities. Aesthetic beauty always has and always will be a deal breaker when it comes to products due to its deep history in society. It has been well documented that the more pleasing a product looks to the eye, the easier it will be to sell.

Through the power of advertisement, Apple Inc. has been able to gain global recognition even through controversies

surrounding the product.

Advertisement can be a tricky business and Apple has spent upmost to \$1 billion in order to get more customers. Advertisements have been able to create a smoke screen as well for the controversies surrounding human rights violation as well as environmental problems. Apple has been focusing on righting these problems, however, it will be a long arduous tasks due to the deep history behind these problems.

## Check Out and Apply to be a part of Sigma Iota Rho!

Happy (almost) Spring! For those of you who don't know, Sigma Iota Rho is DePaul's international studies honor society. It is a great way to get involved in the department, meet fellow students, and network! SIR is working on putting together a couple more events during the spring quarter to provide information on future careers for INT students. These events are not only informative as for planning for the future but also for talking with your peers about what they are doing with their major. **Our application cycle for the spring has been extended and applications are due to the INT office by Monday, April 6th.** If you would like to get involved, have ideas for future programs or would like more information send us an email at [Int.sir.depaul@gmail.com](mailto:Int.sir.depaul@gmail.com). In addition like our page on Facebook and keep a look out for emails from us!



## Spring Quarter Electives

### INT 365/ Thucydides and International

**Relations** | Michael McIntyre | TuTh  
11:20-12:50pm

### INT 366/ International Law | Gill Gott |

Tu 6:00-9:15pm

### INT 368 Culture and Inequality | Shiera

Malik | We 6:00-9:15pm

### INT 388/Gender & International

**Studies** | Shiera Malik | MoWe  
2:40-4:10pm

### INT 388/ Race, Sex and Difference |

Brendan McQuade | Th 6:00-9:15pm

## Dissecting the Discrepancies and Addressing the Deficit: Cesarean Rates in Nigeria

By Debra Eluobaju

It is commonly understood that numbers tell stories, but the notation of the untold stories that numbers tell are far less explored. Numbers can be deceptive, specifically rates. Rates serve three functional roles, they are informative, insinuating, and lastly they are camouflaging in nature. When analyzing the rates of caesarean sections in Nigeria it is easy to be blinded by the hegemonic preconceived notations of poverty, and primitivism. Like majority of Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria has a c-section rate well below the World Health Organization recommendation of between 5-15%<sup>1</sup>. Nigeria's rate of 1.8% is staggering low in comparison to the recommended 15.5%<sup>2,3</sup>. A low rate is detrimental, illuminating the limitations of the obstetric care to women; women in imperative need of life saving cesareans are not receiving them. The rate of 1.8% also coincides with the high maternal and infant mortality rate of 545/10000, and one in six children under five, respectively<sup>4</sup>. Looking at the raw data, two things become apparent, Nigeria is in need of intervention to save the lives of mothers and their children, and also that there must be other factors contributing to the low rate besides simply lack of access. Also, since maternal mortality is indicative of the health of the population, the rate insinuates major flaws within the Nigerian health care system<sup>5</sup>. The initial shock that this rate induces is where majority of us stop looking, rather than further investigating what else the rate alludes to regarding the culture, and health care system in Nigeria.

The problem with national c-section rates, notably in countries that have large discrepancies between those who do, and not do not have access is that, it conceals women who are receiving elected unnecessary cesareans, while not fully exposing the paucity that some women live with. The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is very populous and economically prosperous, due to oil trading. As all developing countries strive for neoliberal modernity, there is a trend towards the acclimatization to western medicine. With this orientation towards western medicine, it is expected that countries like Nigeria would have an increase rate of cesareans. The increase in wealth appears to be in congruence with a raise in cesarean sections rate well above the amount recommended by the World Health Organization, competing even with the countries of the Global north such as the

United States and the UK. The Niger Delta has a rate of 34.5, about twice the recommend<sup>6</sup>.

The high rate of cesareans in specific regions of Nigeria are not only detrimental because of the physical repercussions of serious and unnecessary abdominal surgery. But also, the procedure is expensive and funds are being wasted on the vanities of elected c-sections, rather than being allocated towards women who require them. The global cost of excessive and unnecessary cesareans is about 2.32 billion dollars, whereas as the cost of the global needed is only about 432 millions dollars<sup>3</sup>. Specifically in Nigeria 68,411,688 dollars would be needed to combat the deficit of c-sections<sup>3</sup>. Due to the fact that most of the world struggles with cesareans in excess, emphasis has been placed on examining the financial strain of c-sections on health care systems. Health policy appears to be far less interested in assessing the morality cost of cesareans in deficit.

Some regions of Nigeria, predominately the rural northeast report cesarean a rate close to 0%. But due to the skewing of the national c-section rate, caused by regions such as the Niger Delta receiving c-sections in excess, regions experiencing massive deficits do not receive adequate attention. But, it must be noted that this low rate is not solely due to lack of access, cultural non acceptance plays a definite role. On average northern Nigerian women have eight children, for a variety of reasons, from a strongly agricultural based economy, to a cultural norms. Since c-sections significantly decrease the amount of children a woman can have, women are reluctant to undergo this procedure especially for their first child. Vaginal births after cesareans are not very commonly practiced globally, and women tend to accept the notation that "once a cesarean, always a cesarean"<sup>4</sup>. Also, in parts of Nigeria women are seen as weak, unfaithful to their husband, or even as witches if they require interventions during labor. Some women even reported not being well accepted at home after undergoing a necessary cesarean<sup>7</sup>. Cultural factors in congruence with the lack of access to hospitals in rural areas of Nigeria contribute to the low c-section rate.

Despite discrepancies in the rate, maternal death, and lack of infrastructure are still major issues in the arena of obstetric care in Nigeria. (cont. on page 6)

These problems are further amplified during periods of crisis and civil unrest. Nigeria over the past year has been experiencing heightened levels of conflict ranging from the Ebola outbreak, and currently, the terror of Boko Haram. In times of crisis such as these, women, especially those with child tend to experience the full wrath of the circumstance. Therefore improving the infrastructure of Nigeria is necessary for the promotion of the well being of expecting, and new mothers. Nigeria has proven that she has not only the capital, but also a labor force very capable of building efficient, and sustainable infrastructure. This was seen most vividly in Nigeria's ability to

mobilize and contain the Ebola outbreak at a level of efficiency the rivaled and arguably surpassed the Global North. The magnitude of problems such as Ebola, and Boko Haram tend to draw the attention of people, when the fact of the matter is that despite the current state of Nigeria, women are still giving birth. Seeing that women bear the brunt of both disease, and civil unrest, it is no time to experience a deficit in either obstetric care or infrastructure.

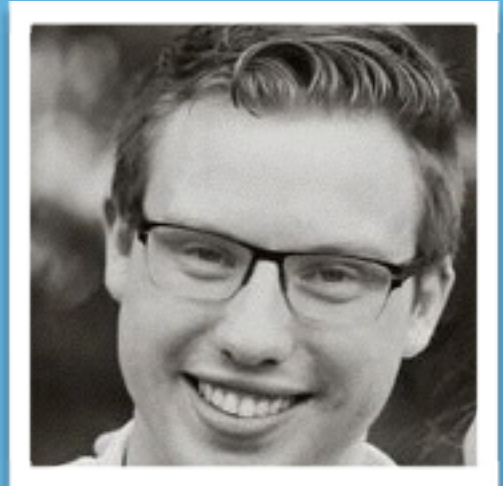
## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Alex Johnson

The academic background I built in the International Studies program at DePaul has laid the foundations for my master's in International Relations at the London School of Economics. INT pushed me to think critically about international politics and to challenge myself intellectually. I can remember the impossible amounts of readings that were required as well as the countless hours I spent with my cohorts on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the library. But the challenges presented by the INT program also fostered a sense of community within the student body. This is part of the reason why a couple of us got together and started the INT newsletter and became more involved on campus. I have carried many of these experiences from INT onto my studies in London.

One of the biggest challenges in studying at the LSE is the workload that is expected by the professors. I've also found that there is a lot less classroom time, as the study style also tends to be more independent. I knew that it was going to be difficult to get through all of the work alone and I quickly got together with a group of students in my class to form a study group. It was that same sense of community and peer support that developed out of the experiences of 201. I have also been building off of a lot of the coursework I started at DePaul, specifically my concentration in Religion and Political Conflict as well as a class I took with professor Malik on Postcolonial Theory. As part of my master's, I'm completing coursework in the International Politics of Culture and Religion, Empire and Conflict, and International Law. I hope to combine themes from these classes into a dissertation on 'secular imperialism'.

The LSE has also provided me an international environment and a wealth of opportunities. The school is known for its public lectures where academics like Judith Butler and Immanuel Wallerstein have come to talk about their work. I also joined the student society that is associated with the IR department at the school. The society hosts study trips to various places around the world where students can explore their academic interests with professionals in the field. I am leading a trip to Geneva, Switzerland at the end of March and have been working on setting up meetings with various IOs, Think Tanks, and Embassies.

As an INT graduate, the biggest piece of advice I can offer you is to become more involved, build a community with your peers, and be confident in the education you are receiving. But don't just listen to me, go out there and see how it works in practice. University is a test run for the real world in more ways than one, so give it a go!



# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Dr. Kaveh Ehsani

By Elena Beceril



*Dr. Kaveh Ehsani is an International studies assistant professor who received his bachelors and masters at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Dr. Ehsani has additionally finished his PHD at Leiden University. Some of Dr. Ehsani's teaching interests include Middle East Society and Politics; Political Economy; Development Studies and Environmental Studies. He has had a variety of publications throughout his career and is currently publishing a Book titled Oil and Society in Iran; Abadan and Urban Modernity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to his impressively extensive list of publications, he has an exceptional record of experience working on international regional development projects. Dr. Ehsani is a contributing editor of Middle East Reports in Washington DC and a member of the editorial board of the Goftogu Quarterly in Iran. In addition, Dr. Ehsani was a consultant and adviser to the first elected City Council of Tebran.*

**Q: I heard you're currently completing a book titled Oil and Society in Iran; Abardan and Urban Modernity. What's the book specifically about and what influenced you to write a book on oil and society in Iran.**

It's a social history of oil that investigates the discovery of oil in the Middle East in the beginning of the 20th century and how that has shaped politics and social relationships in Iran and in the rest of the World. I was doing field work in the region of Iran where oil is produced, on the border of Iran and Iraq. Which is also where the Iraq war was fought, I went there right after the war had ended and I did two years of field work. I was working with peasants in rural areas originally, but then I became interested in these "Oil Cities" that were destroyed in the war. I started writing an urban analysis of these oil company towns, which were unique, large and very fascinating. Not just the cities themselves, but the individuals who were shaped by the form of the cities, the urban design, the role the cities had played in history, how the space of the city had shaped their political agency and their political action. I became interested in that and then I continued my work looking at the complicated ways that oil has been shaped historically.

**Q: I also briefly read that you were a consultant and adviser to the first elected city council of Tehran. What were some of the difficulties in advising a city council?**

The challenges were many, Iran is the Islamic Republic of Iran, and I am a secular intellectual of the left, so there's a kind of ideological animosity between the Regime and those like me. And so I was in Iran and this was a period of opening up in Iran and one of the major steps; by people who were part of the regime, but critical of it, was to attempt to decentralize power. If you have a very powerful state, what are ways of creating authentic spaces of resistance to it and democratizing politics. One of the solutions was to transition to local, independently elected representation. Which hadn't existed before, cities were governed by municipalities and the Ministry of Interior. Suddenly you have a couple hundred thousand individuals in the Country that were elected directly to represent localities. So the challenges in Tehran, which is a huge city with a population of like 8 million, the big challenge was that the 15 people who were elected to the City Council, were not people who were involved with urban politics. They were politicians who because this position had become open, they wanted to represent the city since they couldn't be elected to parliament. Since this is a huge city, with enormous problems and challenges, the urban residents were really vested in this plan of direct representation, thinking that 'we don't care about national politics, we care about our local matters, so lets elect these people', but these individuals didn't know about local politics or urban government. (cont. page 8)



**Q: Have your fields of interest such as Middle Eastern Society and Politics; Political Economy; Social Theory and Urban Studies changed since your time as an undergraduate and graduate student? For INT students hesitant or unsure of which concentration to select, what are some tips or words of advice you can offer to them about picking certain fields of interests.**

The strength of a department like INT is that you do not think that learning critical knowledge is limited by disciplinary barriers. There are great strengths for disciplines that specialize in their field, for example anthropologists study culture, and the method that they use is field work, where you spend time in the local setting, you try to blend in, learn the language, listen and analyze and then present an ethnography. Sociologists examine how institutions interact and they try to quantify that, and to understand the dynamics of institutions. So each discipline has its own strengths and also limitations because you only examine through your own method. The great strength of International Studies is that it hasn't acknowledged these disciplinary boundaries. So you can use any method of study, and also combine them. A criticism is that this approach may be shallow, but I don't think that's the case because it's not as if you do ten things at the same time. On the other hand, this is not how the world works, the world is not divided by these disciplinary boundaries so understanding it cannot be divided by these disciplinary boundaries. That's what has attracted me to INT, in my own education that's what I have done, my undergraduate degree is in philosophy and economics, my graduate degrees were in regional planning and French literature, geography and social history. I've done a lot of different things because those interested me.

**Q: When is *Oil and Society in Iran* going to be published? Do you have any other books you're working on? If not are you planning on writing others in the future?**

Im working on editing a book this year, which is a comparative study of oil workers; a study of labor in the oil industry. It's not about Iran; it's looking at the role of labor in oil, historically and geographically. So a lot concerning Latin America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the U.S. I am working on publishing my thesis as a book, hopefully that will be completed next year and I am working on two other book projects, which will have to wait, but they are in the pipeline.

## EDITOR'S NETFLIX PICKS FOR BREAK

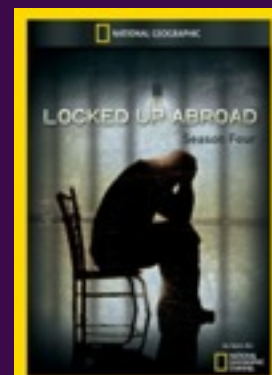
### 1. Peaky Blinders



### 2. Paris is Burning



### 3. Locked Up Abroad





# Thabita Haruna's Life Matters

By Kathleen "Kat" Anaza

Last weekend a young woman named Thabita Haruna lost her life. Until yesterday, her name evaded me in all the news reports available. What the media had informed me of were the alleged events that led to her murder. After refusing to the search and frisking of her body at an entrance to the Muda Lawal Market in Bauchi, Nigeria; she arose suspicion from her fellow market-goers. Her refusal, incited the forcible removal of her hijab from her body; allegedly revealing two plastic bottles attached to her waist. This revelation was all the catalyst the crowd needed to bludgeon her to death, place a tire drenched in gasoline over her body and light her ablaze.



(picture courtesy of the New York Post)

This story leaves me distraught. For nearly a week, her name was unavailable for those who wanted to pray on her behalf or the behalf of her family. In my head I named her Nneka Doe, (Nneka is a common Nigerian girl name). I could learn nothing about her life, except its heinous end. All reports indicated that it was unlikely that Thabita had any involvement in a 'terror' plot. It is possible she was nervous and uncomfortable with idea of subjecting her body to the violation and humiliation of a search. I think about all the feelings present in the marketplace. I think about the fear she must have experienced when she realized this crowd had turned their anger, fear and helplessness onto her body. I think of the fear her shopping companion experienced as they watched their friend's gruesome murder. Now with the confirmation of her name, I only have a little more insight into Thabita's life. Her sister is presently

extremely pained by her death and in mourning. Thabita previously worked in the market until 2007 when she began experiencing mental illness. I can learn little more about Thabita, but the press wants me to know who and what Boko Haram is, also they want me to know that Boko Haram's action could hinder the upcoming Nigerian Presidential election.

In spite of the media, what I can't stop thinking is the crowd. Thabita and her fellow market-goers are living in a climate where the kidnapping of hundreds of their daughters during their final examinations occurs, and nearly a year later no one has conclusively answered how many girls are even missing. They live in a world so numb to their suffering that a weekend slaughter of over two thousand community members in Baga, Nigeria barely elicits a hashtag. They live a world where #Pray4Nigeria or #BringBackOurGirls are requests they know will remain unanswered.

The market-goers of Bauchi are not unique or irrational in their fears. In the last year alone 28 women have been involved in suicide attacks in Nigeria alone. When these reports cite women as the attackers, it could likely be that the attackers are young girls, girls the same age as the missing Chibok girls. The media does not differentiate between children, adolescents and adults in their reporting of Nigeria; not in same ways that they would report if 'Nneka Doe' was a 'Jane Doe' of the US. The media does not ask if the young female attackers are the same young females, kidnapped nearly a year ago from their school in Chibok, Nigeria; the girls who still are not back! They do not ask what support someone experiencing these traumas requires before condemning and attacking a possible 'terrorist'. No one asks because their still posting aimless hashtags, hoping someone, somewhere cares more than them. The market-goers of Bauchi can feel this irreverence, their feelings are similar to any community battling insurgency. Communities in Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mali, Kurdistan and numerous other regions conduct their daily social interactions in political climates like those of Bauchi.

(cont. on page 10)

With political climates like these, I can only imagine how many other women like Thabita will have their bodies used as a space for cathartic release. How many, will bear the brunt of brutalization while their communities negotiate fear, despair and hopelessness? Their bodies have become the space where communities release feelings of fear, affirm their cultural beliefs and resist conditions imposed on them. Their bodies become a crucial space for debates like: female circumcision, veiling practices and child marriage; but the voices and stories attached to these bodies remain silenced and ignored.

Hearing the name 'Boko Haram' on the global media was the first time I had heard the Hausa language outside of my community, nonetheless on international

media. Today we recognize the names of 'Boko Haram' and its leaders like Abubakar Shekau. We acknowledge those people; but I still cannot learn about Thabita. We know ISIS or ISIL and Al-Shabab; but do we know its victims? Do we think about what the 'notions of terror' and 'insurgency' are doing to communities, families and especially the bodies of women? Moreover, do our thoughts extend beyond the time needed to create as hashtag and share it on social media? I have consumed countless expert analysts and politicians' opinions about the political climate in Nigeria. I do not want to hear any more from them, until I get to hear what the daughters of Nigeria: the Thabitas, Nnekas, Halimas, Abiolas and Chimamandas have to say. Until I hear from the daughters of Afghanistan, Mali, Syria and Pakistan this story will not be whole.

## Anonymous Drones (Prologue)

By Lukas Shadair



I don't even know how it happened. I don't think anyone does. It was considerably quicker than you would expect. Of course, it was a possibility but no one thought it would actually transpire. Our security was, and had been for quite a while, top-notch. Our intelligence systems were supposedly impregnable. Our citizens valued democracy far too much to endanger our political system. At some point, though, all good things must come to an end. In the past, our media had always been quick to criticize the reigning government administration. The media threw stones at democrats, at republicans, at independents, at rich people, at poor people. Despite the inequalities and defects of our country, the media and the majority of the population were free to say and do whatever they wished for the most part. This is not true anymore.

We, as inactive citizens and ignorant consumers, took our freedom and prosperity for granted and it made us lazy, untrained, and unprepared. We were certainly not ready for what was to come. It was an event that shook the foundations of history. It made us doubt the possibility of humanity steering towards a more positive and enlightened trajectory. Now we must unify to take back what is ours. What has happened to our beautiful country is hard to believe but it came to pass and there is nothing we can do to change that. On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2035, there was a coup in the United States of America.

The leader of the coup goes by the alias Emperor Kahn, a technological genius with a quick wit and a political savvy that is unparalleled. His real name is Anthony Jarvis but no one calls him this anymore, as calling Kahn by his true name is punishable by death. He took over America from overseas...from Rome, Italy to be exact. Aside from English, he is known to be fluent in Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, French, Arabic, Mandarin, and Japanese.

Anthony Jarvis' company, 1Rex, gained almost immediate fortune and success, making him a billionaire in his 20s. Jarvis flew around the world on private jets, he dated beautiful and shallow women, he created countless inventions that were ahead of their time, and he reenergized the American economy. Everyone carries a phone like an ID these days and it was not a difficult task for Kahn to improve upon the design. Kahn's devices were irresistible to the public. I hesitate to even call them cell phones. (cont. on page 11)

He dropped out of high school in order to join a special task force of UAV construction agents in the C.I.A.—in case you were unaware, a UAV is an unmanned aerial vehicle which is also commonly called a drone by the general public. UAVs, especially in this day and age, are used extensively for military and surveillance purposes. Despite the job's guaranteed high salary and many perks, Kahn ended up quitting in his early twenties to become an inventor and entrepreneur. Emperor Kahn made millions developing new types of cellular devices that drove Apple out of business. He was a legendary figure.

Anthony Jarvis' company, 1Rex, gained almost immediate fortune and success, making him a billionaire in his 20s. Jarvis flew around the world on private jets, he dated beautiful and shallow women, he created countless inventions that were ahead of their time, and he reenergized the American economy. Everyone carries a phone like an ID these days and it was not a difficult task for Kahn to improve upon the design. Kahn's devices were irresistible to the public. I hesitate to even call them cell phones. At least, not the same phones as we used to have in the past, the phones I remember as a child. These new devices functioned mainly with hologram technology. They were worn like headsets and operated solely on voice commands. When calling someone, a 3D holographic image of the person's face would appear in front of you. You can watch videos that appear in midair, you can be fully present for conferences on the other side of the world, and there are countless options for social media and gaming experiences. These devices were the future of communication technology. Little did we know, Kahn had been using 1Rex in order to conduct inverse surveillance on the C.I.A. and to compile a database on all of the citizens in the United States of America in order to identify threats and allies as well as plan for a propaganda campaign.

Due to Anthony Jarvis' inventions, the economy soared. Because of his work with the C.I.A. improving UAV technology, the U.S. military regained its diminishing standing in the international scene. Jarvis seemed to be an unexpected blessing to the U.S. and the key to bringing the American Republic back to its former glory. The man had celebrity status, but in the end, no one really knew who Anthony Jarvis was or what his motives were. He seemed to be a diehard patriot. Unfortunately, our perception of this man was completely wrong.

On the morning of July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2035, I was reading *The Independence*. There were several articles mentioning that the U.S. military had been hacked. I had read stories about the U.S. being hacked before and therefore wrote it off as nothing too serious, merely another unimportant event over-exaggerated by the media. However, as I was reading, I found another article in which a journalist stated that several of the C.I.A. intelligence systems had been hacked. As I looked through the paper, this type of news dominated the press. At this point, I was convinced that something sinister had occurred...

While in Rome, Jarvis and a band of treasonous associates and devious close personal friends had hacked into every U.S. security system. It was only possible because Jarvis and many of his associates had been members of the Intelligence Community and had a lot of clout with many corrupt American politicians. After several months of hard work and preparation, Jarvis and his cronies hacked into the U.S. military's computer systems controlling all Reaper 500 UAVs, the most popular combat drones available. They deployed a regiment of armed surveillance UAVs that had been manufactured in secret in order to subdue the public. Almost half of Congress was assassinated with targeted drone strikes. The beheading of the President on the White House steps, which was undertaken by Jarvis himself, was publicly televised. All of the immediate opposition to the new regime was either killed or exiled. The United States had a new leader. He proclaimed himself Emperor Kahn and he was only 34 years old...



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Evan Kirkeeng

*INTerrupted silence was recently notified that Evan Kirkeeng, INT sophomore, was recently accepted to a year-long study abroad program at Sciences Po in France. We decided to catch up with him about his plans for next year and his experience with the INT department.*

## Why did you choose to become an INT major?

I love INT because it's a really new academic discipline. A lot of people sort of marked the beginning of international relations with E.H. Carr, so we're really only talking about 80 years worth of study. With all new disciplines, there's a lot wrong with it-- strange discourses and other inhibiting factors that play into the lack of its "truth-finding" ability. But I think that's really great because, what's the point of playing into a perfect discipline, you know? I think that it's so interesting for me in that there is a real chance for our generation of scholars to really iron out the ability to understand how people interact in the international realm. Other than that, on a thematic level, I've always been interested in other locations and other cultures. You just sort of get a little bit of everything with international studies. You get a little bit of economics, a little bit of cultural studies, a little bit of geography, etc. These are all things that I'm interested in and they're all rolled up into one really esoteric package that I don't really see myself getting bored with anytime soon.

## What languages can you speak?

I fancy myself a pretty decent English speaker. I know my way around the English lexicon to an acceptable degree. I speak French about as well as I speak English, which is cool. That all happened really quick. I've only been studying French for about five years now, but I can talk about anything and it's a really great skill to have. Learning another language really helps your understanding of your own native language. Japanese is the newest edition. I would say that I probably have a twelve year old's proficiency in Japanese—that is to say that if I were to randomly wake up in rural Japan tomorrow, I'd live—but I don't know it nearly as well as the other two. That just means that I have more to learn, you know?

## What are your plans for next year?

I was just very recently, actually last week, accepted to study abroad at Sciences Po, the political science university in France. There are a lot of different campuses each with a different academic focus, but the main campus is in Paris. I'll either be studying there or at the campus in Le Havre. The focus at that campus is Asiatic studies, so that would be an amazing once in a life time opportunity to bridge the gaps that I have linguistically by studying Japanese in a French-language setting. So, that's the plan. I'm going to spend 2015-2016 at this super prestigious university and I would be absolutely lying if I didn't say that I am completely terrified. I feel like it's going to kick the absolute crap out of me but, you know hopefully I learn something in the process!

## Who's your favorite professor in the INT department?

Well, I'd like preface this by saying that that is a totally unfair question. I have only encountered three INT professors during my time in the major. I'm going to take the cop out answer and say that I have the utmost respect for all three and like them all for different reasons. In the fall quarter, I had INT 201 with professor Gott and he might be the most knowledgeable person I have ever met. Aside from being blisteringly knowledgeable, Dr. Gott is also extremely patient and passionate about what he is teaching and that really shows in the classroom. We were working with some really hefty concepts that we had never encountered before and Dr. Gott made them accessible in a way that I don't think that many people can. This quarter I am taking two classes with INT professors. I'm taking a class Dr. Maureen Sioh and besides also being horrendously knowledgeable about basically everything, she has a way of conveying all of these really dense, really esoteric concepts with a sense of genuine candor. (cont on page 13)



She doesn't like to dance around the hairy subjects and the real-life social implications of these phenomena. She's not interested in academic pretense; she's interested in reality. I'm also taking INT 202 with Brendan McQuade this quarter. He has mentioned that he is horrifically well read and I totally agree—you have it, he's read it. I mean, he's an INT guy who can hold his own in a conversation about Queer Theory, so that alone should say something. My favorite thing about Professor McQuade has been his ability to articulate things in the most concise, irreducible way possible. For example, we working through Enloe's "Bananas, Beaches, and Bases" and talking about her theoretical framework. I gave my two cents on it, which is more like eighty cents—because, if you couldn't tell by now, I have a habit for rambling—and within two seconds, he took everything that I said and formed it into a simple, perfectly crafted sentence that summarized everything that I meant to say. It was seriously cool. People say that International Studies is the most difficult undergraduate program at DePaul, and that's probably true—but when the most difficult program comes with the most talented instructors, it's all worth it.

**What specials hobbies do you have?**

I have a couple. I play dodgeball at DePaul and am a part of The DePaul Dodgeball Society. I have had a great time and met some really cool people doing that. Aside from that: as much as I love academic gobbledygook, I have the most hopeless addiction to pop culture. I love music and am a classically trained pianist and cellist. I was a way better musician at ten but, now I like to write pop music. It's kind of a shame, but all's well that ends well, I guess.

**Thanks for your time!**

## The Non-Profit Blues

By Estelle de Vendegies

When given the opportunity to intern with Mujeres Latinas en Acción in the Pilsen neighborhood on the Southside of Chicago, I thought I had found the holy grail of internships. Any other internship or volunteer opportunity I was part of in the past usually entailed office work, and an unending shuffling of paper. It was obvious that my "internship" was a way for me to have something to put on my resume, and for them to have bodies to shred and file documents. When I was introduced to Mujeres' domestic violence (DV) internship, it seemed like an actual investment in my future. In order to be accepted as an intern within the DV program, an initial 42-hour training only offered in Spanish was required. This seemed like not only an amazing opportunity to get a hands on experience, but also a chance to strengthen my Spanish. As time went on, however, I realized that I had gone from shuffling papers, to shuffling women through the system.

Mujeres Latinas en Acción is one of the most established and recognized Latina organizations not only in Chicago, but the United States. The Mujeres' mission states, "Mujeres Latinas en Acción empowers Latinas by providing services that reflect their values and culture and by being an advocate on the issues that make a difference in their lives." Founded in 1973 by three Latina immigrants, Mujeres began as an organization dedicated to helping runaway teens in Chicago. For the first few years, Mujeres was such a small and unstructured organization that it had to hold monthly "rent parties" to raise money for rent. Today Mujeres has developed a variety of services. The organization has expanded to two office locations and now includes programs such as domestic violence counseling, sexual abuse counseling, parent support programs, childcare, and after-school. An outsider may look at Mujeres as a success story; however, my research and time on the inside has led me to believe otherwise. While I believe that many of the men and women who work and volunteer at Mujeres have the right intentions, they are simply feeding into an organization that has become an institution of the state much like those institutions that the three women who founded Mujeres were fighting against.

(cont. on page 14)

One of the striking things that I remember when I first started at Mujeres was seeing a huge framed poster in the waiting room listing the organization's donors. Foundations such as Chase Bank and the Verizon Foundation were just two off of a list that must have contained at least twenty different foundations. Though I did not realize why at the time, this list of donors seemed very much out of place to me. Later on, I was given a tour of the building and soon found out that almost half of the top floor was dedicated to Mujeres' grant writers and the CEO of the company, Maria Socorro Pesquiera (a DePaul and Harvard grad). While these aspects of Mujeres appeared to be somewhat of a complexity and even a contradiction, I thought, "Well, how else are they supposed to do it?" As a young and learning activist, I was introduced to this work with the idea that it could be a career, housed in a non-profit structure and funded by foundations, and that these structures could sustain a movement. Now, through my own experience and research I have found that large-scale funding and non-profit management not only exhausts the movement, but also compromises its radical edge, the sort of rage and fire that I previously associated with it, and has convinced many people and organizations that social movements cannot come without foundations' money and systems.

After spending more and more time within Mujeres, I realized that the organization was run very much like a business and thus exuberated a corporate culture. Domestic violence victims who come to the office are referred to as "clients," and at the end of every consultation the women are given a survey so that they can rate their satisfaction with the services provided. What seemed like an extremely awkward practice was later explained to me as a way to "show" the donors that their money was being put to good use. More than once in our training sessions we were told that we couldn't do something because it was against the "policies" of the donors. All of the "skills" that I had developed during our training course seemed lost to a greater need to sustain the agency that houses the community organizing. It would appear that the management skills required to maintain the operation of non-profit organizations have become more important than the organizing skills needed to develop grassroots leaders, make institutional change, develop methods to raise community consciousness, and build a movement. Much of the time and energy of the employees at Mujeres is spent raising money for employee salaries, sending in reports, and schmoozing with funders; they spend more time on fundraising and administration than they do on organizing and activism. I would not say that the people who work at Mujeres think that they are "selling out," but just by trying to keep funding and pay everyone's salaries they start to unconsciously limit their imagination of what they can accomplish.

While I do not doubt the good will of every individual who works and volunteers at Mujeres Latinas en Acción, I do believe that it has morphed into a static institution very different from its origins. In my opinion it is an organization that has grown too big and lost its fire and passion along the way, falling into the rabbit hole of funding. It is an institution that disseminates the belief that prison, therapists, and medicine can eliminate violence against women. Yet these quick fixes do nothing to help to eradicate the institutions and frameworks that work to promote a racist, sexist, and heteronormative discourse on violence. Once upon a time Mujeres had activists; they now have managers and bureaucrats, receptionists, and clients. Fighting for social change has become a static institution of service deliverables and statistics. As Native American Civil Rights Activist Madonna Thunder Hawk stated, "Activism is tough; it is not for people interested in building a career."



# A Call for Action

By Areej Mahmoud

On Wednesday, March 4, a Jewish feminist scholar Simona Sharoni joined forces with ethnic/race studies professor Rabad Abdulhadi in the finality of a weeklong college campus tour, in which they discussed Palestinian resistance and feminist solidarity, especially during times of war and conflict, and the ways in which silencing the other becomes a discourse of policies on the issue of justice for Palestine.

To begin with, Abdulhadi discussed her being uncomfortable about how the Israeli occupation of Palestine is presented, in which she believes that it should be an issue about being on the same side of justice, not about narratives and two sides. Accordingly, Abdulhadi analyzes an array of attacks that took place against Palestinians in the US and those in the occupied territories, one of which is the analysis of Muhammad AbuKhdeir, a teenager who was forced to consume fuel and then set on fire until he burned to death in the summer of 2014. AbuKhdeir's violent death was a response to the three missing Israeli teenagers who were also murdered, and a ferocious operation in the Gaza Strip would ensue. However, the ways in which these events were presented differed, in that AbuKhdeir was subjected to false allegations of being gay, and that his death was a result of an honor killing, though surveillance video would prove otherwise. The need to plaster the Palestinian as deranged, violent, and propagate an image that Palestinian society is homophobic is a tactic used to undermine the Palestinian's right to exist. Moreover, Abdulhadi brought up the myth that Palestinian men send women to the frontlines to fight and resist their occupiers, which is problematic given that it paints Palestinian women as those who are docile and reinforces the orientalist stereotype that Arab/Muslim/Palestinian men are violent and viscous, rather than the notion that Palestinian women have always resisted their occupier in which they protested the Balfour Declaration.

Abdulhadi has experienced harassment and many forms of verbal attacks due to her being outspoken about the issue of justice in and for Palestine, in which she was charged with anti-Semitism, terrorism, amongst others charges, which would later be dropped and rebuffed. She viewed this as a political campaign to silence her and put an end to collaborating with Palestinian universities, which would thus end the discussion about Palestine in general. Rabad's case is not new, however, as many Palestinian activists have been subjected to intimidation and McCarthyism-like tactics in the past few years, such as the cases for Rasmia Odeh, Steven Salaita, Hatem Abudayyeh, not to mention those who are involved in Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) at DePaul.

Simona Sharoni, who once taught Rachel Corrie, discussed the ways in which media presents the issue of 'two sides.' In her reflection, she recalls in the 1980s during her student years at Haifa University, 90% of students believed that Israelis and Palestinians were fighting on equal plain fields, with Israel as the underdog. When speaking to DePaul students, she asked this question again, with not one student in attendance raising their hand. (Cont. on page 16)

The silencing of the Israeli occupation of Palestine played a pivotal role in Sharoni's life, as she grew up in a settlement in Nazareth. However, because of the Judaized policies of land plans, Sharoni would not know this was confiscated land until 18 years later, when she would come into contact with Palestinians who challenged her perspectives. Her experience as a student at Haifa University exposed her to narratives that were previously not presented to her, and that were in the viewpoint of the oppressed. Later, Sharoni would also recall that many students are taught to not take courses with professors such as she (and Abdulhadi), as a way to silence the discourses that she is attempting to bring into light.

It witnessing genocide against the Palestinian people, Sharoni calls for Jewish feminists to take action against the policies that no longer reflect the Israeli dream of statehood by calling students to learn about the 'other' and to join forces with them, as she asked DePaul students to become involved with SJP chapters. Abdulhadi also calls for more organization and involvement amongst students to take part against action that demoralizes the Palestinian people. In this matter, the two scholars are attempting to interweave different strategies to discuss the issue of justice in and for Palestine, hopefully within our time.

## Faculty Book Recommendations for over Break



[Little Bee](#)

Chris Cleave

Rec. by Dr. Shiera Malik



[The Gold Finch](#)

Donna Tartt

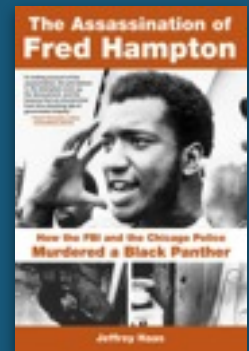
Rec. by Mallory Warner



[Exile & Pride](#)

Eli Clare

Rec. by Susan Dirr



[The Assassination of Fred Hampton](#)

Jeffrey Hays

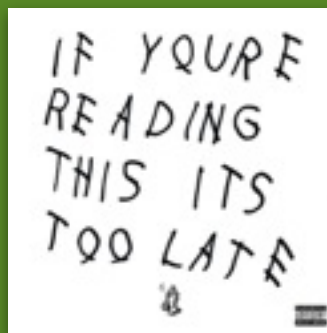
Rec. by Dr. Michael McIntyre

## Editor's Album Picks for over Break



*I Love You, Honeybear*

Father John Misty



*If You're Reading This It's Too Late*

Drake



*Selena*

Selena

## 2015 Penn State Student Paper Competition

Penn State's Supporting Women In Geography (SWIG) calls for submissions to its annual student essay competition. Recognizing the role of gender, class, sexuality and race in the organization of our everyday lives, SWIG aims to promote and empower individuals within geography by offering a supportive network that sponsors opportunities to grow professionally, intellectually, and personally.

This paper competition solicits perspectives on the following question: How do representations of scale or representations at certain scales give voice, or take it away?

Giving voice refers to being heard and seen, a visibility that is closely related to attempts to alleviate underrepresentation. Submissions can include marginalizations arising from gender, race, class, ethnicity, geographical location, non-human, or other identified factors. We encourage authors to interpret scale and giving voice in ways that are meaningful to their experiences.

We welcome contributions from current undergraduate and graduate students, irrespective of academic institution or discipline. Although written essay submissions are limited to 1,000 words, we encourage contributors to express their thoughts using other mediums as well, including, but not limited to, maps, diagrams, photography, poetry, film, drawing, and painting. Every submission, whether textual or visual, should include a 200 word abstract that indicates how the entry addresses the intent of the CFP.

With the author's permission, submissions will be made public for others on Penn State SWIG's website. We envision the public presentation of submissions to provoke discussion and questions in the discipline about what support looks like, and how it may be and could be experienced. Awards will be presented at the 2015 AAG Conference in Chicago, although participation in the conference is not required.

If you are interested in questions of scale, representation, voice and marginalization, consider submitting to the 2015 annual Penn State Student Paper Competition, open to current undergraduate and graduate students. Submissions are due by April 1st online at <http://www.geog.psu.edu/swig-essay-form>.



# ALUMNI IN ACTION: Karen Kilberg

No matter what year you are in INT, the question of “*what will I do when I graduate?*” always seems to be looming in the back of your mind, or at least that was the case for me. I graduated in 2013 and I vividly remember thinking of the endless career and academic paths I could choose with an INT degree. Given the tough job market and lack of significant professional experience, I ended up applying to become a Peace Corps Volunteer - a path perhaps some of you are already considering.

Throughout the INT program, I believed I wanted to somehow get into the field of development work, but many INT courses encouraged me to think critically about the efficacy of development work. I considered my options and I figured I'd apply to the Peace Corps and see what happens. After the 9 month application process, I was accepted and assigned to be a health sector volunteer in Cameroon. I had a week to make my decision to accept or decline the offer.

I won't lie, I hesitated until the last possible moment. I worried about the financial constraints of volunteering for 27 months, about living abroad with the likelihood of not seeing my friends and family for two years, and I was concerned about being a pawn in the great game of US geopolitics - I mean, who wouldn't worry after INT 202?! At the last possible minute, I chose to accept the position. I figured it would be a unique experience to live abroad, learn a new language, get real job experience, and find out if I was really interested in development work.

I'm now 14 months into my 27 months commitment, and I'll be the first to admit that it hasn't been easy. The experience of being a volunteer and being immersed in the local culture is unparalleled, but being a volunteer most definitely makes you aware of the flaws of development work. My experience thus far has been full of challenges: harassment, evacuation from post, and more than my fair share of medical problems, but regardless of all that, the redeeming moments make it worthwhile.

Before I share the challenges and successes of my personal experience, it may be best for me to first explain the structure of a Peace Corps service. The first three months of any given Peace Corps service are spent in Pre-Service Training, where you adapt to the culture, learn the language, and acquire the necessary technical skills with your fellow volunteers. During this time, you are merely a trainee, and it is only after you complete those three months that you are sworn in as an official Peace Corps Volunteer.

After you swear in, you abruptly say goodbye to all your new American friends, who you won't see for at least three months. Then you move to your assigned village, where you either live with another host family, or in the case of Cameroon, you move into your own house. The next several months are spent furnishing your house, bickering with carpenters, stumbling through the language, finding a host organization to work with, and doing Community Needs Assessments. After you have identified the community's needs, you begin to create projects.

I was initially assigned to the village of Lomi, a village with a population of 5,000 located deep within the Congo River Basin of Cameroon's East Region. The natural beauty of my village was stunning - nothing beats the gorgeous vistas and abundant fruit of the rainforest. My village was the most remote Peace Corps post in Cameroon, with the unpaved road between Lomi and the next volunteer's town taking between 5 and 20 hours by car, depending on the season.

Lomi was surrounded by many small Baka 'pygmy' encampments, where the Baka attempt to maintain their traditional lifestyles in spite of the pressures the various mineral extraction business are putting on their environment.

Despite the beauty that surrounded me, it was a depressing village with all the exploitation and extraction. The logging industry creates a large transient population, which encourages prostitution, rape, and thereby, increased HIV infections. When I encouraged the health center to begin testing all patients, we found that the HIV prevalence in Lomi was over an astonishing 70%. I couldn't help but think about all the INT discussions about capitalist cultures and the effects the globalized world economy has in even the most remote corners of the world. Cameroon is wound up in the web of globalization and the effects of American, European, and Chinese consumerism and industrialization are felt here, and felt here hard. (cont. on page 19)



After months of security incidences, stalkers, and finally being punched in the nose by a inebriated passenger in a car, the Peace Corps called me and told me I had 12 hours to pack my belongings and move out of my village. I had made a home in Lomi over 9 months, and in the span of 12 hours, I had to pack my house and say goodbye to my friends and work partners, meanwhile explaining that the beekeeping and soy cultivation project we had spent months working on had to be abandoned.

Lately, countries in which Peace Corps operates in Africa have faced plenty of security challenges. Kenya was forced to close due to coastal insecurity, Burkina-Faso and Lesotho both recently had coups, and Cameroon...well, Cameroon is surrounded nearly entirely by dysfunctional neighbors. In the past year, two regions of Cameroon have been shut down, causing the displacement of over 50 volunteers, and this isn't to mention the personal security incidents, such as mine, which force volunteers to move. Boko Haram threatens our Northwestern border and the Central African Republic threatens the Eastern border. When you sign up for the Peace Corps, you have to be mentally prepared for the unexpected.

After spending 2 months living in a Peace Corps office and transit house in the East regional capital, I finally was relocated to the village of Ngatt in Cameroon's Adamaoua Region. Ngatt is quite the opposite of Lomi. It has a population of 1,000, the majority of the population are Muslim, and everyone is very eager to work and learn. In the one month I have so far spent in Ngatt, I've created a youth sexual health group, a men's group to promote gender equality and equity, I do weekly trainings on various health topics in nearby villages, and I'm in the process of planning a beekeeping training as well as applying for a grant for 1,000 HIV tests, which will be used to test the population and create a support group for people living with HIV/AIDS.

It's hard to sum-up a Peace Corps experience in a mere blurb because every experience is so unique to the person and to the country. The overriding consensus among Peace Corps Volunteers seems to be that while the work we do might not seem the most fulfilling, and in many times may feel like it doesn't make a difference, it's the practical skills we gain and the personal connections we make that make this experience, with all its highs and lows, worth it.

While we hold group meetings and create youth camps and teach some income generating activities, the work we do won't be the solution to the endemic problems, and it mentally helps coming here knowing that. It is the practical knowledge we gain, such as working in multicultural contexts, becoming fluent in two or three languages, dealing with difficult personalities, being adaptable and persevering, that help us grow as human beings. Last but not least, it's the personal connections you make with your landlords, neighbors, work partners, and friends over *chai* and *couscous avec folr* that will be the lasting memories. I believe the Peace Corps, as well as development work in general, has countless flaws, but despite that, this is truly a once in a lifetime cultural immersion experience that results in unparalleled personal and professional growth.

If anyone has questions on the Peace Corps, feel free to email me at [karen.kilberg@gmail.com](mailto:karen.kilberg@gmail.com), or read my blog ([www.saidbyred.com](http://www.saidbyred.com)) for personal anecdotes from my high points and low points.



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Get involved with Interrupted Silence next quarter! Look for an announcement via intstuds in the *Winter*