McNair Scholars Program
DEDICATED TO DIVERSIFYING THE DOCTORATE

Boise State University

McNair Scholars Research Journal

Volume 8 - Spring 2012

Featuring research of Boise State McNair Summer Research Fellows
### Boise State University McNair Scholars Graduate Institutions

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<tr>
<td>Luis Rosado</td>
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<td>University of Massachusetts, Amherst</td>
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MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BOB KUSTRA

It is with real pleasure that I write to introduce this eighth volume of the McNair Scholars Research Journal. The papers contained in this volume represent a remarkable breadth of scholarship that encompasses some of the best of what Boise State University has to offer. The Scholars, their faculty mentors, the staff of the McNair Program, and all of us at Boise State are justifiably proud of this work.

Congratulations to all of the 2012 McNair Scholars for your achievements over the past year. In particular, I want to acknowledge the hard work and accomplishments of the senior Scholars whose research is represented in the papers in this publication. McNair scholars work with faculty mentors who are committed to the rigors of scholarship—a working relationship that both students and faculty describe as unique and beneficial. I also want to recognize and thank all of the faculty mentors who have worked with our McNair Scholars. It is your patience, guidance, and encouragement that facilitates the transformation of these students into scholars.

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program honors the memory and achievement of the late Dr. Ronald E. McNair, a physicist and NASA astronaut. Its goal is to encourage undergraduates from underrepresented backgrounds to emulate the academic and professional accomplishments of Dr. McNair by facilitating their pursuit of doctoral degrees and academic careers in teaching and research. The McNair Scholars Research Journal is evidence that the McNair Program provides a valuable opportunity for these students to explore research on significant issues. Students are also provided access to conferences and graduate schools where they can present their original projects and meet doctoral faculty. This formula has proven very successful for a vast majority of those who have participated in McNair since it began on our campus in 2003.

The research presented here signals the arrival of a new group of rising scholars who will carry their talents, enthusiasm, and hard work ahead into graduate programs here and across the country. I hope that you will continue to aspire, achieve, and pursue your dreams.

Again, congratulations and best wishes,

Sincerely,

Bob Kustra
President
May 2012

We are very pleased to present our eighth issue of the Boise State McNair Scholars Research Journal. The collective excellence of these projects is a testament to the hard work of our Scholars and the tremendous support of faculty mentors who supervised these projects. The McNair Scholars Program at Boise State strives to create meaningful academic experiences that will enable our students to succeed at the next level. The research component of the McNair Program has two specific goals: First, engage students in the research enterprise at the undergraduate level, so they develop the analytical and methodological skills, academic sophistication, and confidence that will make them successful students in graduate school. Second, provide students an opportunity to publish their research, so the scholars gain an early understanding of the critical role that publishing will play in their academic careers. In this respect, the McNair Scholars Research Journal is a key component in the preparation of our scholars for careers in research and teaching.

This year’s graduates, as those of the past, have maintained a high standard for themselves. Their dedicated work has translated to high levels of success for our program which to date has delivered more than 80% of our Scholars to excellent graduate programs. It is fitting that all this effort culminates in deserved recognition of their work through this journal. We are especially proud to see how these students have grown as researchers.

The research articles you hold culminates the Scholars work over the last 20 months and provides extensive proof of the impressive undergraduate research that can be accomplished with collaborative efforts. These Scholars worked many hours in seminars with staff, with faculty mentors and each other in order to do the work necessary to develop meaningful research and to turn graduate school into a reality in their lives.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our faculty mentors, whose guidance and support has allowed our Scholars to grow in meaningful ways, while giving them the foundation to enter graduate school with confidence and solid research experience. We would also like to thank Jon Schneider for his masterful work editing our journal this year.

Gregory Martinez
Director

Helen Barnes
Program Coordinator
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The Influence of Parent-Child Attachment on Romantic Relationships

Monica Del Toro: McNair Scholar
Dr. Teresa Taylor: Mentor
Psychology

Abstract

The present study examined the significance of parent and child relationships and how the parenting styles used and parent-child attachment related to future reports of romantic relationship anxiety. Participants were young adults ranging from ages 18-30 recruited from various university psychology courses. The participants were given an online questionnaire measuring quantitative data. This questionnaire asked about the participant's feelings of respect from their parents toward them, the expectations perceived from parents toward the participant, fear of losing a romantic partner’s love, and comfort with closeness in romantic relationships, among other related items.

Introduction

The development of romantic relationships has long been associated with the relationship between parents and their children and the manner in which these children were raised. Although most people begin to form intimate romantic relationships in their early adulthood, much research suggests that the development of romantic intimacy traits and qualities begins in early childhood. The quality and type of attachment children have with their mothers and fathers has been found to strongly suggest the future quality of attachment in romantic relationships that child experiences as an adult (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer, 2004).

Examples of how parent-child relationships can influence the future quality of romantic relationships can be found when examining the parenting style used on a child. Parenting which uses an authoritative parenting style (e.g., high quality relationship between parent and child with equal amounts of warmth and demandingness; Seigler, et al., 2006) has been related to healthy romantic relationships for young adults due to the presence of qualities such as trust and closeness (Dinero, Conger, Shaver, Widaman, & Larsen-Rife 2008; Seiffge-Krenke, Shulman, & Klessinger 2001).

It is important to understand the relationship between parent-child attachment and its influence on romantic relationships because this shows there is much parents can do to influence the well being of their children in future relationships. Parents can become aware of the magnitude of influence their relationship with their children has and how it affects their children. Consequently, they could make a proactive effort to improve the quality of their relationship, so in the future, their children can partake in healthy relationships.

It is also important to understand the influence of parent-child attachment and relationships in order to apply the knowledge to settings such as counseling. Counselors can speak to their client about their relationships with their parents when they were children and help them figure out if their current situations with their romantic relationships perhaps stem from their childhood.

Parenting Styles and Parent-Child Attachment

Parenting styles are defined as parenting behaviors and attitudes that set the emotional climate of parent-child interactions (Seigler, Deloache, & Eisenberg, 2006). According to a study done by Diana Baumrind (1973), there are three parenting styles, which include, authoritarian parenting, authoritative parenting, and permissive parenting. These styles of parenting are determined by two specific measures: first, the degree of parental warmth, support, and acceptance a parent gives their child; and secondly, the degree of parenting control and demandingness toward the child (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). It has been found that authoritative parents tend to have a high quality relationship with their child with equal amounts of warmth and demandingness, while authoritarian parents do not.
Authoritarian parents tend to have lower amounts of warmth and higher amounts of demandingness, and permissive parents tend to have high amounts of warmth with little to no amounts of demandingness (Seigler, et al., 2006). Previous research has found strong positive correlations between authoritative parenting for both mothers and fathers and a secure parent/child attachment (Heer, 2008). Characteristics displayed from authoritative parents such as parental availability, demandingness, limit-setting, and discipline remain important for a child’s development from early childhood up through adolescence and have been shown to have a positive influence on secure parent/child attachment. Other factors displayed by authoritative parents, such as allowing children autonomy with age-appropriate monitoring, have also been found to influence a secure parent/child attachment (Karavasilis, Doyle, Markiewicz, 2003).

Relationship Anxiety and Avoidance and Parent/Child Attachment

It was proposed by John Bowlby (1973) that the relationship between a young child and their parent serves as a “working model” for future close relationships. This relationship between the young child and their parent helps establish a set of “rules” and helps to develop prototypes for relationships such as friendships, and more significantly romantic relationships. These prototypes are based on patterns of caregiver response and responsive attachment figures in childhood (Griffith, 2004).

Previous research has shown that children who experience a secure relationship with their parents will develop a “mold” for future close relationships that includes sensitive and responsive attachment. Children who experience an insecure relationship with their parents will develop an anxious attachment due to inconsistent responsiveness or an avoidant attachment due to a complete lack of caregiver response (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978).

The Present Study

The purpose of the present study was to examine if there were any relationships between perceived parenting styles, parent-child attachment, and the presence of attachment anxiety in current or most recent romantic relationships of the participants. The main guiding research question for this study was to find out what factors contributed to a healthy romantic relationship.

In order to test for these relationships, the following research questions were developed. 1.) Which parenting styles are predictive of an absence of attachment anxiety? 2.) Is the nature of the bond between parents and their children predictive of future presence of attachment anxiety? Based off of correlative relationships found between parenting styles, parent-child attachment, and attachment anxiety, it was hypothesized that a healthy parenting style and a secure parent-child attachment would be predictive of an absence of attachment anxiety.

The proposed study relates to previous research in the area of romantic relationships by examining variables that have previously been found to be influential in the development of romantic intimacy. The proposed study intends to measure levels of secure attachment between parents and their children and how these may be related to the parenting style used by parents when raising their children and by the amount of relationship anxiety and avoidance experienced by young adults. This study differs from other work in the area by examining a retrospective account given by the students, rather than providing input from parents, as well. While this method may not necessarily build upon previous research, it will offer a differing perspective by examining the reports given by the participants of events they remember rather than by examining combined reports from the participants and their parents.

Method

Participants

The sample of participants who completed this study consisted of 711 (456 female, 255 male) undergraduate college students. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 30 (M = 19.82, SD = 2.82). Four hundred and ninety-eight participants were in their freshman year of undergraduate study, 128 were sophomores, 53 were juniors, and 26 were seniors. Participants’ racial backgrounds included White/Caucasian (83.4%, n = 593), Hispanic (8.3%, n = 59), Asian/Pacific Islander (3.8%, n = 27), Black/African American (1.3%, n = 9), Native American Indian (0.8%, n = 6), Arabic/Middle Easterner (0.3%, n = 2), and other or non-specified ethnic identities (2.1%, n = 15).
Procedure

All participants were college students enrolled at a public university in Boise, Idaho. The results of this study were obtained from a questionnaire created for this study. Participants were given information about the questionnaire and chose to participate by accessing the questionnaire via a website link provided to them. After giving consent, participants completed demographic information followed by various scales used to measure (a) parent-child attachment, (b) romantic relationship anxiety, and (c) romantic relationship avoidance. The questionnaire took an average of 35 minutes to complete.

Measures

Parental authority. The students’ perceived parenting style was assessed using the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, 1991). The PAQ was developed to measure Baumrind’s (1971) three parenting prototypes with 10 questions each, and it consists of 30 items per parent for a total of 60 items. Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree), where higher scores reflect greater amounts of parenting style. The PAQ produces authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative scores for each parent. Alpha levels for the three subscales include: authoritarian parenting for mother, α = 0.622, authoritarian parenting for father, α = 0.596, authoritative parenting for mother, α = 0.665, authoritative parenting for father, α = 0.634, permissive parenting for mother, α = 0.606, and permissive parenting for father, α = 0.657. A sample question regarding authoritarian parenting includes, “My mother felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.” A sample question for authoritative parenting includes, “As I was growing up my mother gave me clear direction for my behaviors and activities, but she was also understanding when I disagreed with her.” A sample question for permissive parenting includes, “As I was growing up, my mother seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behavior.”

Experiences in Close Relationships. Relationship anxiety and avoidance was assessed using the Experiences in Close Relationships scale (ECR; Fraley, Waller, and Brennan, 2000). The ECR was developed to measure levels of relationship anxiety and/or avoidance experienced by individuals. The ECR consists of 36 items which measure the attachment (anxious or avoidant) between the individual and their romantic partner. The ECR produces a score for attachment anxiety and a score for attachment avoidance. Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree), where higher scores reflect a higher prevalence of attachment anxiety or attachment avoidance. Alpha levels for the two subscales include: global attachment anxiety, α = 0.85, and attachment avoidance, α = 0.88. A sample question measuring attachment anxiety includes, “I am afraid that I will lose my partner’s love.” A sample question measuring attachment avoidance includes, “I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.”

Parent-Child Attachment. Attachment between the participants and their parents were measured using Armsden and Greenberg’s Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). The IPPA was developed to measure how secure the attachment level was between parents and their children. It includes a total of 28 items and these items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree), where higher scores reflect a more secure level of attachment. Alpha levels for this measure are, α = 0.91. A sample question from the IPPA includes, “My parents sense when I am upset about something,” and “Talking over my problems with my parents makes me feel ashamed or foolish.”

Results

Table 1 represents the results found between the three parenting styles, parent-child attachment and their significance when predicting attachment anxiety.
Question-by-Question Analysis

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict the presence of attachment anxiety in romantic relationships from parenting styles and parent-child attachment. The results of this analysis indicated that authoritative parenting styles and a secure parent-child attachment accounted for an absence of attachment anxiety, $R^2 = .16$, $F(2, 668) = 65.31, p < .001$, indicating that participants who reported a secure romantic relationship (absence of attachment anxiety) tended to have been raised by parents who used an authoritative parenting style and also experienced a secure parent-child attachment growing up.

Discussion

Prior research on how parent-child relationships affected the future romantic relationships of the child had not specifically focused solely on the retrospective account of the child as a young adult. It had also not addressed the specific combination of parenting style and parent-child attachment found in the relationship between parent and child. The purpose of the present study was to see whether parenting styles and security of parent-child attachment were predictive of the presence of attachment anxiety in the participants' current or most recent romantic relationships. In the present study, we found that the use of authoritative parenting and having a secure parent-child attachment were both predictive of an absence of attachment anxiety.

Surprisingly, it was not only found that the absence of attachment anxiety was associated with authoritative parenting, but we also found a very strong positive relationship between having an authoritative father and having an authoritative mother. This is intriguing for future studies, which may want to further analyze why parents of the same child reported having similar parenting styles.

The aforementioned findings suggest that when children have a healthy relationship with their parents, they are more likely to have healthy romantic relationship patterns in future romantic relationships. This is especially useful for settings such as counseling in which counselors and therapists can integrate these findings into therapy and counseling sessions. It is also helpful to provide general information to parents so that they may know how their relationship with their children affects the future romantic relationships of their children.

A few limitations to our study include the variability of our participants. Our participant pool was not as varied culturally. Previous studies show that culture plays a significant role in how adults view romantic relationships. Attachment can vary within these cultures, for instance, the Chinese ethnicity traditionally uses a masculine management style, therefore inhibiting romantic closeness and security (Marshall, 2005). If there was more cultural variation, we would be able to have results that could apply to a more general population, rather than the select population that was represented by the present study.
References


Fighting for Our Foster Youths’ Future
Shwayne Eibensteiner: McNair Scholar
Dr. Robert McCarl: Mentor
Sociology

Abstract

This study will analyze the issues surrounding the “aging out” of young adults in the foster care system in the United States by focusing on data from three locations: England’s Child Welfare System, Idaho’s Department of Health and Welfare, and Texas’s Department of Family and Protective Services. The study looks to current research to describe the resources needed to help foster youth achieve self-sufficiency and finds that youth need social support, financial support, healthcare, mental health resources, housing resources, substance abuse treatment, educational resources, legal assistance, employment stability, and assistance with child care. In order to measure the transitional resources being provided to foster youth, a Self-Sufficiency Matrix is utilized. This research is a comparative study that intends to describe the different types of transitional resources provided to youth transitioning out of the foster care system in Idaho, Texas, and England. Four main themes emerged from this research: better communication, gradual transition, building long lasting relationships, and collaboration with transitioning foster youth.

Project Rationale

The impact of adolescents aging out of foster care is too great to ignore. Aging out is a time when a youth is discharged from a foster care system, which occurs at the age of 18 (for definitions and terminology see Appendix A). It is essential that services and programs focus on encouraging and supporting youth in transition from foster care to a life of independence. The problem is that there are too many foster children without a stable home, a social network, or resources. Scannapieco, Carrick, and Painter (2007) explain that the number of children coming into the foster care system has increased since 1980. In 1980, there were about 302,000 children coming into care in the United States. By 2000, this number increased to 556,000. According to Casey Family Programs, the statistical data on foster youth alumni is depressing. Casey found that 46% of foster children have developmental delays resulting from a history of trauma, approximately 50% of them have chronic health problems of some kind, and only about 33% have health insurance (Reilly 2003, White et al., 2009, Barriers, 2011).

Geenen and Powers (2007) report that research has repeatedly proven that the transition experienced by foster youth has numerous negative consequences. In comparison to the general population, foster youth alumni experience problems with substance abuse, are at a high risk of becoming homeless, are more likely to be unemployed, are less likely to finish high school, are less likely to attend college, and are at a high risk for mental illness. According to Casey Family Programs, foster youth alumni are also more likely to be diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Modified Social Phobia, Panic Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Alcohol Dependency, Drug Dependency, and Bulimia (Casey, 2005).

Significance of the Study

Over 24,000 youth “aged out” of the nation's foster care system in 2005 (Packard, 2008). While independent living programs and other services are available to foster youth and almost all states allow dependency courts to retain jurisdiction of foster youth beyond age 18, the outcomes for former foster youth are disturbing. If the United States wants to reduce the high homeless rate, over-filled prisons, and drugs and violence in the streets, then it needs to improve the way it transitions youth out of foster care and into adulthood.
White, O’Brien, Pecora, Williams, and Phillips (2009) found that in United States close to 800,000 children are served in the foster care system each year and about 513,000 children are serviced in the foster care system on any given day. Youth that are involved in the foster care system cost about $24.3 billion annually.

According to the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, the costs to the justice system are greatest for foster youth alumni who commit the most serious crimes. The essay reports that the typical career criminal causes $1.3 to $1.5 million in external costs; a heavy drug user costs $370,000 to $970,000; and a high school dropout costs $243,000 to $388,000. Crimes committed by individuals who are both heavy drug users and career criminals costs $1.7 to $2.3 million dollars (Jim, 2009). Thus, the significant conclusion of this research is that providing preventive assistance to foster youth will help save the social justice system and the Department of Health and Welfare millions of taxpayer dollars.

Study Aims

This study looks at what is being done to help aging out adolescents transition into healthy adulthood in Idaho, Texas, and England. It is a comparative study that describes the different types of transitional resources provided to youth transitioning out of foster care in Idaho, Texas and England. Specifically, it analyzes whether Idaho, Texas, or England provide youth who are aging out of foster care with resources in the following areas: housing assistance, social support, mental health support, healthcare, employment stability, educational attainment, legal assistance, and financial support.

Literature Review

Theoretical framework

Maslow’s (1960) Hierarchy of Needs explains that people must first meet certain needs in order to be productive members of society. According to Maslow, there are five levels of needs that are necessary for people to achieve their full potential in life. He states that people need to have their basic needs met before they can attain higher-level needs. The first needs are physiological, like oxygen, food, water, and appropriate body temperature. After a person’s physiological needs have been met, a person is able to move to the second level of needs, which is the need to feel safe in their environment. After safety is achieved, a person can pursue love, affection, and connectedness. Humans need to feel loved, wanted, and like they have a place they belong. Maslow believes if a person receives love, affection, and connectedness then they can feel esteem. After a person feels esteem, then he or she can achieve the final goal of self-actualization.

Many foster youth alumni have trouble achieving the basic level of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Often times they do not have shelter and food which causes them to feel unsafe and exposed. Moreover, foster youth alumni do not feel love, affection, connectedness, and esteem. Most of the time, they are disconnected from family, friends, community, and resources. According to Maslow (1960), if foster youth do not achieve their basic needs they will be unable to self-actualize and therefore will be unlikely to achieve their full potential and make contributions to society.

Current federal legislation

Child Welfare services were first authorized under Title V of the Social Security Act in 1935. This act allowed the federal and state governments to work together to fund child welfare services. In 1985, Title IV-E was added to the amendment to assist states in helping foster youth transition into an Independent Living Program. In 1989, the program Title IV-E was expanded to include all foster youth 16 and older. This expansion also allowed states to follow up on foster youth alumni six months after their emancipation from the foster care system.

In 1999, the Independent Living Program was renamed the Chafee Independent Living Program. This act expanded services to foster youth 18 through 21. In 2001, the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program re-authorized funds and added $60 million per year to the Chafee Independent Living Program. This provided education and training vouchers to youth who had aged out of foster care. Lastly, the reenactment created a new program that provided mentoring to youth of incarcerated parents.

Research on transitional living programs (Reilly, 2003) has found that many adolescents are exposed to independent living programs, but few receive concrete assistance. It has been more than 15 years since the
enactment of the Independent Living Program; nevertheless, research demonstrates that youth who age out foster care have a grim future and need greater assistance in the areas of employment, education, mental health, and social support.

The problems and the resources needed to create successful outcomes

A study conducted by Reilly (2003) looked at the outcomes of foster youth transitioning out of foster care. Originally, Reilly had 105 foster care alumni participate in his research. During the research period, five participants died: three from gang violence, one from drug overdose, and one person from diabetes after being discharged from foster care without health insurance. The study used surveys and interview questions that covered the following areas: education, living arrangements, employment support, health, substance use, foster care experiences, and legal issues. Reilly (2003) also identified factors that made youth transition better into adulthood. To assess social support Reilly used a tool developed by Courtney and Piliavin (1998); to measure health and substance abuse Reilly used resources from Abatena (1996) and Cook (1991); to measure self-esteem Reilly used the Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale; to measure mental health he used the Mental Health Inventory (Berwick et al., 1991); and to rate life satisfaction he used Diener’s (1980) Satisfaction with Life Scale.

Most of the participants were between the ages of 18 to 25 with an average stay in foster care of 9.3 years. They found that 50% of the participants lived in apartments, 34% made less than $5000 annually, and 41% said they did not have enough money to cover their living expenses. Some of the participants indicated that they were involved in illegal activities in order to cover their expenses. The average wage of the participants was $7.25 an hour. The researchers discovered that 50% of the participants left the foster care system without a high school diploma. At the time of the interview, 69% of the participants had attained a high school diploma and 30% of the participants indicated they were attending college or had attended college. A high percent of the participants (75%) indicated that they wanted a college degree. Since leaving the foster care system, 36% said that some of the time they did not have a place to stay, 19% stated that they lived in the streets, 35% indicated that they had moved at least five times since they left foster care, and 38% of the participants had children. Reilly also stated that more than 70 pregnancies had occurred out of the hundred participants that were interviewed. Eighteen of these pregnancies had been aborted, and 15 were miscarried. The research showed that 30% of participants had serious health problems, 45% of the participants were involved in the justice system, 41% had spent time in jail, and 15% of the participants had $250 or less when they exited foster care. Responses to questions about transitional services found that 53% of the participants were not satisfied with the services they received to prepare them to live on their own. Lastly, participants that had training and services in foster care had a more successful outcome in comparison to youth who did not receive transitional services.

Reilly (2003) states that certain changes could improve the outcomes of youth transitioning out of foster care. Specifically, he says that health coverage and the age of emancipation should be raised to the age of 21. Furthermore, the government should extend transitional programs beyond age 18, social workers should develop ongoing supportive relationships with foster youth beyond age 18, and specialized mental health services should be included while youth are in care and after they exit care. In conclusion, he points out that more research is needed to see if Chafee legislation is making a difference for foster youth alumni.

Wade and Dixon (2006) studied the outcome of foster youth alumni in areas of housing and career. They begin by explaining the difficulties foster youth alumni face in England, particularly in attaining stable housing and employment. According to the article, large numbers of foster care graduates become homeless shortly after leaving care. This research had 106 participants that were 16 and 17 years of age, who recently aged out of care in England. The researchers conducted two interviews and utilized a questionnaire. The base interviews began two to three months after the adolescents left foster care. The first base interview focused on preparation for transitioning, transitional support arrangements, and outcomes. The second interview took place nine to ten months after the first interview. The second interview assessed the progress that was made in attaining housing, education, and employment and checked the participants’ mental and physical health status.

At the second interview, 31% of the participants were living in independent housing. Thirty-five percent of the participants experienced homelessness shortly after exiting care, but 64% of the participants stated that they had received accommodations for housing, and 93% of the participants stated that they received assistance from a social worker or independent living advisor. Wade and Dixon (2006) observed that having stable housing was connected to good mental health. Education and career options were also assessed. Many of the participants frequently changed jobs. Of the 44% of the participants who were struggling to attain employment, only 23% had full-time or part-time jobs, and only 6% of the youth were involved in training. The researchers stated this was due to a lack of education
and training before participants left care. Many of the participants dropped out of school due to financial and personal difficulties. From the cohort of participants, only one person entered higher education. As a result of this study, the researchers concluded that England needs to increase motivation and support for foster youth to continue their education, and they need to put greater emphasis on life skills training while foster youth are still in care.

Collins, Spencer, and Ward (2010) looked at how much social support foster youth have and how this impacts their transition into adulthood. This study is part of a larger study that examined 660 youth who had aged out of care in 2005. The study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions that focused on the amount of social support youth received in care and how this influenced the degree of self-sufficiency in adulthood. After looking at social support, investigators found that 52% of participants had an outreach worker, 33% of participants were unaware of adolescent outreach programs, 90% of participants had some connection with their birth families, and 73% of participants had mentors. They found that participants were more likely to complete high school if they had a mentor or had some connection with siblings, and were less likely to complete high school if they did not have these connections. Also, participants were 23% more likely to sustain employment and 10% more likely to stay of jail if they had a connection to a sibling. In conclusion, the researchers state that foster youth experience frequent disruptions in relationships with family, friends, social workers, and educators. Therefore, social support is especially important for transitioning foster youth. In turn, disruptions in relationships are tied to physiological distress, making it difficult for youth to function.

Geenen and Powers (2007) describe the differences between youth who have been raised in foster care and those who have not been raised in foster care. There were a total of 88 participants separated into 10 focus groups. The participants included 19 youth who were currently in care, eight foster youth alumni, 21 foster parents, 20 child welfare workers and nine education professionals. Eleven of the foster youth lived in care for 1 to 5 years, eight lived in care for 6 to 10 years, and five lived in care for at least 10 years. They were all asked qualitative questions regarding the transition of foster youth into adulthood. The questions asked ranged from, “What formal transition planning happens for foster youth?” to “What are the differences in the transition process for foster youth in comparison to youth who were not raised in foster care?”

There were several themes that stood out as a result of the 10 focus group discussions. First, they found that youth who are not raised in foster care have a different experience transitioning into adulthood. They also concluded that those who are not raised in care transition gradually into adulthood, while youth in care experience an abrupt transition into adulthood. They found that foster youth are forced to become adults instantly at the age of 18, usually with minimal resources and social support. It also became apparent that foster youth all receive similar services. Geenen and Powers (2007) propose that the transition process be individualized to meet individual needs. They state that the effectiveness of independent skills training needs to be evaluated and that youth need greater encouragement to achieve their educational goals, and they need more help getting connected with resources in the community.

Scannapieco, Carrick, and Painter (2007) wanted to understand the challenges faced by foster youth and the additional services needed to facilitate the transition process. There were 72 participants divided into six focus groups comprised of foster youth and their circles of support, such as foster parents and social workers. The groups were set up in a discussion format and each group had two interviewers. The interviewers asked the groups a series of qualitative questions about the challenges faced by foster youth and what additional services are needed to aid the transition process. Four themes emerged from this research: there needs to be more youth focused practice, social workers need to have more collaboration with foster youth, foster youth personnel need to have better communication skills with foster youth, and social workers need to help youth find permanent connections with people.

White, O’Brien, Pecora, English, William, and Phillips (2009) studied levels of depression among foster youth alumni. There were 479 foster youth alumni who participated in the research and all the participants had been in care for at least one year. This study analyzed and coded qualitative interviews and secondary data obtained directly from each participant’s case file. The researchers looked at the participants’ case files to see why they came into care, the environment they lived in before they came into care, and their experience in care. The case files were read completely then coded and analyzed by a highly trained staff. After coding the participants’ files they conducted qualitative interviews with each participant. The interviews started in September 2000, and continued until January 2002. The interview questions looked at experiences while youth were in care, such as education and mental health. They also asked questions about transitional experiences, such as social support and independent living resources. The Composite International Diagnostic Interview (World Health Organization, 1996) was used to measure depression. Data on mental health was collected from the National Comorbidity Survey to compare participant results to the general population.

The research of White, et al., (2009) shows that depression among foster youth alumni has serious negative consequences. The researchers state that depression can cause role impairment, making it difficult to keep
employment and to focus on educational goals. Overall, it was found that foster youth alumni are more likely to have a mental illness then the general population. They found that 41.1% of foster youth alumni suffer from depression, while only 19.8% of the general population suffers from depression. A positive correlation was found between the number of placements in foster care and the rate of depression in adulthood. Those who experienced a high number of placements and/or instability in the home had higher rates of depression in adulthood. Those who received mental health services while in care had less depression in comparison to those who did not receive mental services while they were in foster care. Also, the youth’s perception of being loved and cared for was positively correlated with rates of depression in adulthood. In summary, the researchers contend that foster youth are significantly more likely to suffer from mental illness, which puts them at a high risk for other psychosocial challenges.

**Summary and Hypothesis**

The purpose of the previous research was to identify what transitional challenges youth face as they exit foster care and what resources are needed to improve the outcomes of foster youth. Both the old and the current literature clearly document that foster youth alumni have a difficult time attaining self-sufficiency in adulthood, especially in the areas of education, housing, employment, mental health, criminal conduct, and social support. The research recommends that services be improved in the following ways: better communication and collaboration between foster youth and social service personnel in order to include the youth in the planning process; efforts need to be made to increase youths’ motivation to achieve their potential, especially in the area of education; opportunities need to be created for youth to establish long-lasting permanent connections with people in and outside of the foster care system; social service practices need to be more individualized and less universal; the transition process needs to be gradual; the Chafee Independent Living Act needs to be reevaluated and improved; and there needs to be more opportunities for youth to take risks while they are still in care. The research review also noted the following improved effective practices: proactive versus reactive mental health counseling, greater stability while in care, and mentoring.

After reviewing the literature on transitioning foster youth, I became interested in finding out what is currently being done to help youth transition out of foster care. In order to assess current resources, I chose to compare and contrast the transitional resources and programs in three different locations: Texas, Idaho, and England. This study asks the following questions:

- What transitional resources are currently provided to youth transitioning out of the foster care system in Idaho, Texas, and England?
- What transitional resources are not provided to foster youth transitioning out of the foster care system in Idaho, Texas, and England?
- When do Idaho, Texas, and England begin providing transitional resources, and how long do they provide these resources to foster youth transitioning out of foster care?

The hypotheses for this study are:

- Young adults in Idaho, Texas, and England, who are aging out of the foster care system, need more support and resources to prepare them to be self-sufficient adults.
- Compared to Texas and England, Idaho offers fewer resources and less support to emancipating foster youth.

**Method**

In order to measure the transitional resources being provided to foster youth, 11 areas of need have been identified. These areas were taken from the Self-Sufficiency Matrix. The Self-Sufficiency Matrix is a tool to measure a client’s degree of self-sufficiency by providing detailed information about the client’s needs and current life circumstances. It was originally created to be used with the homeless as a tool to determine whether there is a need for subsidized housing. Since this time, it has been used to measure self-sufficiency in many at-risk populations, including transitioning foster youth.

The Self-Sufficiency Matrix has 12 domains and 5-point scale. The Self-Sufficiency Matrix is flexible and can include or exclude domains. In this research, few of the domains were excluded because they were covered in
other categories. The areas being measured are housing, social support, mental health, physical health, employment, education, legal support, and finances.

Design and data collection

This research is a comparative study that intends to describe the different types of transitional resources provided to youth transitioning out of the foster care system in Idaho, Texas, and England. Specifically, I will determine whether Idaho, Texas, or England provide youth who are aging out of foster care with support in the following areas: housing, social support, mental health, physical health, employment, education, legal support, and finances. The following resources will be used to document the amount of support each state provides: government documents, official statistics, technical reports, scholarly journals, trade journals, review articles, research institutions, and universities. The Department of Health and Welfare and the people working within the foster care system may be contacted directly to report on any missing data that was not able to be found elsewhere.

Location Descriptions

Idaho, Texas and England were selected because the original plan was to conduct research with Idaho's foster youth alumni; however, this was not implemented because Idaho’s foster youth was already concurrently participating in a federal research study. The proposed research study would have conflicted with the federal data collection that was already underway. Even though Idaho and Texas have similar political systems, Texas had considerably more resources for transitioning foster youth, which prompted further investigation. England was selected to provide an alternate view of a system that provides culturally, socially, and politically different approaches to child and youth welfare. Upon examination of state resources, Idaho and Texas, although they had a very similar political system, provided different amounts of resources to transitioning foster youth. Further, England has a different political system than the United States, which has a strong influence how the child welfare system is instituted.

Idaho. Idaho is located in the Pacific Northwest and is the 11th largest state geographically in the United States. It has 82,747 square miles of land and a population of approximately 156,759,001. Boise is the capital of Idaho, and it is the largest city for 400 miles. Idaho is placed geographically at the foot of the Cascade Mountain Range where people can find a wide array of outdoor activities. In 2009, the median household income was $44,644 and the poverty level was 14.4%. Idaho is 89.1% white, 11.2% Hispanic or Latino origin, 1.4% American Indian and Alaskan Native, 1.2% Asian, and .06% black. The dominant political party is Republican. Idaho is 48% Mormon, 20.2% Catholic, 7.5% Holiness/ Wesleyan/ Pentecostal, 4.2% Baptist, 6% other conservative Christian, 2.7% Methodist, and 2% Lutheran.

According to Idaho’s Child Protection web site, there are 3,349 children in foster care in Idaho, and the number is increasing. More than 100 foster care youth age out of the foster care system each year (www.isc.idaho.gov). According to the Casey Family Program, because Idaho has grown a lot and it is continuing to grow, the number of children that come into care has increased 40% in the past three years. There are over 3,000 youths in care and only 1,000 licensed homes available.

Texas. Texas is located in the south central part of the United States. It has 261,797.12 square miles of land and has a population of 25,145,561 people. Texas is 70.4% white, 37.6% Hispanic, 11.8% black, and 3.8% Asian. The state of Texas is Republican. The median income in 2009 was $48,286, and the poverty level was 17.1%. Texas has 32.5% Protestants, 21.0% Roman Catholics, and 46.5% are other religions or are non-religious. In August 2010, there were 27,304 children in the Texas foster care system. At any given time, there are about 3,500 foster youth in care who are 16 years of age or older and approximately 1,500 foster youth age out each year. The length of stay in care varies from 1 to 14 years with the average being about three years.

England. England is 50,000 square miles and is the largest of the countries comprising the island of Britain, covering about 66% of the island with a population of about 49.1 million people. England is a Constitutional Monarchy with a Parliamentary Democracy in which the people choose representatives at regular elections to govern the country. England’s population is 87% white, 25.7% Leicester India, 4.6% Asian or Asian British, 1.2% white Irish, and 1.1% black or black British. Sixty-five percent of people in England consider themselves Christian,
14.6% no religion, 3.1% Muslim, 1.1% Hindu, 0.3% Jewish, and 0.1% Sikh. According to the British Association for Adopting and Fostering (BAAF), in March of 2009 there were 60,900 children in the government’s care. England has approximately 37,000 foster homes, and 8,200 additional foster families are needed, according to The Fostering Network. According to BAAF, 39% of children in care are ten years or older with the largest percent being 15 years old. Children typically stay in care for at least 12 months. The child welfare policy varies from region to region. The homelessness rate is high among older foster youth alumni due to the loss of parental and family relationships and friends who are able to assist them.

Results

The following matrix chart compares the types and the length of support provided by independent living programs in Idaho, Texas, and England. The independent living programs help youth in foster care system transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Idaho</th>
<th>Texas</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Living Program begins</strong></td>
<td>90 days after 15\textsuperscript{th} birthday.</td>
<td>16 years old.</td>
<td>14 years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Support</strong></td>
<td>2 years and 9 months.</td>
<td>2 years.</td>
<td>2 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support ends</strong></td>
<td>At 18 full benefits end (21 if in school and sometimes until 23 to finish college or technical training).</td>
<td>At 18 full benefits end (22 to complete high school and sometimes until 23 to finish college or technical training).</td>
<td>At 18 full benefits end (youth can move out of foster care at age 16 and can exit the independent living program anytime between 16-18).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education support</strong></td>
<td>$5000 Chafee education voucher per year. Help gathering all important documents for attending school.</td>
<td>$5000 Chafee education voucher per year. Plus a complete tuition and fee waiver. Help gathering all important documents for attending school.</td>
<td>College education is free in England, plus they provide additional educational training and assistance for foster youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing support</strong></td>
<td>$500 per month for living expenses with a minimum of 50% of the income going to rent and utilities.</td>
<td>$500 per month for living expenses with a minimum of 50% of the income</td>
<td>30% of the youth’s income has to go toward rent and utilities. They teach house management skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental health</strong></td>
<td>Not everyone is eligible or encouraged to access services, but there are some mental health services available based on assessment until the youth is 21.</td>
<td>Usually starts when child enters foster care and ends at age 18.</td>
<td>Psychological counseling and therapeutic intervention are available from 13 to 19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal</strong></td>
<td>Help youth understand legal rights and legal responsibility.</td>
<td>Youth can voluntarily remain in court’s jurisdiction until 21 which gives them access to an attorney.</td>
<td>Legal advice and representation. Ensure privacy of young people. Inform young people of their rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td>Create jobs and leadership opportunities. Job coaching. Connect youth to employment agencies.</td>
<td>Legislature gives former foster youth preference at state agencies for job openings. Legislature also makes sure youth have access to their important documents at age 16.</td>
<td>Training or employment. Help youth identify career goals and actively engage youth in career planning. Caseworker links youth with employment agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>Make an effort to help youth have healthy connection with birth family. Connect youth with adult mentor in the community. Connect with people that youth can visit for holidays.</td>
<td>Help youth create long lasting connection with supportive adults. Encourage youth to invite important adult to attend meetings and help youth make important life decisions.</td>
<td>Help build relationship with family, friends, and significant others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Budgeting.</td>
<td>Help promote financial security by matching savings account program up to $1000, and teach youth how to build assets.</td>
<td>Financial self-sufficiency through education and budgeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills training</td>
<td>At 15 years and 3 months: Maintaining house, access transportation, accessing community resources, and decision making and problem solving skill training.</td>
<td>At 16: Supervised teaching of skills in grocery shopping, laundry, money management, finding housing, self-care, and housekeeping. Short term financial, job skill, vocational, educational assistance.</td>
<td>At 14: Shopping for groceries, housekeeping, accessing local support services. Training in stress management, personal care, safety, laundry, and access public health.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

Three main themes emerged from this research regarding gradual transitioning into adulthood: the importance of helping foster youth build long-lasting relationships, health care coverage beyond age 18, and collaborating with foster youth and with larger systems involved during foster care. In the foster care system, when children turn 18 they are forced to leave care right away even if they do not have resources or social support. Young persons are presented with myriad daunting responsibilities for which they are inadequately prepared. Research has repeatedly supported the notion that this is not a good way to transition foster youth into independent adulthood. Instead, the transition should be more gradual and incorporate resources established outside of the foster care system for youth to navigate all of the complexities of adulthood.

The literature points out the importance of helping foster youth build long-lasting relationships with adults and peers both inside and outside of the foster care system. Foster youth experience instability in relationships in many different ways because they tend to be moved around from foster home to foster home, from school to school, and from community to community. This constant transitioning forces them to leave their friends, teachers, family, and community behind and readjust to entirely new environments and social networks. This frequent changing makes it challenging for foster youth to connect emotionally with people or know where the resources are in the community. Foster youth need to have social support both during care and outside of foster care. It is important to have social support outside of the foster care system so when the youth age out of care they will have a social network.

The second theme that emerged is the need for continual health care coverage. Health care is important. It is especially essential for foster youth alumni to have non-interrupted access to health services because compared to the general population, foster youth alumni are more likely to be diagnosed with some kind of health issue and less likely to have any type of health care coverage because they cannot afford it. Many times when youth emancipate from the foster care system at the age of 18 they lose their health care coverage. Research has shown this has negative consequences for foster youth alumni, which results in numerous societal costs.
Another theme is the importance of collaboration with larger social systems during the transition process. Part of helping foster youth transition into independent adulthood includes collaborating and involving the youth in decision making processes, informing them about the progress of their case plan, and asking for the youth’s feedback. It is essential to communicate what is happening with transitioning foster youth even if the progress is not positive.

Collaboration will teach the foster youth vital decision-making skills and teamwork. Most importantly this lets the youth know what is going in his or her life. The other challenge with collaboration is there are many different agencies involved with the foster care system and many times the different agencies have different rules and different ways of doing things. The different agencies’ methods and regulations are inconsistent with each other and cause conflict for the foster youth.

Limitations

It was challenging to obtain data from the Department of Health and Welfare, particularly in Idaho. Idaho had limited information on transitioning foster youth. Idaho is not as advanced as other states in documenting and collecting data about youth transitioning of the foster care system into adulthood. It was also difficult to collect accurate data for England since it is a different country and they may use different terminology than the American child welfare system. I did not conduct research with human subjects, which left some limitations. The places from which the data was being collected may have bias. This research only focused on three locations and the child welfare system is complex. There are many ways of practicing it. The three locations do not accurately represent all areas of child welfare practice. In the future, it would be interesting to continue to research what the different locations are doing to help their foster youth transition out of the foster care system successfully. Another limitation is this research does not use real human subjects, which would give a more accurate assessment.

If our country wants to combat the high homeless rate, the over-filled jails and prisons, and the drugs and violence in our streets, we need to focus on helping our foster care children transition better into adulthood. These issues affect the whole society not just the individuals that are involved in it. We cannot change the past of the children, but we sure can help change their future by providing them with the resources and social support they need in order to be contributing adults.
References


Appendix A

Definitions and terminologies:

United States Federal Definition of Foster Care means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes.

Aging Out is a time when a youth is discharged from foster care system, which occurs at the age of 18.

Emancipated/Emancipation: For the purpose of this Search Proposal we will be using the definition of emancipation as defined by USLegal: “Emancipation is when a minor has achieved independence from his or her parents, such as by getting married before reaching age 18 or by becoming fully self-supporting” (USLegal. Retrieved from http://definitions.uslegal.com/e/emancipation/).

Self-Sufficiency is being able to provide for oneself without the help of others.

Transitional Supports and Resources will be defined as providing support in the following areas: financial, employment, social, substance abuse, mental health, physical health, and educational attainment.

Social Support: For the purpose of this study we will be using the definition of Social Support as defined by the National Cancer Institute which is: “A network of family, friends, neighbors, and community members that is available in times of need to give psychological, physical, and financial help” (National Cancer Institute. Retrieved from http://www.cancer.gov/dictionary/?CdrID=440116).

Homelessness: This research proposal will define homelessness as stated in the McKinney Act utilized by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (2009) HUD-VASH resource guide, which is as follows:

- An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence or
- An individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:
  1. A supervised publicly or privately-operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional house for the mentally ill.
  2. An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (United States Department of Veterans Affairs, 2009).
  3. Housing assesses the ability of the client to obtain appropriate housing of choice based on their Circumstances.

Mental Health Supports: Mental Health is the emotional well-being of the client and mental health supports are services provided that address the emotional needs of the youth.

Physical Health Supports: Physical Health is the general physical well-being of the client. Physical health supports are having health insurance and having the knowledge and resources to access health insurance.

Employment Stability Resources: Employment Stability is the nature of the job or career in which the client is employed and considers the permanency and evaluates the ability of employment to provide for the needs of the youth. Employment Stability Resources are those items that provide the youth with the education and or skills to obtain job placement that sufficiently meet the needs of the youth.

Educational Support provides youth with access to higher education by supplying youth with items such as financial resources, academic advising, and tutoring for youth to compete and be successful in higher education.

Childcare Supports provide youth with the ability to access childcare, financial resources to purchase the childcare, and parenting skills.

Legal Supports help prevent youth from engaging in criminal activities, provides access to legal advising when these supports are needed, and works to rehabilitate youth who were previously or are currently involved in illegal activities.

Substance Abuse Supports provide the person with the social support and financial resources to recover from addictions.
College Adaptation among Traditional and Non-traditional College Students

Sofia Fernandez: McNair Scholar
Mary Pritchard: Mentor

Psychology

Abstract

Although research has established several factors related to college adjustment in traditional college students (e.g., self-esteem, perfectionism, family environment), few studies have examined whether these factors also relate to college adjustment in non-traditional students. The present study examined whether the factors related to academic and emotional adjustment to college differed between traditional and non-traditional college students. Three hundred thirteen college students (78% traditional; 22% non-traditional) completed the almost perfect scale revised, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire, and the family environment scale. Non-traditional college students displayed significantly greater academic and emotional adjustment to college than did traditional college students. Academic adjustment was related to self-esteem in both groups; in addition, perfectionism related to academic adjustment in traditional students. Emotional adjustment related to self-esteem and independence in both groups; in addition, emotional adjustment related to achievement motivation and organizational skills in non-traditional students and discrepancy between self and ideal in traditional students. College administrators may wish to emphasize different factors for these two groups when discussing adaptation to college during orientation sessions. Keywords: college adaptation, traditional v. non-traditional students

Introduction

College enrollment of non-traditional students (typically defined as 24 years of age or older; Jinkens, 2009) is on the rise. Between 2000 and 2009, college enrollment of students aged 25 and older increased by 43%, whereas enrollment in college students under the age of 25 only increased 27% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). Academically speaking, non-traditional college students adapt to college just as well as traditional students, and in fact, have a higher GPA than traditional college students (Hoyert & O'Dell, 2009), and may display a higher motivation to succeed in academics (Justice & Dornan, 2001). Chao and Good (2004) noted that non-traditional students tend to use support from their family, friends, teachers, and themselves in order to succeed in college. In this paper, we are interested in the relation between self-esteem, family environment, perfectionism, and adjustment to college in traditional and non-traditionally aged college students.

Traditional college students typically tend to be fresh out of high school, and many students go out of state for college. Entering college demands more responsibility and some students may doubt their ability to be successful at the college level which may lower their academic success and increase their stress level (Dwyer & Cummings, 2001). According to Grant-Vallone, Reid, Umali, and Pohlert (2003-2004), positive self-esteem and social support can be good predictors of academic adjustment and social adjustment.

While there is research that compares traditional and non-traditional college students on factors such as the “ideal” course and professor (Strage, 2008); student development (Macari, Maples, & D’andrea, 2005); student wellness (Hermon & Davis, 2004); and achievement goal orientation and coping style (Morris, Brooks, & May, 2003), little research has examined how well non-traditional students adjust to college in comparison to traditional students. Below we will discuss factors that may differ between traditional and non-traditional students, which may influence adjustment to college in the two groups.
Self-esteem

Self-esteem affects the health of both body and mind (Dwyer & Cummings, 2001), and it has been suggested that self-esteem relates closely to adjustment to college. For example, traditional students’ self-esteem level in the summer prior to matriculation predicted academic, social, and emotional adjustment to college for the next six months (Pancer, Hunsberger, Pratt, & Alistat, 2000). This is not surprising as Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, and Cribbie (2007) found that among traditional college students if the student feels like he or she has the capability of succeeding academically they are more likely to do so. The purpose of this study is to not only to explore the relationship of self-esteem between academic and emotional adaptation, but also to see if there are differences between traditional and non-traditional college students when looking at self-esteem.

Perfectionism

In addition to self-esteem level, certain personality traits may affect college student adjustment. For example, perfectionists with high standards seem to self-criticize more, leading to difficulty adapting emotionally to college (Rice, Vergara, & Aldea, 2006). On the other hand, perfectionism is a multi-dimensional construct and certain aspects of perfectionism may actually be advantageous. For instance, Grzegorek, Slaney, Franze, and Rice (2004) looked at traditional students who were adaptive perfectionists, these students showed lower anxiety, higher self-esteem, and adapted better academically to college. However, traditional students who are maladaptive perfectionists show more difficulty coping with stress-management due to personal emotional difficulties, and leading to poorer emotional adjustment to college (Dunkley, Zuroff, & Blankstein, 2003). As perfectionism is multi-faceted and different aspects of the trait may help or hinder college students, the present study examined three factors of perfectionism: (1) standards; (2) discrepancy, which is defined by Slaney et al., (2001) as the view that one keeps failing to achieve the high standards that one has set for oneself; and (3) order in order to see if these different factors have a relationship with academic and emotional adaptation, and whether there are differences in these relations between traditional and non-traditional college students.

Family

In addition to factors internal to the student (e.g., personality, self-esteem), external factors may also impact adjustment to college. For example, college students tend to adjust to college easier when they come from an authoritative family (Hickman, Bartholomae, & McKenry, 2000). An authoritative family is accepting, warm, and encouraging, but is also firm. They teach clear principals, giving suitable expectation without being invasive or restrictive (Blondal & Adalbjamardottir, 2009). Similarly, Johnson, Gans, Kerr, and LaValle (2010) found that traditional aged students who viewed their family as cohesive displayed little difficulty adjusting academically and emotionally to college. On the other hand, students that come from families that have conflict and poor coping skills do not adapt well to college (Feenstra, Banyard, Rines, & Hopkins, 2001). Again, these studies were conducted using traditional aged college students; thus, little is known about the impact of family-of-origin on non-traditional aged college students. The present study examined the relation between family-of-origin environment and academic and emotional adaptation to college. Given that non-traditional students have been away from their family-of-origin longer than traditional students, we wanted to ascertain whether these relationships may differ for traditional and non-traditional college students. For example, would these relationships have less of an impact on non-traditional students as they are older and more removed from their family-of-origin?

Present Study

Although previous research has examined the impact of self-esteem (Blankstein, & Dunkley, 2008), perfectionism (Dunkley, Zuroff, & Blankstein, 2003), and family-of-origin environment (Feenstra, Banyard, Rines, & Hopkins, 2001) on academic and emotional adjustment in traditional college students, no studies have examined these relationships in non-traditional college students. Non-traditional college students, by virtue of being older and having had more life experiences, may be less, or more, affected by these factors than traditional college students. As the rate of non-traditional college students entering college is increasing rapidly (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001), it is important to ascertain not only how well they adjust to college, but also what factors may impact their adjustment.
The primary purpose of this study was to examine whether self-esteem, perfectionism, and family-of-origin environment relate to academic and emotional adjustment to college in the same way in traditional and non-traditional college students. Due to their maturity levels and life experiences, we first hypothesized that non-traditional college students would display greater academic adjustment to college than would traditional college students. Although we expected self-esteem, perfectionism, and family-of-origin environment would relate to academic and emotional adjustment in traditional college students, no predictions about these relations among non-traditional college students were made as no studies have examined this question before.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were from a public university in the Northwest and were enrolled in a general psychology course. A total of 313 undergraduate students participated: 197 were female, 114 male, and 2 transgendered. 79.6% were Caucasian, 5.6% Latino, 3.8% Asian, 3.1% African-American, 1.9% Native American, 9% Pacific Islander, and 3.1% identified themselves as other. The average age was 22.2 (SD = 6.90). The participants responded to an online survey and were awarded with credit toward their general psychology course. All procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board before data collection commenced.

**Materials**

*Almost perfect scale-revised.* The Almost perfect scale-revised (APS-R; Slaney et al., 2001) is a 23-item scale that measures perfectionism with three subscales: 7 items that measure high standards for personal performance (e.g., I have high standards for my performance at work or at school; α = .86), 12 items that measure discrepancy (e.g., I often feel frustrated because I can’t meet my goals; α = .93), and 4 items that measure order skills (e.g., I am an orderly person; α = .84). The APS-R was measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. Each subscale is summed, with higher scores indicating higher levels of that particular dimension.

*Rosenberg self-esteem scale.* The Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) is a 10-item Likert scale with items that look at how one feels toward oneself (e.g., On the whole, I am satisfied with myself). It was answered on a four-point Likert scale measuring from 3 = *strongly agree* to 0 = *strongly disagree*. The 10 items were summed, with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-esteem (α = .91).

*Student adaptation to college questionnaire.* The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ, Wetzel, 2007) is a 39-item Likert scale that looks at how well a student adapts to college with two subscales that look at academic adaptation (α = .87) and emotional adaptation (α = .85). Each subscale was summed, the higher the score the higher the adaptation.

*Family environment scale.* The Family environment scale (FES; Moos & Moos, 1986) is a 90-item Likert scale that looks at relationships and overall social environment among the family. Items are scored true/false. This scale had 10 subscales: (1) cohesion—the level of commitment, help, and support members give to each other (e.g., family members really help and support one another); (2) expressiveness—the amount to which family members are encouraged to express their feelings (e.g., family members often keep their feelings to themselves); (3) conflicts—the amount of open expression of anger and conflict between family members (e.g., we fight a lot in our family); (4) independence—assesses the extent to which family members are sure of themselves, self-sufficient, and make their own decisions (e.g., we do not do things on our own very often in our family); (5) achievement orientation—assesses how much activities (such as school and work) are shown as an achievement-oriented or competitive framework (e.g., we feel it is important to be the best at whatever you do); (6) intellectual-cultural orientation—the degree of interest in political, intellectual, and cultural activities (e.g., we often talk about political and social problems); (7) active-recreational orientation—looks at participation in recreational activities (e.g., we spend most weekends and evening at home); (8) moral-religious orientation—evaluates the importance placed on ethical and religious issues and values (e.g., family members attend church, synagogue, or Sunday school fairly often); (9) organization—the
importance that is given to organization and structure in planning family activities and responsibilities (e.g., activities in our family are pretty carefully planned); (10) control–assesses the extent to which rules and procedures are used upon the family (e.g., family member are rarely ordered around).

**Results**

Some studies have defined non-traditional college students as 24 years or older (Jinkens, 2009). However, for the purpose of this study traditional college students were grouped by ages 18-22, and nontraditional college students were grouped by ages 23 and older. The reason that non-traditional college students were grouped by ages 23 or older instead of ages 24 or older was because a bachelor degree takes on average between 4 to 5 years to obtain, therefore if a student would enter directly after high school the average age that they would obtain their bachelors would be around age 23. There were 222 traditional students, and 79 non-traditional students; 18 participants did not indicate their age. Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and confidence intervals of all factors by age group (traditional v. nontraditional college students). Overall, traditional students showed a higher mean when looking at discrepancy, conflict, achievement-orientation, active-recreational orientation, and control, while non-traditional students showed a higher mean when looking at high standards, order, self-esteem, academic adaptation, emotional adaptation, cohesion, expressiveness, independence, and moral-religious orientation.

As expected, non-traditional college students ($M = 144.10, SD = 32.34$) displayed significantly greater academic adjustment to college than did traditional college students ($M = 134.91, SD = 27.94$), $t(298) = -2.29, p < .05$. In addition, non-traditional college students ($M = 84.76, SD = 25.71$) also displayed significantly greater emotional adjustment to college than did traditional college students ($M = 78.07, SD = 22.59$), $t(297) = -2.06, p < .05$.

In order to examine whether differences in our independent variables (self-esteem, family environment, and perfectionism) related to age group (traditional v. non-traditional) differences in our dependent variables (academic and emotional adaptation to college), we ran separate regressions for traditional and non-traditional college students using the stepwise method (see Tables 2-5). The stepwise method was chosen because we felt it was important not only to know whether different factors predicted adjustment in traditional and non-traditional college students, but also their order of importance.

In non-traditional college students, self-esteem was the sole predictor of academic adjustment to college, $R^2 = .12, F(1, 62) = 8.39, p < .01$ (see Table 2). In traditional college students, self-esteem was also the primary predictor, $R^2 = .20, F (1, 192) = 46.24, p < .001$. However, having high standards (perfectionism) was the second predictor, $R^2 = .22, F (2, 191) = 27.44, p < .001$ (see Table 3).

In non-traditional college students, self-esteem was also the primary predictor of emotional adjustment to college, $R^2 = .48, F (1, 61) = 56.122, p < .001$. The secondary predictor was independence, which measured how sure family members are about themselves, and whether they make their own decisions, $R^2 = .576, F (2, 60) = 40.10, p < .001$. Achievement, which measures degree of achievement-orientation that a family has, was the third predictor, $R^2 = .61, F (3, 59) = 30.26, p < .001$. Finally, the fourth predictor was organization, which measures how much a family values organization and structure in the family, $R^2 = .64, F (4, 58) = 24.91, p < .001$ (see Table 4). In traditional college students, self-esteem was shown to be the primary predictor, $R^2 = .29, F (1, 192) = 76.22, p < .001$ of emotional adjustment to college. Independence from other family members was the second predictor, $R^2 = .32, F (2, 192) = 45.32, p < .001$. The third predictor was discrepancy, which measured the difference between a person’s standards and their actual performance (Sirois, Monforton, & Simpson, 2010), $R^2 = .34, F (3, 192) = 32.94, p < .001$ (see Table 5).

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether self-esteem, perfectionism, and family-of-origin environment relate to academic and emotional adaptation in traditional and non-traditional college students in the same way. As expected, non-traditional college students displayed greater academic and emotional adjustment to college than traditional college students. Although we expected self-esteem, perfectionism, and family-of-origin environment would relate to academic and emotional adaptation in traditional college students, no predictions about these relations in non-traditional college students were made. Results will be discussed below.
Self-esteem

The results from the present study showed that self-esteem was the primary predictor of academic and emotional adaptation for traditional and non-traditional college students. The present study measured global self-esteem which has been identified to be related to psychological well-being (Oguz-duran & Tezer, 2009). This finding is interesting because it may help college counselors when attempting to assist college students who are struggling to adapt to college. The fact that it was the primary predictor for both traditional and non-traditional college students makes it more interesting because college counselors might start by assessing the student’s level of self-esteem in order to determine what might inhibit the student’s adjustment to college. However, future studies should conduct a comparison between specific self-esteem (which has been identified with academic achievements such as GPA) and global self-esteem. It seems that students who have a high level of global self-esteem seem to maintain that high level despite of academic failure. This may be because students with a high level of global self-esteem are relying on other sources such as family and friends or devaluing academia (Peixoto & Almeida, 2010), while students who rely more on specific self-esteem are relying primarily on their academic success, and if that plummets they might be left with a feeling of failure and of not being able to cope. Future studies might want to see whether there are differences between traditional and non-traditional college students and if one tends to have more of a global self-esteem or a specific self-esteem than the other.

Perfectionism

The present study showed that among traditional college students, high standards was the secondary predictor for academic adaptation. High standards has been identified to capture personal standards and performance expectations (Stoeber & Eysenck, 2008). Therefore, traditional college students might rely on performing a certain way academically because they expect to do so. The study that Stoeber and Eysenck (2008) performed showed that individuals with high standards tend to find something wrong even when there is not, and tend to display less efficient performance. When looking at emotional adaptation, the third predictor for traditional college students was discrepancy. The same study of Stoeber and Eysenck (2008) showed that individuals who tend to believe that they are constantly failing to meet their perfectionistic expectations are more cautious and conservative. They also are reluctant to blame themselves even when there is something wrong. Therefore, it is not surprising that individuals with high discrepancy tend to be more likely to adapt emotionally to college because they are not assuming responsibility if something is goes wrong or not as planned. This study looked only at perfectionism for college adaptations, but future studies might want to see how these two types of perfectionistic traits might affect academic performance.

Family environment

Beyers and Goossens (2003) showed that students who had positive feelings of being separated from their parents during college was a predictor of adjusting to the college environment. This supports our findings that independence was the secondary predictor for non-traditional and traditional college students when looking at emotional adaptation to college. In this study, independence is known as the extent to which family members are sure of themselves, are independent, and make their own decisions. This may be due to individuals who developed skills of not depending on their family and who might not have viewed being separated due to college as a big strain. It is worth mentioning that non-traditional students are older and might have not lived with their family for a while, thus they might be accustomed to the separation and might know how to live already on their own. Future studies should measure if students are living on their own and if so for how long, in order to more accurately determine family independence as a predictor of emotional college adjustment between traditional and non-traditional college students. Achievement orientation was the third predictor for emotional adjustment to college among non-traditional college students. The fourth predictor for emotional adjustment to college among non-traditional college students was family organization.

Limitations

Possible limitations of this study include the fact that this survey was self-reported, therefore it is not possible to know if participants were being completely honest. Also, because data was collected in a university where there is a fair amount of non-traditional college students, generalizability to other universities where there are
not that many non-traditional students may be difficult because non-traditional students on a non-traditional campus may be able to adjust better to college classrooms when they see there are more non-traditional students and they might feel like less of an outsider; whereas, a non-traditional student on a traditional campus might feel less comfortable in a classroom where there are a fair amount of much younger students. Finally, this study was correlational in nature. Future studies should examine how self-esteem, perfectionism, and family-of-origin environment relate to academic and emotional adaptation in traditional and non-traditional college students over time.

Conclusion

Our study shows that while self-esteem is a strong indicator of adaptation to college for both traditional and non-traditional college students, there are also different predictors for traditional and non-traditional college students. Non-traditional students seem to be influenced more by family, while traditional students are influenced by family independence. They also are influenced by perfectionist tendencies, while non-traditional students are not. Finally, non-traditional college students seem to adapt better academically and emotionally to college when compared to traditional college students.

We believe the findings in this study will assist in the expansion of the differences between traditional and non-traditional college students. Knowing what factors might help in adapting to college will allow for school counselors and professors to know where to aid each type of student when facing difficulties. Knowledge in this area will help to ensure academic success for college students. Future research should examine how family environment, self-esteem, and perfectionism affects students in a longitudinal dimension starting from their freshman year until graduation, and it should see if there are different predictors along the course and if traditional and non-traditional students tend to develop more difficulties adjusting to college on different time frames.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Mary Pritchard for all the support and guidance, to Dr. Elizabeth Morgan and Dr. Charles Honts, who have allowed me the opportunity to grow as a researcher and as a student, and to the McNair program.
References


Tables

Table 1. Survey Items with Means, Standard Deviations and Confidence Interval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Nontraditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n M (SD)</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS-R (standards)</td>
<td>225 41.06 (5.64) [-1.68, 1.59]</td>
<td>66 41.11 (6.84) [-1.68, 1.59]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS-R (discrepancy)</td>
<td>233 44.56 (14.91) [-93.74, 7.47]</td>
<td>66 41.28 (16.69) [-93.74, 7.47]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS-R (order)</td>
<td>229 5.54 (2.21) [-0.76, 0.44]</td>
<td>66 5.70 (2.16) [-0.76, 0.44]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSES</td>
<td>227 21.04 (5.89) [-2.82, 0.41]</td>
<td>66 22.24 (5.77) [-2.82, 0.41]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACQ (academic)</td>
<td>233 134.91 (27.94) [-17.10, 1.29]</td>
<td>67 144.10 (32.34) [-17.10, 1.29]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACQ (emotional)</td>
<td>233 78.07 (22.59) [-13.08, 0.29]</td>
<td>66 84.76 (25.71) [-13.08, 0.29]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FES (cohesion)</td>
<td>225 6.55 (2.17) [-0.77, 0.44]</td>
<td>66 6.71 (2.31) [-0.77, 0.44]</td>
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<tr>
<td>FES (expressiveness)</td>
<td>226 5.41 (1.87) [-0.80, 0.22]</td>
<td>66 5.70 (1.75) [-0.80, 0.22]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FES (conflict)</td>
<td>231 4.79 (1.40) [-0.16, 0.61]</td>
<td>65 4.57 (1.41) [-0.16, 0.61]</td>
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<td>FES (independence)</td>
<td>228 6.63 (1.60) [-0.66, 0.22]</td>
<td>66 6.85 (1.60) [-0.66, 0.22]</td>
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<td>FES (achievement-orientation)</td>
<td>228 5.80 (1.52) [-0.02, 0.83]</td>
<td>66 5.40 (1.65) [-0.02, 0.83]</td>
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<tr>
<td>FES (active-recreational)</td>
<td>225 5.50 (2.11) [-0.56, 0.63]</td>
<td>66 5.47 (2.30) [-0.56, 0.63]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FES (moral-religious orientation)</td>
<td>227 4.78 (2.72) [-0.95, 0.51]</td>
<td>65 5.00 (2.40) [-0.95, 0.51]</td>
</tr>
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<td>FES (control)</td>
<td>228 4.55 (1.36) [-0.27, 0.48]</td>
<td>65 4.45 (1.37) [-0.27, 0.48]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < .05
APS-R: almost perfect scale revised
RSES: Rosenberg self-esteem scale
SACQ: student adaptation to college questionnaire
FES: family environment scale
Table 2. Summary of stepwise regression analysis for the variables predicting academic adaptation among non-traditional college students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.35*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **p < .01

Table 3. Summary of stepwise regression analysis for the variables predicting academic adaptation among traditional college students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.44**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.39**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.18*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **p < .001,  
* p < .01,  
Standards: perfectionist standards

Table 4. Summary of stepwise regression analysis for the variables predicting emotional adaptation among non-traditional college students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.70***</td>
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<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
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<td>.64**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>4.56</td>
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<td>.31**</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.65***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.28**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement orientation</td>
<td>-2.61</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.60***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.25**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Achievement orientation</td>
<td>-3.59</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.19*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: ***p < .001  
**p < .01  
*p < .05
Table 5. Summary of stepwise regression analysis for the variables predicting emotional adaptation among traditional college students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>β</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>2.02</td>
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<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.46**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.21**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
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<td>Independence</td>
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<td>Discrepancy</td>
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Note: ***p < .001  
**p < .01  
*p < .05
A West European Style Populist Radical Right Movement in America? The Case of the Tea Party

Daniel May: McNair Scholar
Dr. Ross Burkhart: Mentor

Political Science & Communication

Abstract

The Tea Party (TP), whose candidates made significant gains in the 2010-midterm elections, lacks a place in the comparative party literature and also defies ready classification. Is it solely a movement to reduce the size of government and cut taxes as its name – some refer to it as the Taxed Enough Already party – implies? Or do its supporters share a broader set of conservative positions on social as well as economic issues? Does the movement draw support from across the religious spectrum? Or has the religious right “taken over” the TP, as some commentators have suggested (Koelkebeck, 2010)? In light of these various claims, this comparative study seeks to characterize the TP and asks: (1) Is it a populist party? (2) Is it a populist radical right party? The aim is to locate the TP in multi-dimensional space using a careful reading of the party literature as the primary data source and to do so by reference to three fundamental “isms” attributed to West European populist radical right parties – that is, populism, socio-cultural authoritarianism and ethno-nationalism (nativism). It is argued that the TP is indeed a populist radical right party – with Americanism as its pivotal concept – albeit one (thus far) lacking the xenophobic extremism of the likes of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPA) or the Danish People’s Party (DPP).

Tea Party Influence

The growth in TP support has steadily increased, from its peculiar beginning on February 19, 2009, (the infamous 8:15 AM rant by CNBC on-air editor Rick Santelli on the floor of the Chicago mercantile exchange) right on to the dramatic achievements made in the 2010 mid-term elections that helped the GOP take control of the House of Representatives and make gains in the Senate. Indeed, TP supporters made up 41% of the electorate on Nov. 2, and 86% of them voted for Republican House candidates according to exit polls (Clement & Green, 2010). The movement owes much to the business reporter Santelli who, while live on his broadcast, criticized the government plan to refinance mortgages, which had just been announced the day before. He stated that this proposal was simply “promoting bad behavior” by “subsidizing losers’ mortgages.” He further suggested holding a tea party for traders to gather and dump the derivatives in the Chicago river on July 1. He clearly had the support of the traders around him, who cheered his strategy, as well as the apparently amused hosts in the studio and the video quickly went viral.

According to the New York Times reporter Kate Zernike, this is where the movement was first inspired to coalesce under the collective banner of “Tea Party.” Websites materialized within hours of Santelli’s broadcast (Zernike, 2010). John Shilling, an 18-year-old student in Hilton Head, South Carolina, launched a site called 92percentgroup.org. Its primary mission was to oppose the Homeowner Affordability and Stability Plan. “We feel like 92 percent of the country has been paying their mortgage on time, and we’ve been a silent majority this whole time,” Shilling said. Within 72 hours of launching the site, it received 150,000 visits. That same day, reteaparty.com went live to coordinate tea parties. The founders reported that by the next morning they had received 40,000 e-mails, and by March they reported receiving 11,000 visitors a day (Last, 2009). As reported by The Huffington Post, a Facebook page was created a day after “Santelli’s Rant” by FreedomWorks, who called for simultaneous TP protests across the country (Hamsher, 2009). Soon the “Nationwide Chicago Tea Party” protest was coordinated across over 40 different cities for February 27, 2009, thus establishing the first national modern TP protest (Berger, 2009).

In 2010, Tea Party-endorsed candidates upset established Republicans in several primaries, such as Alaska, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Nevada, New York, South Carolina and Utah, giving a new momentum to the conservative cause in the 2010 elections. Some notable veterans that were taken out by TP candidates in the primaries include Sen. Robert Bennett in Utah, defeated by now-Sen. Mike Lee; Rep. Mike Castle of Delaware, a former governor, upset by Christine O’Donnell; and Trey Grayson of Kentucky beaten by now-Sen. Rand Paul. Prior to the elections taking place the New York Times identified 138 candidates for Congress with significant Tea
Party support, and reported that all of them were running as Republicans—of whom 129 were running for the House and nine for the Senate. Presently, the Tea Party Caucus has 52 members in the House and four in the Senate having thus far has refused to be “co-opted” by the Republican establishment in Washington. Looking ahead to the 2012 presidential primary, several candidates, including Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich and Michele Bachman, are actively courting the various activist groups in the hopes of gaining early support.

With such attention being paid to the movement there have naturally been myriad explanations for what this new political development is all about. Thus far it has been perceived alternately by its supporters as conservative and in line with what America’s founders intended; by American media commentators as a case of right-wing populism; and by researchers as a Republican rebranding that is sure to fade away. Additionally, journalists have made reference to “the breakthrough of right-wing populism in America,” attributing it above all as a response to several federal actions, including passage of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act (2008), the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009) and President Obama’s sweeping health care reform bills (Barnes, 2009, Ferrara, 2009, & Seleny, 2009). Others saw the movement as a reaction to the problems associated with immigration, such as personal safety on the streets, crime and concern about jobs (Garber, 2010). Some go further, claiming that its supporters are nothing more than neo-Klansman, according to Patrik Jonsson of The Christian Science Monitor. Other organizations, such as the National Republican African American Caucus have expressed the fear that the TP is a racist party (Thompson, 2010) and is largely insensitive to the multi-cultural make-up of the country (Tucker, 2010). Significantly, a report published in the fall of 2010 by the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights and backed by the NAACP, found what it says are efforts by white nationalist groups and militias to link themselves to the TP movement (Thompson, 2010). All in all, there has been substantial growth in the TP's support in recent elections, but does this denote the breakthrough of a populist radical right party in America? Based on a careful study of its programmatic output since its inception in 2009, this comparative research project seeks to characterize the TP by reference to its core ideological features in relation to the populist radical right parties present in Western Europe.

The TP: A Populist Party?

Schedler (1996) has noted that populism has been associated with a broad array of anti-attitudes—among them anti-elite, anti-establishment, anti-modern, anti-urban, anti-industrial, anti-state, anti-foreign, anti-intellectual, and anti-minority sentiments. Anti-political-establishment actors, he posits, declare war on the political class—in the pejorative sense of the stratum of professional politicians. When viewed in this light it seems the TP would qualify as an anti-establishment party, asserting the existence of a fundamental divide between the political establishment and the people (Abedi, 2009). The leading TP figures, including the likes of Glenn Beck and Michelle Bachman, have displayed the classic range of anti-attitudes, particularly the anti-elitism and anti-intellectualism that they use to attack the left and President Obama. In addition, they attack the Republican Party as being part of the establishment problem. This despite a The Wall Street Journal-NBC News poll in mid October that showed 35% of likely voters were Tea-party supporters, and they favored the Republicans by 84% to 10%. The TP leader Glen Beck in particular has railed against the elite in government. Typically, for example, he has asserted, “book-learned theoreticians, arrogant bureaucrats, cold-hearted technocrats, uncomprehending centralizers, big-money worshippers and smooth avant-garde thinkers do not trust the people. They do not value the people’s views because they believe the people are stupid and indifferent and that all wisdom rests with the experts and an elite that is divorced from everyday life.”

The TP also conforms to the conventional wisdom that populism is a phenomenon embedded in democratic systems, which is confrontational but not anti-democratic. It seeks to oppose the minority preventing the demands of the people from being realized (Ware, 2002), but while associated with a wide range of anti-attitudes, it is not anti-systemic in the sense of rejecting participation in the institutions of representative democracy. In Bergh’s terms, populism channels “elite protest” rather than “system protest” (Bergh, 2004). Populist movements and parties may be a “by-product of the democratic malaise” (Meny & Surel, 2002) or a manifestation of what Canovan has referred to as “the insoluble paradox of democracy” (Canovan, 2002), but they are not generally anti-democratic in the sense of seeking to dismantle the constitutional and institutional structures of representative democracy.

However, a challenge to this observation occurs when these parties establish themselves and in their policies and rhetoric advocate a society based on ethnic and cultural homogeneity. This can lead to certain people, and groups with foreign backgrounds, being excluded from participating in society, their freedoms and rights limited and exclusion and inclusion mechanisms in society strengthened (Kiiskinen, Fryklund, & Saveljef, 2007). The TP has in fact canvassed a model of populist democracy which places the emphasis on the “by” and “of” elements in Lincoln's classical formulation. The Contract From America website, which was founded as open-sourced platform
for the movement and supported by all major affiliates, states that the TP trusts the people, their strength and creativity and notes that a sustainable society is built from the bottom up by listening to the people. Well-grounded criticism is dubbed “hindsight” and “populist,” but it is argued that it is futile to seek to intimidate the nation with the specter of populism. The TP will ensure that so-called populist themes, which concern the nation, rise to the fore in the coming election campaign. The manifesto concludes that the TP will provide a channel for “new ideas, bold initiatives and sensible protest” and serve as a counterpoise to the compulsory consensus demanded by the political establishment. In short, the TP has eschewed the pejorative connotations of populism and sought unashamedly to market what the Tea Party Express calls responsible populism.

For many scholars populism is either a mass movement (Barr, 2009), a specific style of communication (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007) and/or a political mobilization strategy. Eatwell (2009), for example, argues that “populism is best seen as a style rather than a specific body of thought,” adding that “it has no clear ideology and tends to be negative.” In similar vein, Luther (2007) has noted how the populist vote maximization strategy of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) in the 1990s produced inconsistency in the party’s policies—a type of “ideological promiscuity” born of electoral opportunism. Equally, there are those writers, albeit scarcely a majority, who have viewed populism as an ideology, although it is pointed out that the spatial location of populism will be determined by “additives” from other ideologies. The ideological “overlay” will dictate the particular form of populism and, by extension, allow us to consider the most appropriate characterization of the TP’s populism.

Mudde (2007) notes that social populism is left-wing populism, combining socialism and populism, whereas neo-liberal populism is right-wing populism, combining economic liberalism and populism. Abts and Rummens (2007) hold that left-wing versions of populism will refer to socio-economic relations and “identify the people with the laborers and farmers.” The wider point here is that populism can occur at various points on the political spectrum and is not the sole preserve of either side. Secondly, whereas left-wing and right-wing versions of populism have been defined principally in socio-economic terms, extreme-right or radical-right populism had been conceptualized in essentially socio-cultural terms—by reference to “ethnic characterizations of the true people,” for example (Abts and Rummens, 2007). Thus, Mudde identifies the core ideological features of populist radical right parties as nativism, authoritarianism, and populism, and while it is clear that populism can be placed on a conventional left-right continuum, nativism is viewed as the ultimate determinant of this party family. It is defined as “an ideology that holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (‘the nation’) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state” (Mudde, 2007).

Rydgren (2007) also defines the new radical right in essentially socio-cultural rather than socio-economic terms and like Mudde, he too, identifies three core ideological features. First, there is ethno-nationalism, which involves fortifying the nation by making it ethnically homogeneous and by returning to basic values. Then there is populism, which has essentially involved accusing the political establishment of placing internationalism ahead of the nation and its own narrow self-interest before the interests of the people. Rydgren regards populism as a characteristic but not a distinctive feature of the new radical right. Rather, it is the combination of ethno-nationalist xenophobia and anti-establishment populism that forms the quintessence of the radical right, which also embodies a general socio-cultural authoritarianism emphasizing the importance of law and order and family values. He concludes that the new radical right is right wing primarily in the socio-cultural sense of the term. It prioritizes socio-cultural issues and in particular those related to national identity.

The second part of this paper follows a “core ideological features” strategy in search of the TP’s basic “driving force.” The discussion is predicated on a “qualitative content analysis”—that is, a careful reading and interpretation—of the TP’s programmatic output (the Contract from America, interviews, statements of short-term policy goals, etc.) since 2009. There are two obvious objections to this approach. While definitions of populist radical right parties, such as those above, give precedence to socio-cultural over socio-economic values, an examination of party literature does not permit entirely safe conclusions about dimension salience—that is, the relative importance attached to particular policy content. There is always likely to be an element of expert (subjective) judgment involved, and in this respect, comparativists may well fall foul of the country specialist. Furthermore, characterizing the spatial position of parties on the basis of programmatic themes inevitably simplifies the reality of party behavior. In practice, parties are rarely unitary actors and internal factions and tendencies will differ in emphasis from the programmatic “standard.”

**The TP’s Populism: Center-based or Radical Rightest?**

Ultimately, of course, the spatial position of thought is bound to be somewhat arbitrary, which is presumably why O’Malley makes the point that “if it is not the economic right that is being referred to [in relation to
radical right parties] it is unclear why the term ‘right’ is employed” (O’Malley, 2008). Indeed, while the primacy of socio-cultural values may define radical right parties, it has already been emphasized that populism is not the exclusive preserve of the political right and it may enjoy coordinate or indeed greater importance in the ideological fabric of a party than authoritarianism or ethno-nationalism. In relation to the socio-economic dimension of TP's populism, several fundamental party objectives warrant emphasis.

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tea Party: Conservative on Economic Issues</th>
<th>All Registered Voters %</th>
<th>Rep/Lean Rep %</th>
<th>Tea Party %</th>
<th>Tea Party-Reg Voter Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefer smaller government</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>+32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer bigger government</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov’t almost always wasteful</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>+26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov’t does better job than it gets credit for</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations make a fair and reasonable profit</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>+23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations make too much profit</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>2,816</td>
<td>1,281</td>
<td>887</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As reported by the Pew Research Center, the TP is much more Republican and conservative than the public as a whole. Indeed, TP supporters are more conservative on economic issues and the size of government than either Republicans in general or all registered voters. According to a September 2010 survey by Pew, almost nine-in-ten registered voters who agree with the TP (88%) prefer a smaller government with fewer services, compared with 80% of all Republicans and Republican-leaning independents and 56% of all registered voters.

In the same survey, fully 87% of TP supporters said government is almost always wasteful; eight points more than Republicans overall (79%) and 26 points more than all registered voters (61%). And while more than half of registered voters (54%) said that corporations make too much money, TP supporters were inclined to see corporations as making a fair and reasonable amount of profit. Indeed, TP supporters took this position by a two-to-one margin (62% fair profit vs. 30% too much profit). A somewhat smaller percentage of all Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (55%) said corporations make a fair and reasonable profit. In short, when viewed in traditional socio-economic terms, the TP’s populism has been “right-leaning” or at least “center-right-inclined” in its concern to tackle fundamental social inequalities.

The TP has unquestionably been traditionalist in its socio-cultural attitudes defending fundamental values and standards against those of the “permissive society.” One group has propounded a neo-Jeffersonian small-firm-small-farm model predicated on the belief that family-sized enterprises generate the type of solid inter-personal relations which, when coupled with fundamental Christian values, provide a firm moral foundation for society. Correspondingly, the TP has taken a hard line on those insidious forces eroding the secure moral base of society and in particular those liberal attitudes perverting the traditional family concept. The Grassfire Nation website has noted, for example, that, over the course of the “rainbow coalitions,” the notion of the family has been broadened in a most unnatural way (same-sex marriage now gaining legality at a steady pace) and the door accordingly opened to an ever-deeper decay in the ethical base of society. Indeed, in connection with a law (enacted in May 2009) enabling one of the partners in a registered same-sex relationship legally to adopt the child of the other partner, the TP Patriot organizer Mark Meckler, expressed his dismay at the collapse of basic standards and stated (controversially, to put it mildly) that people would be seeking permission to marry their dogs next!
Table 2.

**Tea Party: Also Conservative on Social Issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Registered Voters</th>
<th>Rep/Lean Rep</th>
<th>Tea Party</th>
<th>Tea Party-Reg Voter Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Same-sex marriage</strong></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abortion should be...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal in all/most cases</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal in all/most cases</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Illegal immigration priority</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better border security</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>+20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Path to citizenship</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both equally</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>More important to...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect gun rights</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>+27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control gun ownership</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While registered voters as a whole are closely divided on same-sex marriage (42% in favor, 49% opposed), TP supporters oppose it by more than two-to-one (64% opposed, 26% in favor). Similarly, almost six-in-ten (59%) of those who agree with the TP say abortion should be illegal in all or most cases, 17 percentage points higher than among all registered voters. TP supporters closely resemble Republican voters as a whole on these issues.

On immigration, TP supporters are 20 percentage points more likely than registered voters overall to say better border security is the most important priority in dealing with illegal immigration (51% vs. 31%). About half as many TP supporters (10%) as registered voters on the whole (22%) see the establishment of a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants as the top priority.

The TP has also taken a tough “zero tolerance” line on drugs and alcohol abuse and demanded suitably punitive and effective measures to deal with a deteriorating situation, including devoting more resources to policing. The Oathkeepers website pointed out the effect of drugs on crimes against the person and property, along with the increase in drug-related traffic accidents. It concluded that the TP is opposed to the liberal line on so-called “soft drugs” adopted in some countries, not least because of the complex social problems that are stored up for the future.
Support for the TP varies dramatically across religious groups. Surveys from November 2010 through February 2011 show that white evangelical Protestants are roughly five times as likely to agree with the movement as to disagree with it (44% vs. 8%), though substantial numbers of white evangelicals either have no opinion or have not heard of the movement (48%). Three-in-ten or more of white Catholics (33%) and white mainline Protestants (30%) also agree with the TP, but among these two groups at least one-in-five people disagrees with the movement.

Among Jews, the religiously unaffiliated and black Protestants, however, there is more opposition than support for the TP. Nearly half of Jews (49%) say they disagree with the TP movement, compared with 15% who agree with it. Among the unaffiliated, more than four-in-ten (42%) disagree with the movement while 15% agree with it. About two-thirds of atheists and agnostics (67%) disagree with the movement. Most black Protestants polled (56%) say they have not heard of the TP or have no opinion about it. But among black Protestants who offer an opinion, those who disagree with the movement outnumber those who agree with it by more than five-to-one (37% disagree vs. 7% agree).

Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion of Tea Party</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion/Haven't Heard/Refused</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White evangelical</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White mainline</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Protestant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White non-Hispanic</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist/Agnostic</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing in particular</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among Registered Voters. Combined surveys from November 2010 through February 2011.

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Table 4.

**Tea Party and the Conservative Christian Movement**

Of those who agree with the conservative Christian movement...

- 69% Agree w/Tea Party
- 4% Disagree w/Tea Party
- 27% Have no opinion/haven’t heard of Tea Party

While of those who agree with the Tea Party...

- 42% Agree w/conservative Christian movement
- 11% Disagree w/conservative Christian movement
- 46% Have no opinion/haven’t heard of conservative Christian movement

Among Registered Voters. Data from survey conducted July 21-Aug. 5, 2010.

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Americans who support the conservative Christian movement, sometimes known as the religious right, also overwhelmingly support the TP. In the Pew Research Center’s August 2010 poll, 69% of registered voters who agreed with the religious right also said they agreed with the TP. Moreover, both the religious right and the TP count a higher percentage of white evangelical Protestants in their ranks (45% among the religious right, 34% among the TP and 22% among all registered voters in the August 2010 survey). Religiously unaffiliated people are less common among the TP or religious right supporters than among the public at-large (3% among the religious right, 10% among the TP and 15% among all registered voters in the August poll). In short, the TP has been authoritarian rather than libertarian, espousing the authority and legitimacy of a Christian society grounded in traditional family values.

It will be recalled that ethno-nationalism or nativism—that is, strengthening the nation by making it ethnically homogeneous—has been viewed as the ultimate determinant of membership of the populist radical right party family. In practice, in the globalized world of the new millennium, the threat to the homogeneity of the nation has come principally from the free movement of peoples and, as Ivarflaten has observed, the grievances uniting all successful populist right parties have been those arising from Europe’s ongoing immigration crisis (Ivarflaten, 2008). On the face of it, the party’s stance on the immigration question has been moderate, at least at the rhetorical level. Bachman has not resorted to the xenophobic extremism of the likes of Heinz-Christian Strache of the FPÖ, insisting before the 2012 general election that demonizing other social groups and stirring racial hatred involved kicking the weak and that she does not want a victory at any price. The Contract From America website, moreover, held that the TP favors a responsible immigration policy. Equally, the TP has undoubtedly attracted racist elements, both candidates and voters. For instance, during the 2012 primary campaign, Herman Cain has used the kind of racist and homophobic language commonly associated with the radical right. Indeed, standing as an Independent on the TP list for President, he has attracted considerable notoriety—as well as a sizeable following—after his idiosyncratic characterization of Muslim attitudes and his argument that it would be constitutional to ban mosques.

Much of the TP’s literature indicates a hard party line on foreigners. On the basis of readings from several TP websites including Americans for Prosperity, The 9/12 Project, and Liberty Central, two intertwined threads in the party’s attitude towards immigrants are worth separating.

First, the TP is mono-culturist rather than multi-culturist in orientation, opposed to wholesale immigration while pursuing a line of what might be termed comprehensive acculturation—a basic “when in Rome, do as the Romans do” approach. Ginni Thomas (who, interestingly, is the wife of SC Justice Clarence Thomas) of Liberty Central asserts that it is not sensible to create a system where persons come to America simply to spend time and find happiness while officials seek artificially to preserve the immigrant’s own culture. Preserving their culture is the immigrants’ own business and public resources should not be expended on it, as it does not directly assist in the integration of immigrants into American society. “We can never accept those decisions which involve urging the native population to sacrifice their own traditions to accommodate foreign cultures. Multiculturalism should not be promoted at the expense of the native culture.” She maintains that since the present body of immigrants does not really try to integrate into society but instead constitutes ethnic sub-cultures, large-scale immigration will ultimately threaten the indigenous American culture.

Second, the TP is welfare chauvinist in the sense that the welfare of the native population must come first and should not be deleteriously affected by immigration. Of particular concern has been the position of young persons and young-parent families. Resistnet.com insists that America does not need significant numbers of immigrants to meet a possible labor and skills shortage but rather vocational education should be increased and its quality improved. It holds that too many young persons were being channeled into an academic route at the end of which there was no guarantee of a job. Many also incur levels of debt (in the form of student loans) that delay the start of a family because no child benefit was built into the student support system. If nothing is done, America will witness the emergence of a white-collar proletariat whose work and family life will rest on a shaky foundation. American working society, too, would rest on a precarious base in so far as racism would breed in a situation in which, shortsightedly, immigrants and foreign labor are available while the native population is experiencing difficulties in obtaining work.

A case can be made for viewing the TP as a center-right populist party. Firstly, although the TP’s electorate conforms rather closely to that of the archetypal radical rightist voter (Lubbers, Gijssberts, & Scheepers, 2002) and its voters are the most hostile of all the parties to increased immigration, the TP supporters have not seen their party as radical right-wing. They display relatively low levels of party identification and have substantially lower than average levels of political trust in politicians. On the basis of the 2010 general election survey, moreover, the TP’s voters were preponderantly white, male, derived overwhelmingly from the age cohorts over 45 years and likely to be wealthier and have more education than the general population (Thee-Brenan & Zernike, 2010).
Secondly, and more tenuously, the TP emerged from a populist movement and not from an extremist right-wing tradition as in the case of the Front National (Rydgren, 2005) or Sweden Democrats (Widfeldt, 2008) and its rhetoric and leadership style have been moderate compared with the xenophobic extremism of the Danish People's Party and the Freedom Party of Austria. There has been no widespread insistence on the threat posed by “Islamization,” proposals of the type of Haider’s sonderlager—a special camp for the elderly, sick and criminal asylum-seekers on an isolated 1,200 meter-high alpine pasture (Connolly, 2008), or wholesale repatriation.

Yet an analysis based on its core ideological features does not support the TP's characterization as a center or center-right populist party. Rather, the mix of traditional conservatism (socio-cultural authoritarianism) and ethno-nationalism (nativism) defines the TP as a spin-off party (Rydgren, 2005)—a populist radical right party endorsing many of the themes of its harsher European counterparts. Many TP supporters are quite anti-globalism and oppose continuing membership in the United Nations and indeed any further renunciation of national sovereignty. This has been coupled with support for the immediate deportation of criminal asylum-seekers, protection for domestic agriculture and industry and tougher penalties for drug-abusers. Crucially, the central concept in the TP's ideology—and one that permeates the entire party literature—is the notion of (true) Americanism. The term appears widely on many of the TP's websites. The Tea Party Nation for example, contains sections entitled “Americanism is strength” and “Americanism is a competitive advantage” and it insists that Americanism is cultural capital, which should be capitalized upon and not dissipated. It holds somewhat obscurely that “society and nation go hand in hand towards the future and if we as a nation are not able to influence society and if society has no nation to influence we will lose our competitive edge over less successful countries in which society and nation are less well integrated than in America.” Americanism is the pivotal, pre-eminent concept and the TP's basic geist. It is that which defines the TP as belonging to the family of radical right parties.

Conclusions

Contrary to the conventional wisdom among American political scientists who have viewed the TP as a “right-based populist party” or the “most right-wing of the non-radical parties,” this article has argued—on the basis of the core nature of nativism or ethno-nationalism in the party's ideological armory—that the Tea Party is best classified as a populist radical right party in the West European tradition. The party’s anti-immigrant rhetoric has undoubtedly been less extreme than say the Danish People’s Party but, not insignificantly, it has had questionable admirers overseas. Andrew Brevik’s manifesto mentions a great admiration for the movement and Strache of the FPÖ has declared a wish to meet with the “leaders of the American Tea Party movement,” which he described as “highly interesting” (AP, 2010).

The article has also made the case that the party has a rather hard line on foreigners although it might reasonably be speculated that (thus far) the populist anti-consensus character of the TP has been more appealing to most of its voters than its nativist credentials. Populist parties have generally been leader-dependent, context-dependent and drawn on the most volatile sections of the electorate. On the point of leadership dependency, Michele Bachman’s decision to run for president was largely designed to capitalize on her personal popularity, maintain the party’s media profile, and above all prepare the way for a strong TP performance in the 2012 general election. However, populist parties have been notoriously prone to factional strains and maintaining the unity, drive and direction of a movement as disparate as the TP will be highly challenging.

On the point of context dependency, the TP undoubtedly profited during the 2010 local and state elections from a widespread anti-establishment, anti-party mood spawned of revelations about “corporate bail-outs” and vague iterations of “too big to fail.” Undeclared contributions from corporate-sector sources created a strong sense of sleaze and a widespread sentiment of “a plague on all your houses” among the public at large. The TP could continue to profit from this—particularly during present economic hard times—not least as, almost daily, fresh murky revelations appear in the press, although the ability of the TP leadership to continue to rein in the racist elements attracted to the party will be crucial. The 2010 mid-term election campaigns triggered many debates about immigration, during which a number of controversial views from high-profile politicians were expressed, and a concerted attempt made by the Democrats to tar the TP with the racist brush. It is highly doubtful if the TP could continue to grow as a blatantly (Danish-style) racist party and the recruitment of both sufficient, and as importantly suitable, candidates for the 2012 presidential election will be vital to its continuing success.

Finally, there is the highly volatile nature of the TP’s support base. Indeed, it should be remembered that TP upsets in Boston and elsewhere were achieved in a heady time and may not necessarily be replicated in a general election, although before midsummer 2011 TP registered 22% percent in the opinion polls (Campbell & Putnam, 2011). The wider point here though concerns the TP’s strategic direction. On the one hand, as a populist party it must retain its protest appeal to attract votes. On the other, Bachman has indicated that she has not ruled out
participation and compromise in governance if elected. Mény & Surel (2002) have noted that populist parties “are by nature neither durable nor sustainable parties of government. Their fate is to be integrated into the mainstream or to remain permanently in opposition.” The Austrian Freedom Party was an office-seeking party and indeed formed part of the governing coalitions between 2000 and 2005. However, the loss of its anti-establishment credentials significantly undercut the party’s vote and radical image. The rise of the TP has witnessed the breakthrough of a West European style populist radical right party in the U.S., but the wider question will be whether, in America and elsewhere, a populist radical right party can continue to appear radical except as an anti-political-establishment party.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express his gratitude to Dr. Ross Burkhart, Helen Barnes, Greg Martinez and the McNair Scholar Program.
References


Effects of Prisoner Location on Visitation Patterns

Anjannette Monroe: McNair Scholar

Dr. Audrey Begun: Mentor

Criminal Justice & Social Sciences

Abstract

This study explores factors related to visitation patterns for prisoners under Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC). A quantitative data analysis was conducted using a database provided by the ODRC which encompassed visits and demographics on incarcerated prisoners (N=50,551) from January 2006 until July 19, 2011. Qualitative analyses depicted a hypothetical visitor’s experience including calculations of transit distances/duration for inmate visits. Hypotheses posited for this study included: (1) there is a negative correlation between travel distances/costs and visitation frequency; (2) inmate relocation to more distant facilities negatively affects visitation patterns; (3) inmate visitation will be greater during early incarceration and immediately prior to release; (4) women receive fewer visits than men due to the smaller number/more centralized locations of women’s facilities. Results show that many inmates had very few visits while a few inmates had many visits. Gender specific analyses indicate significantly more visitors approved, lower security levels, and a higher proportion of marriage/significant others among women than men, but no difference in the actual numbers of visits experienced. Tremendous variability exists between institutions in terms of transportation accessibility and visitation policy barriers. Results will be used to raise awareness towards developing strategies to encourage inmate visitation across geographical distances.

Introduction

Increasingly, research, program, and policy attention is directed toward factors that influence outcomes for prisoners who reenter the community following a period of incarceration in jail or prison. In part, this interest is fueled by recognition that an estimated 95% of prisoners will eventually be released back to the community (Hughes & Wilson, 2002). Positive family and community bonds can be of great importance, especially while inmates reenter community living. Evidence suggests that reentry success is heavily influenced by an individual’s social ties to family and significant others in the community who support their reentry efforts (Bales & Mears, 2008; Casey-Acevedo & Bakken, 2001, 2002; Christian, 2005; Hairston, Rollin, & Jo, 2004; LaVigne, Naser, Brooks, & Castro, 2005; Wright, Cullen, & Miller, 2001).

Often during incarceration, however, it can be difficult for inmates to maintain connections to family and social networks. Social ties tend to be severed during incarceration, leaving inmates with little social capital. Portes (1998) reports that the related literature has increasingly identified social capital as the “ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures” (p.6). Stakes in conformity refers to the strength of bonds (weak to strong) to conventional society and presumes that stronger bonds represent a deterrent to delinquent/criminal behavior (Spohn, 2007). Not only do inmates lack social capital while incarcerated, but the isolation of prison settings can also contribute to a weakened stake in conformity.

Research indicates that individuals who lack “social capital” or a “stake in conformity” may be more likely to reoffend (Toby, 1957 as cited in Sherman, 1992; Spohn, 2007). Results from research conducted by Sherman (1992) indicate that individuals arrested for domestic violence who lacked a significant stake in conformity tended to be more likely to reoffend. Spohn (2007) reports that, when compared with offenders who possessed an elevated stake in conformity, offenders who held a nominal stake in conformity were more prone towards re-arrest.

One factor that may influence the maintenance of social capital and help rebuild a strong stake in conformity is inmate visitation. According to Hairston, Rollin, & Jo (2004), visitation is one way for inmates and family members to preserve contact and cope with the distance incarceration creates. A recent study conducted by Bales & Mears (2008) suggests that visitation may also be linked to lower rates of recidivism. Visher & Travis (2003) report that inmates who experienced higher rates of family contact (regardless of the methods of contact)
tended to have lower rates of recidivism following reentry into the community. Inmate visitation can create a connection to social ties that may provide a helpful resource upon release from an institution.

While visitation may help to sustain an inmates’ social capital and preserve their stake in conformity, there are several barriers that hinder accessibility to inmate visitation. Bales and Mears (2008) found, in accordance with previous literature, that most inmates typically were not visited. Frequent obstacles can include distance from the visitor’s home to the location of the prison, cost, and prison visitation policy and procedure. Visitation is commonly hindered due to the geographic location of inmates (Bales & Mears, 2008; Thomas, 2006; Schafer, 1994). Many prison institutions are located in remote areas and visitors regularly spend more time traveling to the prison facilities than the time spent visiting with the inmate (Gordon, 1999). Many family members of incarcerated individuals may choose not to visit because the cost and time involved in travel is too great (Christian, Mellow, & Thomas, 2006; Christian, 2005; Fuller, 1993). Studies conducted by Bedard and Helland (2004), as well as Jackson, Templar, Reimer, and LeBaron (1997), reported that elevated rates of visitation were associated with the close proximity of visitors’ residence in relation to the prison facilities. Low-income families may rely on public transportation to visit inmates, but public transportation, such as buses, does not always provide direct routes to prison facilities (Clark, 2001).

Visitation policies within the prison system can further impede an already difficult voyage for inmate visitors. While most visitation policies are in place to provide safety and security measures, frequently visitation procedures are strict and limiting to visitors (Clark 2001). Schafer (1994) reports that many facilities only offer daytime visits. A person with school age children or who is employed may have a difficult time visiting an inmate because of the limited hours available to visit. While many prisons have created more lenient policies to help decrease these barriers, prisons still lack adequate staff to supervise the changes to visitation procedures (Clark 2001).

A growing trend in correctional management is the privatization of prison facilities. Privately operated prison facilities offer flexibility for inmate placement during a period of increased budget cuts and prison overcrowding and many states are investing in privately managed prisons. Turning to privately operated prison facilities may provide several fiscal benefits, but frequently, this transition requires transferring inmates to new geographic locations which may further hamper visitation (Shichor & Sechrest, 2002).

The state of Ohio is engaged in and contemplating a series of prisoner relocation actions, as a response to both security and budgetary concerns. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) recently announced plans to accept bids from private prison corporations on five of the 31 prison facilities located in Ohio. Of the five facilities, two are currently privately operated and three (which include the Grafton Correctional Institution in Lorain County, North Central Correctional Institution in Marion County, and Marion Juvenile Correctional Facility, also in Marion County) are available for private purchase (ODRC, 2011). In addition to the closure of several facilities, there are plans to consolidate many more to meet budgetary demands (Johnson, 2011). This has implications for prisoners’ reentry, as well as for their ability to maintain meaningful positive relationships.

The purpose of this research study was to explore a set of factors that might relate to visitation patterns for prisoners under ODRC supervision. This research study was designed to examine the nature of prisoner visitation patterns as related to the characteristics of the incarcerated individual, the incarceration trajectory, geography, and the changing context of prison placements as the State revises its correctional system. The specific aims of this study were to determine: (1) the extent to which geographic proximity affects the rate and nature of visits; (2) the impact on visitation of prisoners’ moves between facilities; (3) differences in visitation patterns for men and women prisoners; and (4) how visitation patterns relate to phases of the incarceration period (i.e., the beginning, middle, and pre-release) and the variable of time. The ultimate goal is to inform policy and practice regarding prisoner location with an eye to promoting social ties that eventually may help promote more positive community reentry efforts following prisoner release. Results will be used to inform criminal justice administrators’ inmate placement decisions and to raise awareness concerning the necessity for developing strategies to encourage visitation across geographic distances.

**Methods**

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative secondary data analyses to explore how prisoner location affects visitation patterns. Quantitative data was analyzed to identify correlations and group comparisons between variables relating to prisoner visitation. Qualitative data was analyzed in order to replicate a typical visitor’s experience and explore the ODRC visitation policies and procedures.
Participants

The data used in the secondary analysis procedures were provided by the ODRC. The given database included routinely collected data concerning each prisoner under state supervision (N=50,551), incorporating data on inmates and visitors within the 31 ODRC prison facilities from January 2006 to July 2011. Inmates without reentry potential (death or life sentences) and those from other states were removed from the database leaving a final sample size of 39,874. Of the 39,874 participants, 5.3% were female and 94.7% were male (see Table 1). The participants ranged in age from 15 to 84 with a mean age of 34 (see Table 2). Data procedures followed strict ethical research protocol approved by both The Ohio State University and The Ohio Department of Correction and Rehabilitation Institutional Review Boards. In order to secure the confidentiality and privacy of all inmates and their visitors, all participant data were stripped of identifying markers prior to the database creation.

Measures

Quantitative. The variables used in statistical analysis were provided by the ODRC database which included: the inmate’s classification code (level of security) at the time of each visit; the location where the visit occurred; numbers and relationships of individuals approved by ODRC for visits; dates of visits; the relationship of each actual visitor to the prisoner (e.g., minor son/daughter, other family member, friend, or legal advisor); the visitor’s city of residence; duration of the visits; inmates last known zip code and the county of arrest/sentencing; the age of inmate (calculated from birth year by ODRC); inmate gender and race; the most serious offense for the incarceration (ODRC Code); beginning date of incarceration; anticipated date of release; and the sequence of facilities and dates at each for present incarceration.

Qualitative. Data collected from the MapQuest® program, the ODRC website, and various public transportation websites were used to evaluate visitation policy and procedure and calculate transit distances and trip duration for inmate visitation when automobile transportation is available including, schedules, accessibility, and costs.

Procedures

Quantitative. A secondary data analysis of the ODRC database was conducted using SPSS® statistical software and inferential statistics to identify correlations and group comparisons. The five separate data files provided by the ODRC were merged into one database with a total of 10,188 variables, and two items were removed and excluded during data analyses. First, all inmates in the ODRC database who were sentenced to life or death were recoded to (0) and removed because inmates with this sentence would skew the analysis of average length of inmate sentence. Second, the inmate’s home state was recoded and all inmates who were not originally from the state of Ohio were removed because our study is limited to only Ohio state prisoners and inmate visitation within the State of Ohio.

After the removal of inmates who were serving life or death sentences or were not residents of Ohio prior to incarceration, several variables were recoded to aid in further analysis. The original eight alphabetic variables listed for inmates’ marital status listed as C=Claimed Common, D= Divorced, M= Married, P=Separated, S=Single, U= Unknown, V=Common Law, and W=Widow(er) were changed to numerical variables and condensed to five: 1= Unknown, 2=Separated, 3=Married or Common Law, 4= Single, and 5=Widow(er). The variable of inmate security level was recoded from: 0A, 0B, 0D, 1A, 1B, 2, 3, 4A, 4B, 5A, and 5B to the new variables of: 1=Minimum, 2=Medium, 3= Close, 4=Maximum, 5=Administrative Maximum/Death Row. We subtracted the variables date of commitment and expected release date to calculate the variable of excepted total months of sentence. The variables for visitor relationship were recoded (see Table 3). Syntax was run on all 67 “approved visitor” relationship variables and 1,047 counts of inmate visits based on this relationship type.

After recoding and removing certain variables, inferential statistics were used to obtain correlations, comparisons of frequency (chi-square), and comparisons of means (independent sample t-tests/ANOVAs). Simple frequencies were conducted to compare the occurrence of the number of visits experienced since 2006 (see Figure 1), number of approved visitors, and the length of sentences expected in months. Chi-square tests were run to ascertain variations between inmate gender, inmate marital status, and inmate security level. Independent sample t-tests were completed to examine differences in inmate sex against number of visits and number of approved visitors (see Table 2). Pairwise correlations on the number of visits since 2006 and number of approved visitors age at commitment and age as of the end of data collection were computed to ascertain existing relationships. Two
independent sample t-tests were run to detect distinctions between inmate sex, inmate age at commitment, and inmate age at the end of data collection (see Table 2).

**Qualitative.** With the aim of simulating a typical visitor’s experience, the MapQuest® program was used to calculate transit distances and trip durations from a central location in Columbus, Ohio (101 Curl Drive Columbus, Ohio 43210), to each of the 31 current ODRC incarceration sites. Using the ODRC facility map, a second map was created outlining the distance in miles from Columbus, Ohio, to the ODRC facilities. Each line was color coded to indicate the different types of facilities (female, male, hospital/psychiatric, and privately operated prisons—see Figure 2). Public transportation was investigated for these routes, as well travel times, accessibility to travel, and travel costs. The ODRC website was used to examine and compare visitation policies. Data were collected regarding each ODRC facility’s physical address, county, gender of inmates housed, security level housed, visitation policies, hours of visitation, days of visitation, access to video visitation, times when prospective visitors are required to arrive, reservation procedures, and availability of regional transportation. The Greyhound bus company website and customer service line were employed to record current ticket prices, times of departure/arrival, and dates of available travel to ODRC facilities. The websites of the regional transportation departments of each county where ODRC facilities were located were also accessed to determine the cost and times of travel available to prospective visitors. Data from the U.S. Department of Transportation Research and Innovative Technology Administration (2005) regarding the average fuel efficiency of U.S. passenger cars and light trucks were used to calculate the average miles per gallon of gasoline used in a non-fuel efficient car or light truck (20 mpg) and the average miles per gallon of gasoline in a fuel efficient car or light truck (30 mpg). Information obtained from the website Columbus gas prices.com (2011) was used to project the average cost of unleaded gasoline per gallon in a light car or truck in July 2011($3.70) in Columbus, Ohio. The data collected were then used to compile the projected cost of inmate visitation by means of a bus, car, or regional transit.

**Results**

**Quantitative**

Results focused on inferential statistics using a 95% confidence interval to identify correlations and group comparisons.

**Inmate marital status.** Most inmates reported being single (71.5%). Nineteen percent of females in the sample reported being separated or divorced, 21% were married (including common law), 57% were single, and 2% were widows. Compared to the females in the sample, 9.7% of the males sampled reported being separated or divorced, 16% reported being married or married by common law, 73.6% were classified as single, and 6% were widowers.

**Inmate security level.** Most of the inmates were at a minimum (30.9%) or medium security level (44.5%). Approximately 33% of females inmates were at a medium security level institution with 12.6% at a close security level, less than 1% at maximum security levels and in administrative maximum security levels. Results also showed that male inmates tended to be housed at higher levels of security than female inmates; 49.6% of male inmates had a minimum security level, 45% of males inmates were at a medium security level, 21.7% of male inmates were at a close security level, 3% of male inmates were housed at maximum security levels, and 2% of male inmates were housed at administrative maximum security levels. Pearson’s chi-square results for inmate gender by security levels was 607.970 (df =4).

**Approved visitors.** Statistical analyses indicate that female inmates had more visitors approved than did male inmates with females having an average of 9.44 visitors approved and males having an average of 9 visitors approved. The independent sample t-test for number of visitors approved for females versus males was t(39,872) =3.260 indicating significance.

**Number of visits since 2006.** Frequency results indicate that many inmates had very few visits while a few inmates had many visits; the number of visits since 2006 ranged from 0-867 (M=24.3667, SD= 50.48948). The
number of visits since 2006 for females ranged from 0-577 visits ($M=24.35$, $SD=48.93112$) and the number of visits for males ranged from 0-867 ($M=24.36$, $SD=50.57512$). Independent $t$-tests results for number of visits by sex was $t_{(39,872)}=.380$. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean number of visits between female and male inmates.

**Age of inmate.** The age of inmates at time of commitment ranged from 15-84 years old ($M=31.67$, $SD=10.672$). The age of commitment for female inmates contained fewer inmates committed under the age of 18 and fewer inmates over the age of 68 when compared with males (see Table 2). The independent $t$-test for age at commitment by sex $t_{(39,872)}=4.906$ representing significance between the age of commitment and inmate sex. The age of inmates as of 07/19/2011 ranged from 15-84 years old ($M=34.65$, $SD=11.256$). While the age of inmates as of 07/19/2011 was lower in regards to inmates under the age of 18 and over the age of 70 when compared with men (see Table 2). The independent $t$-test results for age as of 07/19/2011 by sex for females was $t_{(39,872)}=.608$ indicating no significance. Pearson’s $r$ was run between inmates’ age at commitment, age as of 7/19/2011, number of visits since 2006 and number of approved visitors (see Table 4). While there were many statistically significant correlations between age and numbers of visits/numbers of approved visitors, the correlation coefficients were all very low (below .002), indicating a weak correlation.

**Length of sentence.** The minimum sentence was 0 months and a maximum sentence was 82589.14 months. The mean length of a sentence in months for any inmate was 133.0981 (median= 48.3285, mode=47.67, $SD=2008.60698$). The mean length of a sentence for males was 131.15 months ($SD=1974.42873$), and the mean length of a sentence for females was 132.1254 months ($SD=2548.02207$).

**Qualitative**

Results show that currently (as of 08/13/2011) 25 of the 31 ODRC facilities house male inmates only and four house female inmates only; one of the ODRC facilities is a correctional medical center for both female and male inmates, and one is a psychiatric correctional facility for both female and male inmates. Seven of the ODRC facilities house security levels 1 through 5, whereas the remainder house inmates with levels 1-3. Two facilities are privately operated: Lake Erie Correctional Institution and the North Coast Correctional Treatment facility.

**Distance.** The ODRC prison facilities range in distance from Columbus, Ohio, at 8.4 miles (Corrections Medical Center and Franklin Pre-Release Center) to 206 miles (Lake Erie Correctional Institution). Eleven of the ODRC facilities are over a hundred mile from Columbus, Ohio. The average distance from Columbus, Ohio, to of any ODRC facilities is 80.87 miles.

**Travel cost by car or truck.** By automobile, assuming a vehicle with 30 miles per gallon (mpg) and fuel costs at $3.70 per gallon, average round-trip cost would be $19.60 (range $2 - $50). The Allen Correctional Institution and Oakwood Correctional Institution are two facilities that the ODRC is considering consolidating (Johnson, 2011). If an individual were driving from Columbus, Ohio (Franklin County), to visit an inmate located at the Allen Correctional Institution (ACI) in Lima, Ohio (Allen County), they would travel a distance of approximately 97.28 miles one way (MapQuest, 2011). If the same individual was traveling in an older model vehicle with an average of 20 mpg and gas was averaged at $3.70 per gallon, it would take approximately 4.87 gallons of gasoline at an approximately $18.02 one-way with a total round trip cost of $36.04. Travel to the same destination in a newer, more fuel efficient vehicle with an average of 30 mpg would take approximately 3.24 gallons of gasoline at $3.70 a gallon with a one-way total cost of $12.00 and a total round trip cost of $24.00. The average cost in an automobile would be $15.01 one-way and $30.02 round trip (U.S. Department of Transportation Research and Innovative Technology Administration, 2005).

**Travel cost by bus.** For visitors without private auto access, direct Greyhound bus service from Columbus, Ohio, was available only to 15 of the 31 ODRC facilities and schedules were often inconvenient. The Greyhound bus round-trip average cost was $45.00 (range $22.00-$72.50). A Greyhound bus trip from Columbus, Ohio (Franklin County), to visit an inmate located at the Allen Correctional Institution (ACI) in Lima, Ohio (Allen County), would
Visitation policy. The ODRC sets limits on the number of visits per inmate based on the level of security of the inmate. Each prison has different visitation policies varying greatly from one facility to the next. Visitations are required at 19 of the 31 ODRC facilities. Most visitation reservations can be made up to 30 days in advance and it is recommended that a reservation be made at least seven days in advance. Visitations within each facility differ and typically occur either from Thursday to Sunday or from Wednesday to Sunday. Only one facility, the Toledo Correctional Institution, offers an exception upon approval for all day visits for those visitors traveling more than 120 miles each way. Morning visits start around 8 A.M. and typically evening visits start around noon and end around 3 pm. Most visits are closed on state holidays and are subject to change without notice. Several facilities only allow visitations for certain inmate populations; and while not all facilities have this policy regarding visitation, nine of the 31 facilities have varying policies on visitation, ranging from alternating weekends, odd calendar days, and using the inmates’ numbers to establish fixed visitation times. Video visitation is available at four of the 31 ODRC facilities, but in order to access video visitation you must travel to either the Cincinnati or the Cleveland parole offices, and there is a $25.00 charge (per 30 minutes).

Discussion

Inaccessibility to public transportation and the cost of traveling to prison locations can deter visitation, weakening an inmate’s ties to positive outside influences. Resolutions are necessary that can bridge the gap that surrounds prisoners’ ties to community (Wolff, & Draine, 2004). The purpose of this study was to examine the nature of prisoner visitation patterns based on the characteristics of the incarcerated individual, the incarceration trajectory, geography, and the changing context of prison placements as the state revises its prison correctional system.

Of the four hypotheses in this study, only one was tested, but the results did not support the proposed hypothesis. The author predicted that women would receive fewer visits than men, but quantitative results indicate that women did not receive significantly fewer visits than men. Gender specific analyses indicate significantly more visitors were approved, the security levels were lower, and there was a higher proportion of marriage/significant other partners, but it did not indicate a difference in the actual numbers of visits men and women experienced. Quantitative analyses on the number of visits inmates received showed similar results to research conducted by Bales and Mears (2008): very few inmates received many visits.

While the author was unable to obtain quantitative results regarding correlations between travel distances/costs and visitation frequency, the negative effects of inmate relocation on visitation patterns, and chronological patterns of inmate visitation, qualitative results indicate that tremendous variability exists between institutions in terms of transportation accessibility and visitation policy barriers. Many facilities in Ohio do not have visitation procedures that are realistic for low-income families or working families with children. ODRC visitors without private transportation who depend on public transportation would be forced to arrive after visitation hours, incurring the added cost of an overnight hotel stay, if there is a hotel available in the area.

These finding are important while addressing future visitation policies and reentry programs in Ohio. Future implications should focus on visitation policies and procedures that may be more responsive to situational concerns and less administratively driven. Developing or increasing extended family programs which offer longer visitation hours and accommodate visitors with children may be beneficial by reducing barriers visitors may face. Increasing the number of facilities that offer video visitation could be a low cost solution to many barriers that surround inmate visitation in Ohio. Establishing a low cost transportation program like New York’s Operation Prison Gap—a program which provides reasonable roundtrip transportation for prison visitors directly to prison facilities—may help increase the frequency of prison visitation in Ohio (Christian, 2005).
Limitations

In the study conducted, there existed several limitations. The research results are limited to Ohio state prison facilities, which may not be representative of all state prisons. The area in which the distance in miles was obtained from the MapQuest® program was estimated from 101 Curl Drive which is the location of Jones Towers located on The Ohio State University campus. This location may not be an accurate measure of distance visitors may have to travel.

Several of the proposed hypotheses remain unexamined. Quantitative analysis has yet to be performed on calculations regarding temporal variables, visitor’s zip codes, and geographical locations to the prisons. There was no analysis to account for seasonal variation (e.g., school year, weather, holidays, birthdays) and visitation frequency. While this study included a large sample size, some of the data given were not reliable (e.g. prisoner home zip codes) or reliably coded (e.g., son, daughter, child categories confound visitor age and gender).

Despite the limitations of the current study results can be used to inform criminal justice administrators’ decisions regarding inmate placement and to raise awareness concerning the necessity for developing strategies to encourage visitation across geographical distances and planning for prisoner (re)location. In order to further explore any correlations between prisoner location, time, and visitation patterns in Ohio, future analyses should address the remaining research questions.

Acknowledgements

I would like to recognize Dr. Audrey Begun, The Ohio State University School of Social Work, and The Ohio State University Summer Research Program for the opportunity to study and conduct research within their facilities and with the guidance of their expert staff members. In addition, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Lisa Bostaph, Helen Barnes, Gregory Martinez, Diana Garza, and my fellow McNair Scholars for their unwavering guidance and support. Lastly, I would like to thank my son and family for their perpetual patience, support, trust, faith, and encouragement. I could not have done this without you.
References


### Appendix A

Figure 1. Frequency of Visits to ODRC Inmates: January 1, 2006 to July 19, 2011
Figure 2. Distance in Miles from Columbus, Ohio to each ODRC facility.

Table 1. Inmate Characteristics-Categorical Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inmate Sex:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2095 (5.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37779 (94.7%)</td>
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<td>Marital Status:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
<td>3,996 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/Common Law</td>
<td>6,380 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>28,525 (71.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow(er)</td>
<td>281 (.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>648 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmate Security Level:</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12,320 (30.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57 (1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Inmate Characteristics—Continuous Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>std. dev.</th>
<th>t.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(df=39872)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Visits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0-867</td>
<td>24.3667</td>
<td>50.48948</td>
<td>.380 NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0-867</td>
<td>24.36</td>
<td>50.57512</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Inmate at Commitment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15-84</td>
<td>31.67</td>
<td>10.672</td>
<td>4.906***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15-84</td>
<td>31.61</td>
<td>10.721</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Inmate as of 07/19/2011:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15-84</td>
<td>34.65</td>
<td>11.256</td>
<td>.608 NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15-84</td>
<td>34.64</td>
<td>11.322</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Approved Visitors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0-60</td>
<td>9.02</td>
<td>5.95826</td>
<td>3.260***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0-60</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>5.94923</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *indicates p<.05, **indicates p<.01, ***indicates p<.001, NS is not significant

Table 3. Recoding of Visitor Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitor Relationship</th>
<th>Visitor Relationship Recoded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF= Adopted Father, AM = Adopted Mother, AU=Aunt, BF=Boyfriend, BL=Brother in Law, BR=Brother, CH=Child, CO=Cousin, CS=Counselor, DA=Daughter, DW=Daughter in Law, EM=Employer, ES=Ex-Spouse, FA= Father, FC=Father of Child, FD=Foster Parent, FR=Friend, FW=Father in Law, GC=Grandchild, GF=Grandfather, GM=Grandmother, HB= Half Brother, HS=Half Sister, HU= Husband, LA=Lawyer, LE=Law Enforcement, MC=Mother of Child, MN=Minister, MO=Mother, MW=Mother in Law, NA= Not Available, NB=Neighbor, NE=Niece, OF=Offender, OT=Other, RF=Remove Friend, RM=Re-entry Mentor, RX=Remove Visitor, SB= Step Brother, SF=Step Father, SI=Sister, SL=Sister in Law, SM=Step Mother, SN=Son, SO=Son, SP=Service Provider, SS= Step Sister, SW=Son in Law, TR=Step Daughter, TS= Step Son, UN=Uncle, VI=Victim, WF= Wife, and WI=Wife</td>
<td>1=AF,AM,FA,FW,MOMW,S F,SM,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=BF,ES,HU,WF,WI,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3=BL,BR,HB,HS,SB,SL,SL, S,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4=CH,GC,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5=AU,DA,SN,SO,TS,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6=DW,SW,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7=CO,GF,GM,NE,NI,UN,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8=CS,LA,LE,MN,RM,SP,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9=FC,MC,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10=FD,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11=FR,NB,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12= OF, OT, RF, RX, VI.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Correlation comparing inmates at commitment, age as of 07/19/2011, number of visits since 2006, and the number of approved visitors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age at commitment</th>
<th>Age as of 7/19/2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of visits since 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed)</td>
<td>.011*</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of approved visitors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed)</td>
<td>-.008***</td>
<td>-.002***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *indicates $p<.05$, **indicates $p<.01$, ***indicates $p<.001$. NS is not significant.
Sprawl in the Western United States: Do State Growth Management Programs Reduce Sprawl?

Jenna Nash: McNair Scholar
Dr. Ross Burkhart: Mentor
Political Science & Urban Planning

Abstract

Sprawl is faulted for contributing to excessive commuting and transportation costs, raising the cost of providing infrastructure and other public services (Carruthers, 2002). With the advent of the environmental movement in the 1960s, concern for the impact urban growth was having on the environment caused a surge of growth management legislation that eventually led to several states implementing state growth management programs (SGMPs). While there have been several studies done on the effectiveness of SGMPs in containing sprawl, there have been no studies of state-growth management that focus solely on the Western States, states that have many characteristics in common such as the percentage of federal land and limited resources. Additionally, this study focuses on the period from 1990 to 2010, bringing the literature up-to-date for SGMPs in the West. This article examines the effectiveness of SGMPs on containing urban sprawl in the Western United States where five of eleven states had implemented SGMPs by 2000. Several measures were taken to assess the effectiveness of SGMPs in containing sprawl. While several methods were attempted, statistical significance was found using a dummy variable which supports the belief that SGMPs do help to contain urban sprawl.

Introduction

With the advent of the automobile, moving to the suburbs and the urban fringe became easier and more appealing for many Americans early in the twentieth century. As roads and highways transformed the landscape to make room for the burgeoning number of automobiles, families with growing incomes chose to pursue the American dream of owning their own homes and land far from the hustle and bustle of the city. Since the 1900s, the rate of population growth for the central cities in America’s urban areas has become lower than that in the suburbs (Yin & Sun, 2007). This pattern habituated by Americans has resulted in what is commonly called urban sprawl. Most planners and policy makers see sprawl as causing the loss of prime agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands, deterioration of central cities, increased automobile dependency, and greater social inequality (Burchell, 1997; Downs, 1999; Ewing, 1994). It is also credited with costing tax payers money to expand infrastructure to rural areas on the fringes of central cities. However, some scholars disagree and see sprawl as something that creates more housing and job choices (Gordon & Richardson, 2000).

Due to attention from the media, sprawl came to the governmental agenda in the 1990s, and in 1999 the federal government announced a federally funded “Smart Growth Initiative” to combat urban sprawl (Anthony, 2004). However, growth management is not a new idea. Since the 1960s cities and other local governments have passed legislation that attempted to control and limit the growth and outward expansion. States began to get involved as problems of jurisdictions conflicted and fragmentation resulted in competitive agencies that did not work together, resulting in prolific development in the fringe where less regulation existed. Hawaii, Vermont, and Oregon were among the first states to adopt state growth management legislation followed by a slew of others. As of 2010, 10 additional states have adopted state growth management legislation, including Florida, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Georgia, Washington, Maryland, Arizona, Tennessee, Colorado and Wisconsin.

Several studies have been done to assess the effectiveness of state growth management programs on urban sprawl. In 2004, Jerry Anthony found that growth-managed states generally experience a lesser density decline than states without growth management. Since then, a number of other studies have been done on the impact that state growth management programs have on sprawl. Since state growth management is a relatively new approach and states are adopting growth management plans at a steady rate, it is appropriate to bring the literature to date. This study will focus on changes from 1990 to 2010 in 11 western states of which five will be considered state growth managed states. Western states are a unique bunch with ample amounts of federal lands, large mountain ranges, and
vast deserts. The choice to focus on these states seems appropriate as they have much in common. Additionally, lack of privately owned land may place a constraint on urban expansion and help check sprawl (Anthony, 2004). Prior to the economic downturn in 2008, no other region of the country was growing at a faster rate than the western states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. The United States as a whole grew 19.4% between 1990 and 2010 while the western states grew on average 31.3%, nearly 40% faster than the rest of the nation.

Sprawl

Definitions of sprawl vary, and the causes and consequences are often blurred. Sprawl is generally believed to be composed of low-density, single-use, scattered, strip, and leapfrog developments, and has been extensively criticized for being inefficient, inequitable, and environmentally insensitive (Ewing, 1997; Burchell, 1998; Downs, 1999, Carruthers, 2002). Galster, et al. (2001) contend that any land use pattern that has low values on one or more of eight definitions of land use patterns—density, continuity, concentration, compactness, nuclearity, diversity, proximity, and centrality—is sprawl. Many ways to measure sprawl have been used by a variety of different studies. There seems to be some agreement that large-scale conversion of agricultural land to urban uses and low-density urban development represent sprawl (Anthony, 2004). For the purpose of this study, sprawl will be defined as low-density along with the amount of increased urbanized land as these are seen as the best way to embody sprawl without creating an elaborate sprawl index.

Sprawl is faulted for contributing to excessive commuting and transportation costs, raising the cost of providing infrastructure and other public services (Carruthers, 2002). Quality of life problems such as consumption of natural open space, socioeconomic segregation through inequitable land and housing markets are a prevalent result of sprawl. Sprawl also causes some negative externalities such as traffic congestion, environmental contamination, income and racial segregation, mismatch between jobs and housing, loss of farmland, excess energy use, and overdependence on cars (Yin & Sun, 2007). When market failures occur due to peoples’ preference for single-family dwellings and automobiles, the marginal social costs of sprawl outweigh the marginal private costs (Carruthers & Ulfarsson, 2002a)

Rising incomes and consumer preference for single-family dwellings has perpetuated the pattern of growth that dominates America’s cities and communities. The problem is bolstered and reinforced by preferences for small local governments that play an especially important role in fueling the process of political fragmentation and undermining the overall ability of land-use planning to guide the growth of metropolitan areas. Fragmentation occurs through the formation of local governments as residents attempt to gain a greater degree of autonomy from surrounding jurisdictions. Jurisdictions create regulations that promote specific preferences for their area, often resulting in exclusionary rules with limited land use. This can direct development to the urban fringe, where land is inexpensive and development is allowed to proceed with minimal regulation (Carruthers, 2002). Often times, these local jurisdictions compete with one another for economic growth opportunities. Sprawl is endemic to the urban fringe, fragmentation plays a large part in compounding the issue of maintaining the creation of low densities and scattered developments.

State Growth Management Programs

Land use issues and growth management lie in the hands of the states rather than the federal government. As Americans prefer smaller local governments, and in turn, the elected officials implement voters’ interests, control over land use has historically been delegated to local governments and municipalities. With the advent of the environmental movement in the 1960’s, concern for the impact urban growth was having on the environment caused a surge of growth management legislation that eventually led to several states implementing growth management at the state level.

According to Jerry Anthony, state growth management was first implemented by Hawaii in 1961 through the enactment of comprehensive state land-use planning. The goals of this first measure were to preserve environmentally sensitive areas and prevent haphazard development. For this reason, Hawaii’s land use law is regarded as the first statewide growth management legislation (Kelly, 1993. Anthony, 2004). Ten years later, Vermont followed by adopting Act 250, a land use law that established a statewide development permitting system with substantial control at the regional level. Three years later in 1973, Oregon was the third state to adopt growth management legislation. Twelve years later, Florida combined a number of previously implemented regional and local growth management programs in what was to be a comprehensive state growth management program that
mandated all local governments to prepare growth management plans for guiding local development (DeGrove 1984, Anthony, 2004).

A second wave of states enacting growth management at the state level began with New Jersey in 1987 and was followed by Rhode Island in 1988, Georgia in 1989, Washington State in 1990, and Maryland in 1992. In this so-called second wave, the scope of concern was broadened from mostly environmental concerns to encompass a number of other objectives including specific requirements for local plans, containing urban sprawl and well-planned land use (DeGrove, 1992; Nelson & Peterman, 2000; Carruthers, 2002). Arizona and Tennessee joined the others in 1998, and were followed by the most recent additions of Colorado and Wisconsin, both added in 2000 (Anthony, 2004; Yin & Sun, 2007).

There is some debate as to whether California should be included on this list. They have implemented mandatory planning for highly urbanized areas, but some scholars (see, e.g., Dawkins & Nelson, 2003; Gale, 1992; Weitz, 1999) did not include California as a growth-managed state because the growth management regulations in California were concentrated in coastal areas and emphasized local planning. In addition, California has provided little oversight on local planning (Yin & Sun, 2007). In 1999, Weitz concluded that California should be included in this list on the basis of the numerous regional and local land use regulations (Weitz, 1999; Anthony, 2004). Other scholars (see Anthony, 2004; Bollens, 1992; Carruthers, 2002) argued that California qualifies as a growth-managed state because of its mandatory local-comprehensive plans, coastal programs, and some regional programs for compact development (Yin & Sun, 2007). For the purpose of this study, California will be considered a growth-managed state, along with Oregon, Washington, Arizona, and Colorado.

Reasons, goals and features of state growth management programs

At the heart of all growth management programs is “the belief that land development and population increases can be balanced with conservation of open space and natural, historical, and/or cultural resources” (Gale & Hart, 1992, Smutny, 1998). Common objectives of growth management regulations, according to Anthony, are controlling sprawl, preserving farmland, protecting environmentally sensitive areas, increasing density to make public transit viable, and reducing urban energy consumption. While local land-use control is the typical norm of land-use regulation, several states have chosen to take on the role of land-use regulator.

States intervene in local planning efforts for a number of reasons including but not limited to problems resulting from growth-related spillovers across jurisdictions and environmental issues. Many of the issues that are mitigated at the state level are transboundary problems that elude local control. Air pollution, traffic congestion, and lack of affordable housing are some of the transboundary problems that state growth management programs attempt to address (Smutny, 1998). Like individuals, communities act in their own self-interest, and the smaller they are, the more narrowly their goals may be defined (Fischel, 1999; Porodzinski & Sass, 1994). Without guidance from the state or higher authority, local jurisdictions are often unwilling to work together and often vie for the positive attributes of growth like higher tax incomes and ignore the negative aspects of growth such as pollution and traffic congestion. It is well known that the fragmented structure of the American government aggravates sprawl and unmanaged growth. Diamond and Noonan (1996) argue that state governments must help local governments by establishing reasonable ground rules and planning requirements and providing leadership on matters that can only be dealt with regionally.

According to Dawkins and Nelson, effective state growth management programs should ultimately affect land development outcomes by changing the location of available land development opportunities within the region. By removing or regulating power at the local level, state and regional growth management agencies can insure consistency among the jurisdictions within the state. Contemporary state growth management programs respond to the problem of fragmentation by mandating goals and standards for local land use plans, prescribing the use of specific policy instruments for regulating the outward pace of development, and using enforcement mechanisms aimed at ensuring uniform compliance among jurisdictions (Carruthers, 2002). State growth management programs have distinct advantages as they can require all communities within a state to adopt growth management practices and thereby ensure that benefits of growth management accrue to communities across the state (Anthony, 2004). The state can also assume review powers over local development policies (Anthony, 2004).

Since the beginning of the evolution of state growth management programs, state sponsorship of local and regional planning has taken several different forms. Therefore, there is some debate about what constitutes a state growth management program (Anthony, 2004). Specific consistency requirements vary from state to state. Vertical consistency requires plans to be consistent with state-defined policy objectives: horizontal consistency requires local plans to be consistent with one another; and internal consistency requires consistency between local plans and development regulations—especially the zoning ordinance. Vertical and horizontal consistency requirements work
to co-ordinate local planning practices, while internal consistency requirements are intended to ensure that plans are carried out once they have been prepared (Carruthers, 2002). The strongest state planning frameworks require all three types of consistency, but weaker frameworks require fewer, or only encourage consistency (Gale, 1992; Burby & May, 1997; Weitz, 1999).

State mandates and policies find leverage at the regional and local level through a variety of incentives and disincentives. Contemporary state planning mandates generally follow either a conjoint or co-operative approach (Bollens, 1992, 1993; DeGrove, 1992). In a penalty-based conjoint framework, local governments are required by law to prepare land-use plans and may be subject to strict sanctions, including temporary loss of funding and/or authority to approve development proposals, if they fail to meet state-defined standards. This compares with the more flexible co-operative framework, where planning is voluntary and incentives, such as additional state funding, are the primary means of enforcing prescribed standards. States may offer financial aid or assistance in both cases to assist in the outcomes of their plans (Carruthers, 2002).

Another tool states have used is concurrency, also referred to as adequate public facilities ordinances (APFOs) that seek to ensure that public infrastructure is available before development is permitted (Knaap & Nelson, 1992; Knaap & Hopkins, 2001; Anthony, 2004). In addition, urban growth boundaries (UGBs) have been employed and best exemplified by Portland, Oregon. APFOs and UGBs have become prominent features of sub-state direct urban containment policies (Boyle & Mohammed, 2007).

Findings of previous studies on state growth management programs

There have been several studies done on local and regional planning. In addition to these studies, there have been several studies done on the effectiveness of state-growth management in particular.

Yin and Sun (2007) cited Burby et al. (1997) who compared local planning experiences in California, 20 coastal counties in North Carolina, and Florida with those in North Carolina’s 20 mountain counties and Washington. They found that “local governments responding to a state comprehensive-planning mandate are more likely to have prepared comprehensive plans and to have higher-quality plans than local governments in states without a mandate, although the mandates only have limited effect in enhancing commitment of local officials to state goals.” They conclude that “by influencing the quality and character of local plans, planning mandates in turn influence the extent and character of local development management” (p. 141).

Healy and Rosenberg (1979) found that Hawaii “had been relatively, but not completely, effective in stopping the urbanization of agricultural lands…Nevertheless, the law has had a striking effect on the pattern of Hawaii’s growth, making urban expansion far more compact and orderly than it would have been without the law” (p. 186). An update to the status of Hawaii’s growth management mandate was argued by Kelly (2004) saying that ninety-five percent of the land in the state remained in the rural conservation classifications in 1992 after more than three decades of operation of the SGMP (Yin & Sun, 2007).

Carruthers (2002) used three-stage least square models to examine the impacts of SGMPs on sprawl in terms of population density, the extent of urbanized land area, and property values. He selected 283 metropolitan counties in 14 states, with Oregon, California, Georgia, Florida, and Washington as the chosen SGMP states. He found that only Oregon’s SGMP increased urban density within his five studied states with SGMPs. The other states had negative impacts on urban density including two among them having significant coefficients. The SGMP in Florida significantly increased the spatial extent of urbanized area, and SGMPs in the four states other than Florida have no significant impact on that (Yin & Sun, 2007).

Dawkins and Nelson (2003) examined the impact of SGMPs on central-city revitalization, in which a primary central city’s share of new residential building permits was used to indicate central-city revitalization. Their panel data was composed of 19 periods for each of 293 metropolitan areas (MAs). The fixed effects model shows that SGMPs had significantly positive impacts on primary central city’s share of new residential building permits, which might imply that SGMPs promoted the revitalization of central cities (Yin & Sun, 2007).

Anthony (2004) conducted a cross-sectional research by using data on 49 states at three time points, including 1982, 1992, 1997. Descriptive analysis revealed that growth-managed states generally experienced less density decline than states without growth management. However, his multivariate regression analysis, which examined the effect of SGMPs on urban density by comparing changes in urban densities of states with growth regulations to those without growth regulations, indicated that SGMPs in general had no statistically significant effect on the increase in urban density (Yin & Sun, 2007).
Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to take a fresh look at the effects state-led growth management plans have on curbing the expansion of the population onto undeveloped land and on the perpetuation of sprawl. There have been several studies done on the effectiveness of state-growth management all of which measure state-growth management prior to 2000 with Yin & Sun assessing state-growth management in the 1990’s. By assessing the years from 1990 to 2010, I will be able to bring the literature up to date and include states that have not been assessed. Additionally, there have been no studies of state-growth management that focus solely on the western states. The western states are similar in several ways including the inclusion of large percentages of federal land and limited resources such as water. Because of these unique characteristics, I found the west to be a particularly advantageous group to assess.

Research Method

The study was conducted through an examination of sprawl as the independent variable. Sprawl was operationalized as the percent change in people per square mile from 1990 to 2010, according to the US Census Bureau, divided by the percent change in urbanized land area during that same time period. Urbanized land area was obtained from the National Resource Inventory (NRI) of the US Department of Agriculture. According to Carruthers in 2002, both measures are necessary to get a clear picture of urban form because sprawl is characterized by the spread of development (land area) in addition to its bulk (density).

In this study, data was gathered from counties in the 11 states that were considered to be urban counties in each state by the US Census Bureau. According to the US Census Bureau, these counties had a minimum of at least one incorporated city of 25,000 people or greater. By choosing the most populous counties, I was able to leave out areas that were likely rural areas and undeveloped areas. The most populous counties in the western states were the unit of analysis. There were 118 urban counties in 11 western states examined including Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Colorado. Five of these states were considered to have state growth management programs in place at the time of the study.

I used multiple regression analysis to test which independent variables were statistically significant. The independent variables are listed and described below.

Measuring state growth management programs

As we can see from Table 1, SGMPs differ from one another on several factors. Several methods for measuring state-growth management were used. First, accounting for the year of implementation through a simple scale variable was thought to be useful in that those states that have had programs in place for a longer period of time would likely have a greater effect than those who have been around for a shorter amount of time.

The second method involved creating an index that scored the state-growth managed states on several characteristics found in Table 2. (Yin & Sun, 2007) An overall index is calculated based on the evaluations of the contexts and criteria in Table 1. The contexts of each criterion are scaled as 1, 2, and 3 to indicate low, medium, and high levels of state involvement. For “Year Adopted,” the earlier a SGMP was set up, the higher the score. The ages of SGMPs that are at least 30% higher than the average are scored as 3, those with middle aged SGMPs are scored as 2, and those in the 30% youngest SGMPs are scored as a 1. For “Community Planning Requirement,” 3 is assigned to the states where community planning is mandatory for all areas in the state, 2 is assigned to the states where community planning is mandatory in only fast-growing areas, and 1 is assigned to the states where community planning is only voluntary. For “Principal Plan Review Authority,” 3 is assigned to the “State,” 2 is assigned to “Region,” and 1 is assigned to “Local Government.” Based on the elements of the last two criteria, “Amendments of Original Plan” and “Approval of Amendments,” 3 is given to the states where the amendments of an original plan are approved by a state government, 2 is assigned to the states where the amendments of the original plan are approved according to regional consensus, and 1 is assigned to the states where the amendments are approved by a local planning authority. The final indices are then added together for the 5 states that had adopted SGMPs in the study. Then the indices were assigned to the corresponding counties in the 5 SGMP states (Yin & Sun, 2007). Logs were also taken of the index as the best model often uses logarithms.
Table 1. Features of State Growth Management Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year adopted</th>
<th>Community planning requirement</th>
<th>Principal plan review authority</th>
<th>Amendment of original plan</th>
<th>Approval of amendments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>Amendment required every 10 years for larger and fast growing cities</td>
<td>An affirmation vote of the local legislative body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>Amendments by local agencies</td>
<td>No state role, some regional role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>Amendment as recommended by local planning authority</td>
<td>Local planning authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Amendments at will by local agencies</td>
<td>State can challenge amendments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Mandatory for fast growing areas</td>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>Only one major amendment recommended every 5 years</td>
<td>No state role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Yin & Sun, 2007; Anthony, 2004

And lastly, SGMPs were measured with only a dummy variable where all the states that were considered to have a growth management plan in place (Oregon, Washington, California, Arizona and Colorado) were represented by a 1, and states with no state growth management plan in place were represented with a 0.

Table 2. Scores of SGMPs by Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year adopted</th>
<th>Community planning requirement</th>
<th>Principal plan review authority</th>
<th>Amendment of original plan &amp; approval of amendments</th>
<th>Total score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Yin & Sun, 2007

Other Data Sets

There are other factors associated with sprawl that include economic factors, fragmentation factors, additional land policies, farm revenues, and median house values. Therefore, the researcher has selected a number of other variables to include in the regression model.
Percentage change in median household income, 1990 to 2010

The researcher believes that percent change in income is a good economic indicator to include in the model. Therefore, the percentage change of income between 1990 and 2010 was obtained from the US Census Bureau. The amounts were normalized to 2010 levels to account for inflation factors. The effect of economic growth in an area can have several effects. A rise in income can cause people to want to live in the core of the city where housing costs are higher than the suburbs. Alternatively, a rise in income can cause people to prefer the suburbs where they can live in areas with less density. The researcher hypothesizes that an increase in wages will cause sprawl to increase, thus indicating a positive relationship between income and sprawl.

Number of jurisdictions per thousand persons in 2007

Fragmentation is believed to be one of the many factors shaping urban development patterns, and it plays a role since it is the embodiment of many policy factors and lifestyle choices (Yin & Sun, 2007). Even though individual jurisdictions can limit their own growth, they cannot effect what happens to the region as a whole. The cumulative effect is uncoordinated growth shifted from one community to another, generating the spatial expansion of the metropolitan area. Urban growth evolves into a sprawl pattern under fragmented governance (Carruthers, 2002; Carruth & Ulfarsson, 2002; Downs, 1999). The number of jurisdictions including county, city, or township for each county in 2007 was collected from the US Census Bureau which is used to indicate the fragmentation of the county. The number of special districts is not included as most special districts have very limited powers and do not contribute substantially to fragmentation.

Percentage change in the unemployment rate, 1990 to 2010

The unemployment rate can have a large impact on where people choose to live. As people earn less money, they are likely to choose places where it is cheaper to live, often times driving them to the fringe. An additional data collection point was added to account for the great recession which began in late 2007. Data was collected on unemployment rates in each individual county for 1990, 2006, and 2010. The percentage change for 1990 to 2006 and the percentage change from 2006 to 2010 was then calculated and added to the model.

Percentage change of median house values, 1990 to 2007

House values may be an important variable to explain sprawl. House values are, in theory, at equilibrium between housing supply and demand. Higher house values suggest higher housing demand or relatively lower housing supply. A high percentage increase in house prices may have two possible effects on land uses. On one hand, the supply side of the housing market may produce more houses to meet the high demand by increasing residential densities. On the other hand, it may provide more low-density houses with lower land costs by developing suburb or rural areas. Therefore, the impacts of the growth in house prices on land uses could be mixed (Yin & Sun, 2007). In this article, the percentage change of median house values between 1990 and 2007 were used. The information regarding median house values was obtained from the US Census Bureau and was calculated for each county.

Percentage change of annual farm revenues, 1987 to 2002

The average annual farm revenue in a county can have some impact on sprawl. When county A has more farm revenue than county B, the transformation from rural area to urban area would be more costly in county A, and thus county A may be less prone to sprawling, holding other factors constant. When a county has a higher percentage increase in average farm revenues, it is more likely for the MA to curtail the urbanization of agricultural lands (Yin & Sun, 2007).

Annual farm revenues for each county in 1987 and 2002 were calculated from the Census of Agriculture. The percentage change of annual farm revenues between 1987 and 2002 was then calculated.
Agriculture conservation districts and agriculture protection zoning

Other land policies can have an influence on the supply of land. Agricultural Conservation Districts and Agriculture Protection Zoning can both have an effect on preventing sprawl (Anthony, 2004; Yin & Sun, 2007). The 1980 National Agricultural Land Study found 22 states had some type of agricultural protection zoning (Coughlin, 1991). More states now have such measures and the Sierra Club’s 1999 Sprawl Report found that all states have some form of agricultural protection zoning and districting. The report also provides information on the effectiveness of each policy in each state. Because these programs could reduce the conversion of undeveloped land for urban uses and increase urban densities, two dummy variables set at 1, 2, or 3 and corresponding to low, moderate, or high effectiveness were included in the model (Anthony, 2004).

Rationale

Hypothesis: All other things being equal, the presence of a state growth management plan in place will cause sprawl to increase at a slower rate. No state growth management plan in place will cause sprawl to increase.

Hypothesis: All other things being equal, the longer a state growth management plan is in place, sprawl will increase at a slower rate than those without a state growth management plan.

Hypothesis: All other things being equal, an increase in median household income in the county will increase sprawl.

Hypothesis: All other things being equal, the greater the number of municipalities in the county per thousand persons, the greater increase in sprawl.

Hypothesis: All other things being equal, an increase in unemployment in the county will cause a decrease in the rate of sprawl.

Hypothesis: All other things being equal, an increase in median house values in a county will cause a greater increase in sprawl.

Hypothesis: All other things being equal, a percentage increase in annual farm revenue in the county will cause a decrease of sprawl.

Hypothesis: All other things being equal, effective agricultural zoning in the county will cause a decrease in sprawl.

Equation

\[ y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4 + b_5x_5 + b_6x_6 + b_7x_7 + b_8x_8 + b_9x_9 + b_{10}X_{10} + e \]

- \( y \) = Percentage change of people per square mile in the county from 1990 to 2010 divided by the percentage change in urbanized land from 1987 to 2007.
- \( a \) = Constant
- \( b_1 \) = SGMP dummy
- \( b_2 \) = SGMP year of implementation
- \( b_3 \) = Percentage change of median household income in the county from 1990 to 2010
- \( b_4 \) = The number of municipalities in the county per 1000 persons
- \( b_5 \) = Percentage change of the unemployment rate in the county from 1990 to 2006
- \( b_6 \) = Percentage change of the unemployment rate in the county from 2006 to 2010
- \( b_7 \) = Percentage change of median house values in the county from 1990 to 2007
- \( b_8 \) = Percentage change of annual farm revenues in the county from 1987 to 2002
- \( b_9 \) = \( e \) = Error
- \( b_{10} \) = Agricultural protection district effectiveness rating in the county of 1 is very effective, 2 is moderately effective and 3 is not effective
- \( b_{10} \) = Agricultural protection zoning effectiveness rating in the county of 1 is very effective, 2 is moderately effective and 3 is not effective
Results (I)

The data used for the dependent variable, sprawl, is summarized in Table 3 for each state. While the percentage change in urbanized land and the percentage change in urban population were used as a ratio to operationalize sprawl, the numbers for each state can be useful as well. The results vary for each state whether or not it had state growth management regulations.

Table 3. Results from Simple Analysis of National Resource Inventory (NRI) Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>69.33%</td>
<td>85.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>42.10%</td>
<td>30.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>45.50%</td>
<td>48.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>31.37%</td>
<td>38.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>47.11%</td>
<td>42.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States without growth management regulations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>45.19%</td>
<td>52.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>26.34%</td>
<td>18.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>109.53%</td>
<td>150.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>63.44%</td>
<td>33.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>56.89%</td>
<td>58.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>17.67%</td>
<td>9.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven western state average</td>
<td>50.41%</td>
<td>51.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of states with state growth management regulations</td>
<td>47.08%</td>
<td>48.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of states without state growth management regulations</td>
<td>53.18%</td>
<td>53.94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NRI & US Census Bureau

Of the SGMP states, according to these calculations, some had less sprawl than others. Oregon, whose urbanized land increased 31% while its urban population increased at 38%, showed that it sprawled at a slower rate. Colorado and Arizona also increased urban population at a greater rate than they increased urbanized land. Washington, another SGMP state, shows that their increase in urban land was greater at 47% than their change in urban population at 43%. California also had greater increases of urbanization of land than urban population.

For the states without state growth management regulations, there was a great deal of variation. New Mexico had a greater percentage increase in urbanization of land at 63% in comparison to its urban population increase of 33%. Montana and Wyoming also increased urbanization of land at a greater rate than urban population. Nevada had increases in urbanization of land at a rate of 110%, while they increased population at a significantly greater rate of 151%.

The average for the 11 western states shows a slightly greater increase in population than in urbanized land with 50% and 52% respectively. The average of states with state growth management regulations shows that urban population increased at 49%, while the urbanization of land increased at a slower rate of 47%. The average of states without growth management regulations shows that the urbanization of land increased at a slightly slower rate of 53% than did urban population change at 54%. When comparing the SGMP states to the non-SGMP states, there is only a slight difference in urbanization of land and urban population changes. However slight, growth-managed states as a group experienced lesser density than the states without growth regulation.
Results (II)

The results of the regression analysis, shown in Table 4, show that the overall model is relatively weak with an adjusted r-square of .290, indicating that 71% of the predictors of sprawl as defined in this study are missing from the model. There were, however, some statistically significant findings. Four of the variables, the SGMP dummy variable, the percentage change of median household income from 1990 to 2010, the percentage change of the unemployment rate from 1990 to 2006, and Agricultural Conservation Zoning experienced statistical significance.

Table 4. Ordinary Least-Squares Regression Estimates of the Predictors of Sprawl

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SGMP index score</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>-.732</td>
<td>.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGMP dummy variable</td>
<td>-.246</td>
<td>-1.811</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage change of median household income 1990-2010</td>
<td>.203</td>
<td>2.221</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of jurisdictions per 1,000 persons in 2007</td>
<td>-.033</td>
<td>-.373</td>
<td>.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage change in unemployment rate 1990-2006</td>
<td>.403</td>
<td>4.196</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage change in unemployment rate 2006-2010</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>1.497</td>
<td>.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage change of median house valued 1990-2007</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>0.808</td>
<td>.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Change of Annual Farm Revenues 1987-2002</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Conservation Districts</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td>.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Conservation Zoning</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>2.636</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r-square</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjusted r-square</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>.593</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the scoring index of SGMPs was found to be statistically insignificant, as was running it as a logarithm, running the model with only the SGMP dummy variable was found to be advantageous with a t-value of -1.811. As the direction of the relationship between the presence of a SGMP and sprawl is easily predicted to be negative, it is only necessary to use a 1-tail test where significance is found at -1.645.

The t-value of 2.221 of the percentage change of median household income from 1990 to 2010 performed as expected, showing a positive relationship between household income and sprawl. With a one unit increase in sprawl, the median household income would expect to rise by .203. The t-value of 4.196 for the percentage change in the unemployment rate from 1990 to 2006 shows a positive relationship as well, indicating that as sprawl increased by one unit, the unemployment rate increases by .403. Also experiencing statistical significance is agricultural conservation zoning with a t-value of 2.636.

Discussion

A common objective of state growth management programs is to reduce urban sprawl by coordinating the planning activities of local governments in a way that creates greater regulatory consistency across metropolitan areas (Carruther, 2002). Controlling urban sprawl is a prerequisite for realizing some of the other potential benefits of growth regulations, such as cost efficiencies in the provision of public goods and services, making transit options viable, reducing commuting trip lengths, and decreasing urban energy consumption and air pollution levels (Anthony, 2004).

This research has found that the mere presence of a state growth management plan reduces urban sprawl as defined by the parameters of the study. While SGMPs vary in consistencies and styles, and Yin & Sun found statistical significance using a scoring system of these consistencies and styles, I found that scoring them as Yin & Sun had done was not advantageous and did not produce statistical significance. It is further noted that the SGMP
group of states and the non-SGMP group of states both have varying degrees of growth and urbanization as was discussed earlier. It is clear that there is no uniform result since there are so many variations to how these programs are implemented. There are many factors that can have an effect on growth such as the presence of physical characteristics to the political landscape found in the region.

The other factors that obtained statistical significance on having an effect on sprawl, such as unemployment and median household incomes, show that factors other than growth management regulations can have a significant effect on sprawl as would be expected. While the presence of a SGMP in a state has an effect on sprawl, the other factors can potentially have a greater impact than the regulation, as economic factors are powerful variables.

Although the number of jurisdictions present in a county did not return any statistically significant results, it has been found by other researchers to have a significant effect on the proliferation of sprawl. Carruthers found, through the use of a series of econometrics models, that fragmentation and a host of other factors play a role in shaping the spatial distribution of population growth in American cities (2002). Additionally, he found that municipal fragmentation exerts a significant outward push that grows more powerful with distance from the urban core. He further asserts that infrastructure planning can be used to regulate the location and timing of new development. Yin & Sun obtained statistical significance for this variable and argued that highly fragmented governance causes more intensive competitions among jurisdictions (2007).

Conclusion

This research presents one of the first empirical evaluations of the effects of state growth management regulations on urban sprawl that focuses only on the western states. It also brings the literature up-to-date by assessing the period of 1990 through 2010. Several recent additions to the state growth management family have been assessed as well, making this an integral part of the literature regarding state growth management regulations. The findings show that states with SGMPs have, in general, experienced a lesser density decline between 1987 and 2007 than states without SGMPs in the study. While SGMPs were not found to be statistically significant using a scoring system, the mere presence of an SGMP was found to be statistically significant, resulting in a reduction of the proliferation of sprawl in states that have them.

Western states in this study could use this information as a basis for implementing planning requirements that are regulated by the state in a variety of ways, as is evident in the different SGMPs in the study and in previous literature. The conclusions of this study have confirmed results of past studies that show that state growth management programs slow urban sprawl. There is abundant literature that shows what works best in the states that currently have SGMPs in place. While each state has the power to decide what types of consistencies to include that might fit their political climate and circumstances best, it is recommended that these states considering the adoption of a SGMP look to the literature to assess the best options for their state.
References


The Effects of Dual Enrollment Courses: Do They Prepare Students for College?

Ernesto Soto: McNair Scholar
Dr. Mary Pritchard: Mentor
Psychology

Abstract

The focus on academic success starts early for many students. For example, many high school students have clear career goals and may take steps to ensure success at the collegiate level in order to achieve their goals (McWhirter, Torres, Salgado, & Valdez, 2007). Studies have shown that students who rate high on academic self-efficacy while in high school continue to succeed in their postsecondary education (Eccles, Vida, & Barber, 2004; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). One method in which high school students can be better prepared for postsecondary education and increase their academic self-efficacy (Margolis & McCabe, 2004) is by participating in programs that offer college-level curriculum at the high school level, such as dual enrollment (DE) programs. Method: Two hundred and eight undergraduate students responded to questionnaires assessing factors that may help DE students succeed in college, including higher self-efficacy, academic hardiness, perfectionism, and expectations of success. Results: DE students did in fact possess higher GPAs than did non-DE students. Results showed the most important factor affecting GPA in DE students was facilitating anxiety. For those students that did not take dual enrollment courses, the main factors related to GPA were academic hardiness, general self-efficacy, and organizational skills. Conclusion: College administrators may wish to emphasize different factors for success based on students’ academic backgrounds. Keywords: dual enrollment courses, academic success, academic self-efficacy

Introduction

High school is often seen as one of the most significant times in adolescents’ lives. As students prepare to graduate from high school, they are faced with important decisions. Should they move into the work force, continue with their education, or perhaps take a moment to decide what they actually want to do? There are those students who already know that they will enroll in college upon completion of high school and will plan accordingly so that their transition into college can go as smoothly as possible. Some high schools even allow students to take college level courses while simultaneously working on high school requirements. These dual enrollment (DE) programs were designed to help facilitate a smooth transition from high school to college. Since the introduction of the DE program, the number of high school students who earn at least some college credits has increased (Kleiner & Lewis, 2005). Kleiner and Lewis (2005) reported that approximately 813,000 high school students took post-secondary level courses during the 2002-2003 academic year, with 84% of those students having participated in DE courses. The number of students participating in these courses is expected to increase yearly (Bailey, Hughes, & Karp, 2002).

One of the benefits of dual enrollment programs is that upon graduation from high school, students should have a better understanding of the curricula that are required for college level courses. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; 2005) reported that 66% of 2004 high school graduates enrolled in college within twelve months of high school completion. However, the national retention rate of all first year academic college students was only 52%. When considering that almost half of all first year college students do not return for their second academic year, research on factors affecting retention rates is critical. Greene and Forster (2003) stated that only 31% of 2002 high school graduates were prepared for post-secondary education, based on satisfactory completion of required courses for college and demonstration of basic literacy skills. But this is where dual enrollment programs come in. When students are introduced to college level courses at the high school level, the transition into college should be a natural progression. But is it?

DE courses provide a number of advantages to high school students who decide to take advantage of these courses. In addition to a smoother transition to college, students are able to shorten the actual time spent to attain an undergraduate degree, having already taken some of their prerequisites. This, in turn, allows them to expand their
academic performance, tend to do better when they use a learning and growth mindset (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Benishek and Lopez (2001) suggest that students with a growth mindset view academic challenges as opportunities to acquire new skill sets and enhance their competence. Studies have also shown that students who achieve their academic goals more readily, work harder, pursue more challenging goals, and spend more time towards fulfilling their academic goals (Moulton, Brown, & Lent, 2003). In other words, individuals who display a higher self-efficacy towards a particular behavior are more likely to perform better and persist longer towards a variety of academic behaviors (Moulton, Brown, & Lent, 1991). Students with weaker self-efficacy may choose goals that undermine their success (Hsieh, Sullivan, & Guerra, 2007).

**Self-efficacy**

Students who have a high level of confidence in their own academic ability (academic self-efficacy) expect more from themselves and perform better in school (Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001). DeWitz, Woolsey, and Walsh (2009) suggest that self-efficacy in college students is associated with academic success and purpose in life. Margolis and McCabe (2004) stated that DE students generally have a stronger academic self-efficacy than non-DE students as they are traditionally challenged with their academics. They further suggest that non-DE students could overcome low self-efficacy by taking more challenging courses. Additionally, Gore (2006) and Majer (2009) found that academic self-efficacy is the single best predictor of GPA (Solberg & Villareal, 1997) and first-year retention among college students. Bandura and Locke (2003) suggested that one’s self-efficacy is rooted in the core belief that one has the power to produce desired effects. Students with higher self-efficacy tend to participate more readily, work harder, pursue more challenging goals, and spend more time towards fulfilling their academic goals (Pajares, 2003). In other words, individuals who display a higher self-efficacy towards a particular behavior are more likely to perform better and persist longer towards a variety of academic behaviors (Moulton, Brown, & Lent, 1991). Students with weaker self-efficacy may choose goals that undermine their success (Hsieh, Sullivan, & Guerra, 2007).

**Perfectionism**

Studies have shown that students who rate high in perfectionism have higher GPAs (Rice & Slaney, 2002), whereas those that rate lower in perfectionism are less satisfied with their GPAs and have lower GPAs (Grzegorek, Slaney, Franze, & Rice, 2004). However, no studies have examined differences in perfectionism between DE and non-DE students. Thus, one goal of the present study was to examine this difference as well as its potential impact on GPA in college.

**Hardiness**

Research suggests that academic performance is influenced by a student’s academic goals (Dweck, 2002). Students who work on a performance-based orientation attempt to establish their academic standing by avoiding situations that might demonstrate their inadequacies. In contrast, students who operate from learning-based orientation view academic challenges as opportunities to acquire new skill sets and enhance their competence (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Benishek and Lopez (2001) suggest that students who achieve their academic goals through effort and emotional self-regulation (control) make personal sacrifices to excel academically (commitment), and students who purposely seek out difficult course work because of the long-term personal growth (challenge) tend to do better when they use a learning-based orientation. Studies have also shown that students who rate high in
challenge have a clearer relationship between academic success and viewing their academic work as important, thus encouraging them to put forth their deep involvement with their studies to be scholarly successful and achieve higher GPAs (Maddi, 2006; Maddi & Khoshaba, 2005). Thus, it is not surprising that college students who score high on academic hardiness (control, commitment, challenge) have higher GPAs (Sheard & Golby, 2007). However, no studies have examined whether DE and non-DE students differ in academic hardiness; thus one goal of the present study was to assess this question as well as the possible relation between academic hardiness and GPA in DE and non-DE students.

Achievement anxiety

The influence of achievement anxiety on academic performance is mixed. Cassady and Johnson (2002) found that students who worry more or have higher test anxiety show performance declines in their exam scores and grades. Even though students in DE courses may suffer from achievement anxiety, many of these students will often give up before they even make a full effort to attempt the DE courses (Pajares, 1996). However, Jones, Hollenhorst, Perna, and Selin (2000) found that heightened arousal due to an increase in anxiety actually motivated students to work harder and to achieve optimal performance. When students are challenged, especially in DE courses, their low self-efficacy and achievement anxiety may actually improve (Margolis & McCabe, 2004). Given the inconsistent findings in the area of achievement anxiety and GPA, it would be wise to continue to further study this area. In addition, no studies have specifically examined whether there are differences in achievement anxiety between DE and non-DE students. The present study will do just that.

Expectations of success

Students who expect to succeed in school tend to have their own individual goals and preferred study methods (VanZile-Tamsen, 2001). For example, students who achieve high grades take responsibility for their own learning by asking for help from the instructor when they do not understand something (Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 1996). Those students that spend an increased amount of time focusing on their assignments and practice good note-taking methods are those that expect to do well in their academics and are concerned with higher GPAs (Thomas & Rohwer, 1987; 1993). Choi (2005) found that students who spent the time to achieve their goals were primarily focused on higher GPAs and were therefore able to obtain their desired goals. Students that put forth the extra work and rigorous academic preparation through programs such as dual enrollment courses increase their level of success in postsecondary education due to the increased understanding of expectations of college courses (Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003). In theory, this should then benefit them when they actually get to college. But again, no studies have assessed this directly. The present study will investigate whether DE students do in fact have higher expectations for success than do non-DE students and whether those differences may relate to differences in GPA.

Present study

Previous research implies that dual enrollment courses are beneficial to incoming college students (Andrews, 2004; Goetz et al., 2007; Karp et al., 2004). However, research on the actual benefits of taking DE courses in high school on college performance and retention is mixed (Andrews, 2004; Foster, 2010; McCormick, 2010; Micceri et al., 2009; Parke et al., 2002; Spurling et al., 2002; Williams, 2010). One reason for the conflicting research findings could be that it is not DE courses per se that increase college performance and retention, but something about DE students. That is, some DE students may possess certain traits that increase their chances of success in college. We hypothesized that students who took DE courses while in high school would have higher GPAs than those who did not. Second, we hypothesized that DE students would score higher on certain traits known to relate to college success (e.g., academic hardiness, expectations of success, perfectionism). Finally, we hypothesized that these higher GPAs in DE students would be related to certain traits that DE students are more likely to possess that help them succeed, including higher self-efficacy, academic hardiness, perfectionism, and expectations of success. Because the results of the influence of achievement anxiety on collegiate performance are mixed (Cassady & Johnson, 2002; Jones et al., 2000), no specific hypotheses were made about that factor.
Method

Participants

Participants in this study were recruited from a pool of general psychology students who registered through the computer software program Qualtrics, an Internet-based subject pool management program. There were 208 total student participants (34.0% male, 65.6% female) of which 95 had taken DE courses and 113 had not. In order to ensure that students were traditional college students, and took their DE courses within four years of entering college, students over the age of 21 were not invited to participate. The average age was 18.94 (SD = .90), with the youngest student being 18 years old and the oldest being 21 years old. Of the student participants, 83.7% of students were Caucasian, 1.0% African-American, 6.2% Latino, 3.8% Asian, 1.0% Native American, 1.0% Pacific Islander, and 3.3% considered themselves as other. The psychology students received course credit for participating in the survey. The Institutional Review Board approved the study protocol before data collection began.

Materials and procedures

Achievement anxiety test. The Achievement Anxiety Test was created by Alpert and Haber (1960). The Achievement Anxiety Test measures anxiety about academic achievement and performance, and consists of 19 items that cover two different areas: facilitating anxiety (9 items, α = .72) and debilitating anxiety (10 items, α = .74). Each item had a different response category, although all were measured on a 5-point Likert scale indicating the degree to which the statement applies to the respondent. The mean of responses was calculated for each scale, with higher scores indicating a higher level of anxiety for each given scale.

Frost multidimensional perfectionism scale. The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale was developed by Frost, Marten, Lahar, and Rosenblate (1990). The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale consists of 35 items that cover six different areas: concern over mistakes (9 items, α = .74), parental criticism (4 items, α = .81), doubts about actions (4 items, α = .71), and organization (6 items, α = .92). Responses were based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The mean of each subscale was calculated, with higher scores suggesting higher amounts of perfectionism in that particular area.

Generalized expectancy for success scale. The Generalized Expectancy for Success Scale was created by Fibel and Hale (1978). The Generalized Expectancy for Success Scale consists of 30 items that measure students’ expectations of being successful in three different areas: general expectations of success (10 items, α = .74), long-range career-oriented expectations of success (7 items, α = .71), and expectations about their abilities to successfully solve personal problems (8 items, α = .47). Responses were based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = highly improbable, 2 = improbable, 3 = equally improbable and probable, not sure, 4 = probable, 5 = highly probable). The mean of responses was calculated for each subscale, with higher scores indicating a higher expectancy of being successful.

College self-efficacy inventory. The College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI) was created by Solberg, O’Brien, Villareal, and Kennel (1993). The College Self-Efficacy Inventory consists of 19 items (α = .94) that measure college self-efficacy (i.e., How confident are you that you could successfully complete the following task: Ask a professor or instructor a question outside of class?). The scale covers four different areas: academic self-efficacy (7 items, α = .89), social self-efficacy (8 items, α = .88), roommate self-efficacy (4 items, α = .87), and social integration (2 items, α = .48). Responses were based on a 9-point Likert scale (1 = totally unconfident, 2 = very unconfident, 3 = unconfident, 4 = somewhat unconfident, 5 = undecided, 6 = somewhat confident, 7 = confident, 8 = very confident, 9 = totally confident). To calculate self-efficacy, the mean of all responses was calculated, with higher scores indicating a higher college self-efficacy.

College academic self-efficacy scale. College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES) was created by Owen and Froman (1988). The College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale consists of 33 items that measure confidence and academic self-efficacy (i.e., How much confidence do you have about doing each of the behaviors listed below: Asking a professor in class to review a concept you do not understand?). Responses were based on a 5-point Likert
scale (1 = quite a lot to 5 = very little). The mean of all items on the CASES was calculated (α = .91). Lower scores indicate more confidence and higher academic self-efficacy.

**Academic hardiness scale.** The Academic Hardiness Scale was created by Benishek and Lopez (2001). The Academic Hardiness Scale consists of 19 items that measure students’ attitudes regarding grades and academic success over three different areas: commitment (10 items α = .85), challenge (6 items α = .77), and control (3 items α = .75). Responses were answered on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = completely false, 2 = mostly false, 3 = mostly true, and 4 = completely true). To calculate the Academic Hardiness Scale the mean of all subscales was taken (α = .86). Higher scores indicate positive academic self-concepts of academic confidence, dedication, and motivation towards their academics.

**Results**

As predicted, students who completed DE courses had higher college GPAs than did students who did not complete DE courses, GPA, \( t(152) = 3.19, p < .01 \) (see Table 1). In addition, as expected, students who took DE courses in high school displayed higher levels of personal standards, \( t(196) = 2.81, p < .01 \), fewer doubts about their actions, \( t(200) = 2.02, p < .05 \), greater general expectations of success, \( t(201) = 2.16, p < .05 \), greater confidence in their problem solving abilities, \( t(194) = 2.02, p < .05 \), higher college self-efficacy as measured by the CSEI, \( t(202) = 2.71, p < .01 \), greater self-efficacy in their coursework, \( t(198) = 3.17, p < .01 \), higher social self-efficacy (e.g., perceived ability to make new friends, talk to professors), \( t(198) = 2.10, p < .05 \), greater beliefs in their abilities to integrate socially in college (e.g., get a date, join a club), \( t(201) = 2.27, p < .05 \), greater college academic self-efficacy as measured by the CASES, \( t(205) = 3.49, p < .01 \), and higher academic hardiness, \( t(195) = 2.10, p < .05 \), than did those that did not take DE courses in high school. Although no specific hypotheses were made about achievement anxiety, in the present study, students who took DE courses in high school displayed lower levels of facilitating anxiety, \( t(201) = -2.08, p < .05 \), but there were no differences in debilitating anxiety, \( t(202) = 1.04 \). There were also no significant differences between high school students that participated in DE courses and those that did not in their concern over mistakes, \( t(199) = 1.55 \), parental expectations, \( t(200) = 1.05 \), parental criticism, \( t(203) = 0.58 \), organizational skills, \( t(202) = 0.43 \), expectations of success in their chosen career, \( t(198) = 1.92 \), self-efficacy about getting along with and working well with their roommate, \( t(193) = 1.84 \), commitment to school, \( t(200) = 1.56 \), challenging themselves in school, \( t(200) = 1.90 \), or not being in complete control of their education, \( t(203) = 0.97 \).

Because we wanted to ascertain whether the factors that affect student success differed in their relationships with GPA in DE and non-DE students, we ran separate regressions for each group. In order to find out the order of their importance of these variables, the stepwise regression method was chosen. All variables that did not differ between the two groups in the t-test were not included in the regressions.

In students who participated in dual enrollment courses while in high school the sole variable that related to GPA was facilitating anxiety, \( F(1, 60) = 28.01, p < .001, R^2 = .32 \). For those students that did not take dual enrollment courses, the main predictors that related to GPA were academic hardiness, \( F(1, 60) = 15.61, p < .001, R^2 = .21 \), and general self-efficacy, \( F(2, 59) = 15.84, p < .001, R^2 = .35 \).

**Discussion**

Although previous research implies that dual enrollment courses are beneficial to incoming college students (Andrews, 2004; Goetz et al., 2007; Karp et al., 2004), research on the actual benefits of having taken DE courses in high school on college performance and retention is mixed (Andrews, 2004; Foster, 2010; McCormick, 2010; Micceri et al., 2009; Parke et al., 2002; Spurling et al., 2002; Williams, 2010). The purpose of the present study was to: 1) investigate whether college GPAs differed between students who had taken DE courses and those who had not; 2) investigate whether factors known to affect collegiate success differed between students who took dual enrollment courses and those who did not; and 3) investigate whether the factors that related to college GPA differed between DE and non-DE students.

As expected, students who completed DE courses in high school did, in fact, have higher GPAs in college. In addition, there were some differences between DE and non-DE courses in factors known to affect GPA. For example, DE students scored higher than non-DE students on several measures of perfectionism (Rice & Slaney, 2002), including having higher levels of personal standards and fewer doubts about their actions. In addition, DE students reported higher levels of general expectations of success, as well as greater confidence in their problem-solving abilities.
solving abilities (Venezia et al., 2003). DE students also reported greater college self-efficacy (Margolis & McCabe, 2004), including greater self-efficacy about their coursework, higher social self-efficacy (e.g., make new friends, talk to professors), greater beliefs in their abilities to integrate socially in college (e.g., get a date, join a club), and greater college academic self-efficacy. Finally, DE students reported higher levels of academic hardiness than those that did not take DE courses in high school (Sheard & Golby, 2007).

Given the differences between DE and non-DE students in factors known to relate to success in college, our last hypothesis concerned the potential differences in how these factors would relate to GPA in DE and non-DE students. The findings from the present study supported our hypotheses that these factors would differ. The sole predictor of GPA in DE students was facilitating anxiety. Preckel, Holling, and Vock (2006) suggest that students who have a higher level of facilitating anxiety are more likely to fail in their academic careers. The findings from this study help support those findings in which students that are enrolled in DE courses scored lower on facilitating anxiety. Therefore, we could suggest that these students might be more likely to succeed and have higher GPAs as they are not afraid of underachieving in their academics.

On the other hand, the factors related to GPA in non-DE students were academic hardiness and general expectations of success. This makes sense as the AHS measures a student’s hardiness and ability to be able to rise up to academic challenges (Benishek, Feldman, Shipon, Mecham, & Lopez, 2005). Regardless of DE status, undergraduate students tend to rise to the challenge of their academic commitments and challenges to succeed in their studies, in order to justify their decision to attend college and finish within four years (Lifton, Seay, & Bushko, 2000; Lifton et al., 2006). In addition, students that put forth the extra work and rigorous academic preparation tend to do better in postsecondary education due to an increased understanding of the expectations of college courses (Venezia et al., 2003). Perhaps these two factors did not appear as predictors of GPA in DE students because they were already greater in those students to begin with. Future studies should investigate this possibility.

Limitations

The present study has several limitations that must be considered. The results were based on self-reported survey data, which does not ensure complete honesty from the participants. In addition, the majority of our participants were Caucasian, which may limit the applicability of our findings to students of other races. Future studies should utilize a more diverse sample. Finally, our data was correlational in nature. Future studies should track DE and non-DE students as they enter college to examine whether these differences hold in both high school and in college.

Conclusion

The present study highlights the fact that college students who have participated in DE courses do in fact have higher GPAs than do students who have not participated in DE courses. In addition, DE students differ in a number of positive ways from non-DE students in factors known to relate to academic success. As a result, the variables that relate to GPA differ between DE and non-DE students. These findings can help influence future studies as well as academic counselors that may be looking at certain traits to help students better prepare for college.
References


access and quality. U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education.


### Tables

#### Table 1. Dual Enrollment Key Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>DE</th>
<th>Non-DE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GPA</strong></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.24 (.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitating Anx.</strong></td>
<td>94</td>
<td>28.11 (5.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Debilitating Anx.</strong></td>
<td>94</td>
<td>29.24 (5.60)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Concern over Mistakes</strong></td>
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<td>24.29 (5.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Standards</strong></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>25.34 (5.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Expectations</strong></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>15.98 (4.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Criticism</strong></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>9.68 (4.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doubts about Actions</strong></td>
<td>93</td>
<td>10.22 (3.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>93</td>
<td>23.27 (5.28)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General Expectations of Success</strong></td>
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<td>38.03 (4.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expectations of Career Success</strong></td>
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<td>26.02 (3.55)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs about Problem Solving Abilities</strong></td>
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<td>29.37 (3.31)</td>
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<td><strong>CSEI</strong></td>
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<td><strong>CASES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
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<td>30.72 (4.90)</td>
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Table 2. Factors Affecting GPA in DE and Non-DE Students

<table>
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<th></th>
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<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>DE:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>-.56**</td>
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<td>Step 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>AHS</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.45**</td>
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<td>.49**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>-.38*</td>
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</table>

Note: ** p < .001, * p < .01, DE = Dual Enrollment; Facilitating Anx. = Facilitating Anxiety; AHS = Academic Hardiness Scale; GE = General Expectations of Success.
Career-Decision Self-Efficacy among College Students with Symptoms of Attention Deficit Disorder

Charlotte Tomevi: McNair Scholar

Dr. M. Rose Barlow & Dr. R. Eric Landrum: Mentors

Psychology

Abstract

Compared to the general college population, students with attention deficit disorder (ADD) are less academically prepared with the skills to maintain college course requirements. This inadequacy is due to the change in academic structure, time management, and the skills required for higher education. I measured career-decision self-efficacy to assess college students’ abilities to accomplish tasks necessary to making career decisions, and a relationship emerged between students that self-reported increased symptoms of ADD and a decrease in career decision self-efficacy. Providing academic institutions with knowledge of how symptoms of ADD affects college students and their future career planning may assist advisors in providing students with services and treatment options to increase retention and career commitment.

Introduction

College is a time when students make crucial life and career decisions. For some students, this is the first time they are without parental guidance. An estimated 2% to 4% of young adults pursuing a post-secondary education struggle with symptoms of attention deficit disorder (ADD), a disorder which poses difficulties for these college students that encounter transitional challenges and have difficulty maintaining academic demands (Bolaski & Gobbo, 1999; Lee, Oakland, Jackson, & Glutting, 2008; Weyandt & DuPaul, 2006). College students diagnosed with ADD comprise a significant and growing population compared to their undiagnosed counterparts (Dipeolu, 2011, DuPaul et al., 2001; DuPaul et al., 2009). As the number of diagnosed college students continues to rise, the question of their abilities to make career decisions becomes more important (Dipeolu, 2011).

Studies of career decidedness, career maturity, and career exploration include career decision-making (Creed, Patton, & Prideaux, 2006; Dipeolu, 2011; Hackett & Betz, 1981; Luzzo, 1993; Luzzo, 1996; Luzzo et al., 1999; Taylor & Betz, 1983); however, there is limited research available on career decision and factors associated with persons with disabilities, specifically ADD (Luzzo et al., 1999). Hackett and Betz (1981) were the first to apply self-efficacy to career psychology and counseling. Shortly after, Taylor and Betz (1983) constructed the Career-Decision Self-Efficacy Scale to assess an individual’s self-efficacy expectations and how those expectations apply to career decision tasks and behaviors (Luzzo, 1993). Career-decision self-efficacy is an individual’s belief in their ability to make career decisions (Luzzo et al., 1999; Shaw-Zirt, Popali-Lehane, Chaplin, & Bergman, 2005). Low levels of career-decision self-efficacy may identify the degree to which students with ADD have confidence in their ability to engage in educational planning and decision-making. According to previous researchers, the lack of career decision-making is positively correlated with problems in career exploration and career indecisiveness. In a study conducted by Creed et al. (2006), 50% of college freshmen experience career indecision and would like assistance in making career decisions. In addition, Betz and Klein (1996) suggested that career-decision self-efficacy is strongly related to both statements of and actual difficulties in making and implementing career decisions. Taylor and Betz (1983) found undergraduates that declared undecided in their major reported less confidence in their abilities to make career decisions. According to a 15-year longitudinal study of children with ADD, less than 5% completed college and more than 40% of their non-ADD peers completed college.
(Turnock, Rosen, & Kaminski, 1998). Furthermore, an individual’s career-decision self-efficacy should predict their implementation of career decision-making (Luzzo, 1993). As a result, college students’ ability to thrive in post-secondary education influences their success and self-efficacy. Moreover, deficits in self-esteem associated with ADD can influence academic adjustment (Shaw-Zirt et al., 2005).

The adjustment that college students endure relates to their attachment to college, personal-emotional adjustment, and goal commitment. How college students meet the demands of adjustment is referred to as academic adjustment, which is the independent functioning in which an individual is prepared to accommodate academic demands (Feldt, Graham, & Dew, 2011). College provides an environment that is less structured than secondary education, which may increase potential for added distractions in college than students with ADD are adapted to (Norwalk, Norvilitis, & MacLean, 2008). Lack of structure in a college environment may influence individuals with ADD to struggle with developing an academic schedule, developing internal motivation, and psychological functioning (Feldt et al., 2011). A study conducted by Shaw-Zirt et al. (2005) that examined students adaptation to college found that college students with ADD scored significantly lower than non-ADD on the overall score of the student adaptation to college scale. According to Shaw-Zirt et al. (2005), college students with ADD are more likely to struggle with overall academic adjustment. In contrast, Rabiner et al. (2008) found college students with ADD are more likely to adjust and attain academic success than the general ADD population. The transition into a post-secondary education is critical for student academic success, especially students with ADD (Feldt et al., 2011). The decision to attend and remain at an academic institution also plays a role in student’s adjustment to college. This decision may be affected by the student remaining aware of the importance of getting a degree and clearly defining academic goals. The overall academic goals of the student may be perceived as a poor fit with the institution, which may be due to the fact that student is unaware of institutional resources and utilizing the guidance from an academic advisor (Feldt et al., 2011). The percentage of students who utilize institutional resources remains unknown because students are not required to disclose their disabilities to the institution (Norvilitis, Sun, & Zhang, 2009). The institutional fit for the student plays a crucial role in how students adapt and may impact their career decision.

ADD is a common childhood developmental disorder characterized by impulsive behaviors, distractibility, and the inability to remain focused on tasks or activities (Booksh, Pella, Singh, & Gouvier, 2010; DuPaul, et al., 2009; Thackery & Harris, 2003; Weyandt, Linterman, & Rice, 1995). Symptoms include impulsivity that causes an individual to act on urges of environmental demands (Spinella & Miley, 2003) and inattention, which is characterized by limitations on high order cognitive functioning including organization, planning, memory, and self-monitoring (Connors et al., 1999). According to previous research, ADD symptoms affect approximately 3% to 7% of children (Knouse & Safren, 2010; Levine & Anshel, 2011; Ramsay & Rostain, 2007; Spencer et al., 1996). In addition, up to 70% of children diagnosed continue to display symptoms of ADD into adolescence and adulthood (Heiligenstein, Conyers, Berns, & Smith, 1998; Lee et al., 2008; Weyandt & DuPaul, 2006). ADD untreated in childhood leads to negative effects on a child’s social and educational performance, which can seriously damage one’s sense of self-esteem (Thackery & Harris, 2003).

ADD is the second most common learning disability subsequent to dyslexia, the most common learning disability affecting college students (Faigel, 1995). Some ADD symptoms such as hyperactivity decline in young adulthood, but impulsivity and inattention remain apparent in 50% of individuals with ADD through adulthood (Thackery & Harris, 2003). Heiligenstein et al. (1998) studied 1,080 college freshmen; 47 of the students were previously diagnosed with ADD, and the researchers reported that total symptom hyperactivity decreased with increasing age and there were no gender differences in inattention levels. Research regarding college students and ADD is limited in comparison to the availability of research among school age children and adults with ADD. According to Weyandt and DuPaul (2006), approximately 2% to 4% of college students exhibit symptoms of ADD. A contributing factor identified in previous research is that school age children with ADD remain unidentified until they reach post-secondary education. Compared to the general college population, students with ADD are less academically prepared, and are therefore lacking the skills to maintain college course requirements, which places them at risk for school dropout, underachievement, and emotional impairment (Heiligenstein et al., 1998, Lee et al., 2008; Wolf, 2001). DuPaul et al. (2009) indicated this inadequacy is due to the change in academic structure, time management, and the skills required for a higher education, which highlight the symptoms of ADD that college students struggle to cope with. In addition, students with symptoms of ADD struggle to earn a post-secondary education. Students with ADD in comparison to their non-ADD counterparts are more likely to discontinue their post-secondary education earlier than those without ADD (Lee et al., 2008). According to Lee et al., (2008) approximately 5% of students with ADD graduate college, whereas 41% without ADD graduate from college (Barkley, Fischer, Edelbrock, & Smallish, 1990). With ADD continuing into young adulthood and remaining apparent in post-secondary education, research is clearly warranted in the examination of how symptoms of ADD affect college students’ career decisions.
The goal of my study is to expand on previous research regarding college students with ADD and to assess how the symptoms of ADD affect college students’ future plans for careers. I hypothesize that (1) college students with increased inattention problems and impulsivity problems will have decreased career-decision self-efficacy; (2) college students with increased inattention problems will have decreased academic adjustment; (3) college students with increased impulsivity problems will have decreased academic adjustment; and (4) college students with symptoms of ADD will have decreased academic adjustment, therefore decreasing their career-decision self-efficacy.

Method

Participants

Participants were undergraduate students enrolled in a general psychology course at a western university. Participants volunteered and self-selected into the study through web-based Experimetrix software for course credit. There were 257 participants: 131 males and 126 females. The students ranged in age from 18 to 88 years old ($M = 20.93$, $SD = 6.36$). I received approval from university’s Institutional Review Board; all participants provided informed consent.

Materials

Career-decision self-efficacy. Participants were assessed using the career-decision self-efficacy scale (Betz & Luzzo, 1996). The career-decision self-efficacy measures an individual’s beliefs and attitudes that he or she can complete necessary tasks to making career decisions (Betz & Luzzo 1996). The career-decision self-efficacy is a significant predictor of persistence in college when matched with student’s needs, preferences, and interests with the university they were attending (Norwalk et al., 2009). Example items include “Plan course work outside of your major that will help you in your future career.” Participants rated items on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from $1 = no confidence at all$ to $5 = complete confidence$. Validity tests conducted by Luzzo (1996) revealed a significant positive relationship between career decision-making attitudes and career-decision self-efficacy scores ($r = .41$). Students who retain mature attitudes toward the career decision process will have higher scores on the career-decision self-efficacy. The reliability coefficient of the career-decision self-efficacy scale ranges from .83 to .97 (Betz et al., 1996; Luzzo, 1996; Nilsson, Schmidt, & Meek, 2002). Luzzo (1996) investigated the career-decision self-efficacy in a six-week test-retest of the career-decision self-efficacy total score and revealed a coefficient of .83.

Academic Adjustment. The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) is a 67-item questionnaire that measures four components of college adjustment: academic, social, personal-emotional, and institutional attachment (Feldt et al., 2011). Participants are assessed on a 9-point scale ranging from $1 = applies very closely to me$ to $9 = does not apply to me at all$. Example items include “Is definite about reasons for being in college.” Dahmus (1992) and Feldt et al., (2011) have reported a strong reliability of the subscale academic adjustment with a coefficient range .85 to .91. According to Dahmus (1992), a significant positive correlation exists between academic adjustment and GPA (.17 to .53, $p < .01$), indicating that the SACQ has predictive validity between relationships of SACQ scales and independent real-life behaviors and outcomes.

Attention Deficit Disorder. Participants were assessed using 66-item Conners’ Adult ADHD Rating Scale (CAARS) that measures four facets, including: 1) Inattention/Executive Functioning—self-regulation, organization, prioritization, time-awareness, and planning; 2) Hyperactivity/Restlessness; 3) Impulsivity/Emotional Lability; and 4) Problems with Self-Concept (Conners, 1997; Conners et. al, 1999). Example items include “I’m always moving even when I should be still.” Participants rated items ranging from $1 = not at all, never$ to $3 = very much, very frequently$. High scores within this scale indicate the individual has difficulties that may include poor social relationships, low self-esteem, and self-confidence. Conners et al. (1999) examined validity criterion using a sample of adults with ADHD matched with normal control participants results in preliminary data demonstrating 87% overall correct classification rate. In addition, examining relationships between childhood and current symptoms the four scales of the CAARS has significant test-retest reliability and construct validity that ranges from .37 to .67 (Conners et al., 1999). A study conducted by Conners et al. (1999) consisted of 799 adults ages ranging from 18 to
81 ($M=39.18$, $SD=6.36$) and resulted in a strong test-retest reliability for the subscales Inattention Problems, $.90$ ($p < .05$) and Impulsivity/Emotional Lability, $.91$ ($p < .05$).

**Procedure**

Participants electronically agreed to provide informed consent by checking a designated box provided. The participants participated in an online survey through Experimetrix. Participants answered a 206-item survey that took participants approximately one hour to complete. Upon completion, participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

**Results**

A significant negative relationship was found between inattention and career-decision self-efficacy measures, $r(234) = -.35$, $p < .001$, indicating that the more inattention reported, the less career-decision self-efficacy reported, or vice versa. Also, a significant negative relationship emerged between impulsivity and career decision, $r (236) = -.20$, $p = .002$, signifying an increase in impulsivity is associated with decreased career-decision self-efficacy, or vice versa.

A statistically significant relationship did not emerge between academic adjustment and inattention, $r(252) = .08$, $p = .193$, therefore suggesting college students with inattention problems will not have difficulty with academic adjustment. In addition, no significant relationship emerged between impulsivity and academic adjustment, $r(254) = .07$, $p = .264$. No significant relationship was found between academic adjustment and career-decision self-efficacy, $r(236) = .08$, $p = .176$.

**Discussion**

College students’ ability to thrive in post-secondary education influences their success and self-efficacy. My goal was to examine previous research and to assess self-reported inattention and impulsivity and how the symptoms of ADD affect college students’ plans for future careers. In this study a relationship emerged between students that self-reported increase symptoms of ADD and a decrease in career-decision self-efficacy, which signifies that an individual’s career-decision self-efficacy should predict their implementation of career decision-making (Luzzo, 1993), thus identifying the degree to which students with ADD have confidence in their ability to engage in educational planning and decision-making.

Students that self-reported increase symptoms of ADD had decreased career-decision self-efficacy. The results of the current study also emphasize the results found by Norwalk et al. (2008) that the relationship between college students’ self-reported inattention and impulsivity and career-decision self-efficacy signify that with increased symptoms of ADD, college students’ career-decision self-efficacy decreased. This means students with ADD report lower levels of confidence, therefore decreasing their career-decision self-efficacy inhibiting their ability to make career decisions. Moreover, students with ADD appear to struggle with planning for their future.

According to the current study outcomes, I suggest that students with symptoms of ADD do not struggle as much with academic adjustment. These findings are in contrast to a study conducted by Shaw-Zirt et al. (2005) which examined student’s adaptation to college suggesting that students with ADD struggle with overall academic adjustment. The institutional fit for the student plays a crucial role in how students adapt and may have an impact on their career decision. In addition, the college environment contains a much less structured learning environment with added distractions that some students with ADD are not accustomed to (Norwalk et al., 2008). In contrast to previous findings, students with ADD do not have difficulty adapting to the college environment. Therefore, students with ADD are able to adapt to the environment. In addition, the result that academic adjustment did not have a relationship with career-decision self-efficacy affirms that students with ADD have the ability to adapt to their environment, thus increasing their ability to make career decisions. Based on the findings in the current study I suggest it is not the institution that hinders the student, but their increased symptoms of ADD.

College students that struggle with ADD may have difficulty making career decisions and planning for their future. On the contrary, students’ academic adjustment does not negatively impact their career decision making. I speculate that the academic environment does not hinder students with ADD in making career decisions, however the increase in symptoms of ADD hinder students’ abilities to make career decisions. One limitation in this study was the lack of ethnic diversity to differentiate how symptoms of ADD effect general college populations. Future research may want to conduct data collection where a more diverse subject pool can be obtained. I obtained
self-reported symptoms of ADD, therefore, without an informant report from a close relative or guardian to complement the data collected there is a possibility of response error and a decrease in accurate information.

Apart from the limitations of this study, it is one of the few studies that examines career decision-making and symptoms of ADD. Based on the results of this study, students with ADD do not struggle with academic adjustment, but struggle with making and implementing career decisions. Future research should examine the facets of academic adjustment, which include attachment to college, personal-emotional adjustment, and goal commitment. This will supply researchers with additional knowledge to the contrasted findings within this study in relation to previous research. My results may have implications for academic institutions that aim to improve retention. It may provide some incentive for institutions to assist students with ADD to improve poor academic skills and low career-decision self-efficacy, which could decrease college dropout rates (Norvilitis et al., 2010). Providing academic institutions with the knowledge of how symptoms of ADD affect college students and their future career planning will in turn assist academic institutions in providing students with services and treatment options to increase retention and career commitment. A longitudinal study would provide academic institutions further direction on this issue.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family for their endless love and support, especially my son Kaden. I would like to thank my faculty mentors, Dr. M. Rose Barlow and Dr. R. Eric Landrum, for their guidance and encouragement on this project. I would also like to thank the McNair Scholars Program for the summer research opportunity and the chance to achieve my dreams.
References


Generational Status, Sexual Behavior, and Alcohol Use among College Students

Efren A. Velazquez: McNair Scholar
Dr. Elizabeth Morgan: Mentor
Psychology

Abstract

The study examined the differences between first-generation college students and non-first-generation college students in sexual behavior and alcohol use. Examinations between how first-generation and non-first-generation college students have focused primarily on how they differ academically in college, while sexual behaviors and alcohol use has not been the focus in past literature. A total of 441 college students who enrolled in a general psychology course at a northwestern university took an online questionnaire comprised of various questions referring to sexual behavior and alcohol use. The sample for the study had an even fifty percent split between first-generation and non-first-generation college students. Results showed that there were a few differences in sexual behavior and risky sexual behavior between the generational status. There were some differences between white and non-white students and within each gender when referring to sexual behavior and alcohol use. These findings suggest that generational status does not have a strong influence on whether college students engage in sexual behaviors and that other factors should be examined when looking at both sexual and alcohol behaviors.

Generational Status, Sexual Behavior and Alcohol Use among College

Engaging in risky behaviors has been related to college students performing poorly in their academics (Cyder, Flory, Rainer, & Smith, 2009). An example of this is when college students drink alcohol in excess, especially during their first year in college (Cyders et al., 2009). An argument can be made that college students will either succeed or fail in college based on how disciplined they are outside of the classroom. For example, college students who know how to balance their academic lives with their social lives are known for performing very well in college (Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007). Research suggests that first-generation college students are low on self-efficacy compared to non-first-generation students since first-generation college students lack the resource of parental guidance at the collegiate level (Alessandria & Nelson, 2005; Majer, 2009; Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007). Students who have good communication with their parents tend to perform better academically (McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Strage & Brandt, 1999; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000).

The majority of first-generation college students come from minority families who have come to the United States in search of a more prosperous life than that of their country of origin (Ojeda, Navarro, & Flores, 2011). Also, Ojeda et al. (2011) found that, overall, only 6% of Mexican Americans graduate college. This statistic shows a high rate of college drop-outs based on ethnicity, specifically Latinos in this case, and how that could possibly mean that first-generation college students are at a disadvantage when attending college. In another study, Ishitani (2006) found that first-generation college students drop-out more often than non-first-generation college students. Reasons for higher dropout rates among these groups potentially include a lack support from family and friends and a lack of monetary resources at their disposal, which could lead to great pressures while attending college (Ishitani, 2003).
Interestingly, research analyzing the differences between first-generation and non-first-generation college students has exclusively focused on academic life and has not examined behaviors outside of the classroom such as alcohol consumption or sexual practices that may also influence college adaptation and completion. One study done by Sher and Rutledge (2007) examined factors that could be used to predict first-semester drinking in college students. In their study, they asked whether students were first-generation college students as a demographic question. However, this variable was not used in a statistical analysis since only 23% responded to being first-generation college students (Sher & Rutledge, 2007).

Looking for differences between first-generation and non-first-generation college students is important to analyze since this has not been a primary topic in past research. Also, examining gender differences and the influence of ethnic backgrounds in conjunction with generational statuses could give us a more well-rounded view of the sexual and alcohol behavioral differences. It is very common to see different results when it comes to sexual behavior between different ethnic backgrounds (Buhi, Marhefka, & Hoban, 2010; Bourdeau, Saltz, Bersamin, & Grube, 2007).

Alcohol use

It is really no surprise that college students who engage in alcohol consumption at a regular basis suffer academically during the first years of college (Cyder, Flory, Rainer, & Smith, 2008). Scott-Sheldon, Carey, and Carey (2008) report that college students who drink heavily during parties or other social events will have a high probability of engaging in risky sexual behavior while intoxicated. It is important to keep examining why college students continue to drink, despite knowing that heavily drinking alcohol can lead to hazardous behaviors. An example of risky behaviors while drinking alcohol is a less likelihood of condom use while being sexually active and intoxicated at the same time (Scott-Sheldon, Carey, & Carey, 2008). This risky behavior is starting to become very prevalent among college students (Scott-Sheldon, Carey & Carey, 2008). Many students seek out ways to have fun by experimenting with alcohol and other risky behaviors (Cail & LaBrie, 2010). Furthermore, a relationship has been found between college students who drink a lot of alcohol and pursuing high sensation-seeking activities that could be dangerous to their health (Cail & LaBrie, 2010; Cyder, Flory, Rainer, & Smith, 2008).

Though past research has shown a relationship between alcohol use and risky behaviors, it is important to further the research and examine other factors such as gender differences. Furthermore, intoxicated male college students have a tendency to feel invincible which could lead them to participate in high sensation-seeking activities (Cyder, Flory, Rainer, & Smith, 2008). It is very common for male college students to experiment with alcohol and consume more than females (Johnson & Glassman, 1998). Teevan (1972) reports that young males, specifically adolescents, will very likely consume alcohol if they have friends doing it. Females, however, tend to consume alcohol more when dealing with problems (Johnson & Glassman, 1998). The difference between males and females seems to be one consumes more alcohol for pleasure and fun, while the other consumes more alcohol when in an emotional situation.

Looking into ethnicity is important in order to have a better view of alcohol use within the college student population. Research has shown differences in alcohol use between different ethnicities. For example, Latinos are known for drinking more alcohol than Caucasian students in most occasions, yet African-Americans have a tendency to be even heavier drinkers, and may surpass how much Latinos and Caucasians drink (Bourdeau, et al., 2007; Fife, Sayles, Adegoke, McCoy, Stovall, & Verdant, 2011). However, other researchers claim that Caucasian students have a higher tendency to consume alcohol compared to other college students of different ethnic backgrounds (Bourdeau, et al., 2007). These different results show inconsistency when examining ethnicity and alcohol use. It is still vital to examine ethnicity in order to get a better understanding of alcohol use among college students.

Sexual behavior

Premarital sexual activity among college students is very common (Grossbard, Lee, Neibors, Hendershot, & Laimer, 2007; Meston, Trapnell, & Gorzalka, 1996; Seal & Agostinelli, 1996; von Sadovszky, Keller, & McKinny, 2002). However, males are viewed as being more active sexually than women (Bourdeau et al., 2007; Seal & Agostinelli, 1996; von Sadovszky, et al., 2002). Bourdeau et al., (2007) found gender differences among their Latino sample, where women were expected to conform to the socially accepted behavior and not engage in sexual activity; yet men have more leniencies in their sexual behavior; this resulted in males being more sexually active. A study done by Scott-Sheldon, Carey, and Carey (2008) examined whether alcohol consumption and risky sexual
behavior are related among college students. They found that college students reported engaging more in sex without a condom if they were intoxicated. Heavy drinking in college students usually leads to risky sexual behavior such as having many partners and the non-use of condoms during sexual practice (Grossbard, et al., 2007; Scott-Sheldon, Cary, & Cary, 2008). Females are more aware of the risks of risky sexual activity than men, and tend to take more precautions (Seal & Agostinelli, 1996). Interestingly, though females are more cautious in their sexual activities, they have a tendency to engage in sexual activity without a condom if they are with a steady partner and they have been drinking heavily (Scott-Sheldon, et al., 2008).

In examining associations between ethnicity and sexual behaviors, Meston, et al., (1996) found that Asians were more conservative in their sexual attitudes compared to Europeans and North Americans. In another study, Buhi, Markfka, and Hoban (2010) looked for ethnic differences between many ethnic groups and their results showed that Caucasians participate in oral and anal sex more than other ethnic groups. Interestingly, African-Americans are more likely to have more sexual partners and have unintentional pregnancies (Buhi, et al., 2010). However, Latinos and African-Americans that are close to their religious beliefs are less likely to engage in risky sexual behavior such as having multiple sexual partners (Bourdeau, et al., 2007; Fife, et al., 2011).

Current study

Most of the studies conducted with first-generation college students and non-first-generation college students focus primarily on academic success, college adaptation, self efficacy, and parental influence. There has been very little research examining alcohol use, sexual behavior, and risky sexual behavior differences between first-generation and non-first-generation college students. Past research has clearly shown that first-generation college students are more likely to drop-out of college and struggle more with getting used to academia (Ishitani, 2003; Ishitani, 2006; Majer, 2009; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007). It is interesting to note that since most first-generation college students will struggle more with school, their struggles could be connected to risky behaviors. College students who engage in risky behaviors, such as drinking excessive alcohol and participating in risky sexual activity are more likely to struggle in school and have poorer grades (Martinez, Sher, & Wood, 2008). With many obstacles to deal with, it may be common for first-generation college students to engage in high risk activities.

This study intended to look at the differences between first-generation and non-first-generation college students in their alcohol consumption behavior, sexual behavior, and also take a look at whether ethnicity and gender also plays a role in these behaviors. It was hypothesized that first-generation college students would differ in drinking alcohol to negatively cope with their problems compared to non-first-generation college students. It was hypothesized that first-generation college students would differ from non-first-generation students in sexual permissiveness, and that first-generation college students will engage in more risky sexual behaviors than non-first-generation college students. Finally, it was hypothesized that ethnicity and gender would be associated with alcohol and/or sexual behavior among college students.

Method

Participants

The participants were 441 students (54% females, 46% males) who were enrolled in a general psychology course at a southwestern university. The age range of the participants was between 18-28 years ($M = 20, SD = 2.35$). There were $66\% (n = 291)$ freshmen, $23\% (n = 102)$ sophomores, $7\% (n = 30)$ juniors, and $4\% (n = 17)$ who chose seniors or higher as their class standing. Regarding the participants’ racial backgrounds, $82\% (n = 360)$ were Caucasian, $8\% (n = 33)$ were Latino/Mexican-American, $4\% (n = 19)$ were Asian, $3\% (n = 14)$ were African-American, and the remaining $3\% (n = 14)$ were a different race.

There were $50.3\% (n = 222)$ students who classified themselves as first-generation college students, $49.7\% (n = 219)$ as non-first-generation college students. Of the 222 students who were first-generation college students, $59\% (n = 130)$ were females and $41\% (n = 92)$ were males. For the non-first-generation college students, $50\% (n = 109)$ were females and $50\% (n = 110)$ were males.
Procedure

Data collection was completed in Spring 2011. Participants in the study enrolled through the web-based program Experimetrix and took an online questionnaire. The questionnaire started with a description of the study and a consent section. Once they agreed to participate, the participants took the online survey which took approximately 30 minutes to complete. In the end portion of the questionnaire, the participants were provided with a list of health resources, were thanked for their participation, and given information for the credit allocation process which rewarded them course credit for their general psychology course.

Materials

A questionnaire comprised of 142 items was used to measure alcohol consumption behavior, risky sexual behavior, and sexual attitudes. Demographic questions were also asked at the start of the questionnaire. Scales used for this study included Drinking Context Scale, Hendricks Sexual Attitudes Scale, and questions asking about the participant’s sexual behavior such as their engagement in oral sex and sexual intercourse, along with information such as the age they started to engage in those behaviors. Also, they were asked about partaking in risky sexual behaviors.

Drinking Context Scale (DCS). This instrument was created with the intention of measuring excessive drinking among young people (O’Hare, 2001). This 9-item instrument is divided into three subscales: convivial drinking, negative coping, and intimate drinking. This instrument asked participants to rate the chances they might drinking excessively based on the situations listed within each subscale of the DCS. Examples of items from this instrument are, “When I’m at a party, similar to a get-together,” “When I’ve had a fight with someone close to me,” and “Before having sex.” These items were measured with a 5-point Likert-scale (1 = Extremely Low, 2 = Low, 3 = Moderate, 4 = High, and 5 = Extremely High). These items were reversed scaled and then summed up based on their respective subscale in order to obtain a correct score that would indicate the likelihood of the college students drinking excessively. A higher score means a higher likelihood of drinking excessively (O’Hare, 2001). Cronbach’s alpha for the subscales of convivial drinking, negative coping, and intimate drinking were .871, .944, and .875, respectively.

Hendricks Sexual Attitude Scale (HSAS). This instrument measures how permissive people can be within each of the four levels of sexuality: overall permissiveness, sexual practices, communion in the relationship, and instrumentality (Henrick & Henrick, 1987). Two subscales—permissiveness and sexual practices—were used in the questionnaire. Examples of items from this instrument were, “I do not need to be committed to a person to have sex with him/her,” “It is okay to have ongoing sexual relationships with more than one person at a time.” These items were measured with a 5-point Likert-scale (1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Moderately agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Moderately disagree, and 5 = Strongly disagree).

Other scales related to sexual behavior were used to measure sexual behavior among college students. These questions included what age they began to have oral sex, when they began to have sexual intercourse, and how many casual partners they have had. Another set of questions asked the participants about which sexual behaviors the participants have engaged in over the prior six months. This section listed nine risky sexual situations (Table 1) and was coded as a dichotomous variable (1 = Yes, 2 = No)

Results

A 2X2 ANOVA was conducted to determine if first-generation college students and non-first-generation college students differed in alcohol consumption behavior. A significant interaction between college generations and races found drinking to be a form of negative coping with problems, $F(1, 436) = 3.91, p = .049$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$. The graph below shows the interaction between ethnicity and generational status within the female sample of this study. Furthermore, it clearly shows how non-white first-generation college students drink more to negatively cope with their problems compared to white first-generation college students. Regarding our non-first-generation college student female sample, the graph shows how white students drink more to negatively cope with their problems compared to non-white students.
In the examination of sexual behavior, a 2X2 ANOVA was used to determine if there were any differences in generational status and race. There was no significant interaction between college generation and ethnicity for permissiveness in sexual practices, $F(1, 432) = 1.20, p = .27$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$. There was no significant main effect between first-generation ($M = 1.66, SD = .62$) and non-first-generation ($M = 1.73, SD = .64$) students on how permissive they are in their sexual practices, $F(1, 432) = 9.32, p = .06$, partial $\eta^2 = .008$. There was, however, a significant main effect between white ($M = 1.65, SD = .61$) and non-white ($M = 1.86, SD = .72$) participants on how permissive they are in their sexual practices, $F(1, 432) = 9.32, p = .002$, partial $\eta^2 = .021$.

With regard to other sexual behaviors, the results showed that there was no significant interaction between generational status and race in the activity of oral sex, $F(1, 195) = 2.79, p = .01$. Among males, there was no significant main effect between white ($M = 4.47, SD = .1.12$) and non-white ($M = 4.04, SD = .31$) students on how many times they have participated in necking, $F(1, 431) = 8.22, p = .024$, partial $\eta^2 = .012$. There was a significant main effect between the male sample between white ($M = 4.40, SD = 1.23$) and non-white ($M = 3.80, SD = 1.36$) students in how much they have participated in necking, $F(1,195) = 2.19, p = .006$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$.

When referring to differences in light kissing, there was no significant interaction between college generation and race, $F(1,431) = 1.12, p = .291$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$. There was a significant main effect between white ($M = 4.53, SD = .1.07$) and non-white ($M = 4.19, SD = 1.32$) students on how they differed in the amount of times they participated in light kissing, $F(1,431) = 5.14, p = .024$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Among males, there was no significant interaction between college generation and race, $F(1,195) = 2.79, p = .09$, partial $\eta^2 = .014$. There was, however, a significant main effect of race among males within white ($M = 4.44, SD = 1.19$) and non-white ($M = 3.90, SD = 1.41$) students differing in light kissing, $F(1,195) = 2.79, p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .033$. There was no significant main effect between first-generation ($M = 4.37, SD = 1.28$) and non-first-generation ($M = 4.30, SD = 1.24$) male students in how much they differ in the activity of light kissing, $F(1,195) = .37, p = .55$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$.

In regard to examining more intimate sexual behaviors, a series of 2X2 ANOVAs were used to determine if ethnicity and generational status were associated. The results showed that there was no significant interaction between generational status and race in the activity of oral sex, $F(1, 429) = .03, p = .88$, partial $\eta^2 = .000$. There was no significant main effect between white ($M = 3.54, SD = 1.64$) and non-white ($M = 3.20, SD = 1.66$) students on how many times they have participated in oral sex, $F(1, 429) = 3.08, p = .08$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. There was also no significant main effect between first-generation ($M = 3.53, SD = 1.63$) and non-first-generation ($M = 3.42, SD = 1.68$) college students on how many times they participated in oral sex, $F(1, 429) = .66, p = .42$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$.

When analyzing how many times the participants have engaged in sexual intercourse, there was no significant interaction between generational status and race in this sexual activity, $F(1, 430) = .09, p = .96$, partial $\eta^2 = .000$. There was no significant main effect between white ($M = 3.76, SD = 1.66$) and non-white ($M = 3.63, SD = 1.58$) students on how many times they have done the activity of necking, $F(1, 430) = .521, p = .47$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$. There was no significant main effect between first-generation ($M = 3.74, SD = 1.65$) and non-first-generation ($M =
3.73, SD = 1.64) college students on how many times they have had sexual intercourse, \(F(1, 430) = .12, p = .73\), partial \(\eta^2 = .000\).

Finally, when investigating how many times college students have participated in anal intercourse, there was no significant interaction between generational status and race in this sexual activity, \(F(1, 428) = .31, p = .58\), partial \(\eta^2 = .001\). There was no significant main effect between white \((M = 1.51, SD = .967)\) and non-white \((M = 1.60, SD = 1.12)\) students on how many times they have done the activity of necking, \(F(1, 428) = .11, p = .74\), partial \(\eta^2 = .000\). There was a marginally significant main effect between first-generation \((M = 1.63, SD = .109)\) and non-first-generation \((M = 1.42, SD = .87)\) college students on how many times they have had anal intercourse, \(F(1, 428) = 3.76, p = .053\), partial \(\eta^2 = .01\).

The next set of analyses explored generational status and the age participants began to have sexual intercourse. A \(t\)-test found that there was a significant difference between first-generation college students \((M = 1.63, SD = .11)\) and non-first-generation college students \((M = 3.73, SD = .12)\) in the age they experienced sexual intercourse for the first time, \(t(430) = 2.18, p < .05\). There was also a significant difference among males in their sexual intercourse experiences. Overall, first-generation males \((M = 8.13, SD = 2.03)\) reported being older than non-first-generation males \((M = 7.44, SD = 1.63)\) when they started to have sexual intercourse, \(t(157) = 2.37, p < .05\).

For the examination of the nine different risky sexual behaviors, chi-square analyses only found one significant difference. More non-first-generation college students responded with yes in regards to having sex while being on multiple substances (e.g., drugs and alcohol) compared to first-generation college students, \(\chi^2(441) = 5.25, p = .022\), \(\eta^2 = .11\). Also, a \(t\)-test was used to determine if there was a difference in generational status in heavy drinking and then having unplanned sex. It was found that first-generation \((M = 8.18, SD = 1.20)\) and non-first-generation \((M = 2.09, SD = 1.29)\) college students have unplanned sex while drinking excessively, \(t(438) = -2.38, p = .018\).

Table 1. Chi-Square values applied to generational status and risky sexual behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risky Sexual Behaviors</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>(P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex without a condom</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex with people before finding out they had STD’s</td>
<td>.340</td>
<td>.560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex while using multiple substances (e.g., drugs and alcohol)</td>
<td>5.252</td>
<td>.022*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex with multiple partners at once</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex while intoxicated</td>
<td>1.636</td>
<td>.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unprotected anal sex</td>
<td>1.923</td>
<td>.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex without my full consent</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex outside of a monogamous relationship</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the .05 value

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to determine if there were any differences in alcohol use and sexual behavior between first-generation and non-first-generation college students. We also examined whether ethnicity and gender was associated with alcohol use and sexual behavior. Overall, the study demonstrated few differences between first-generation and non-first-generation college students in regard to sexual behavior. However, the study found that ethnicity and gender played an important role in determining the differences in certain sexual behaviors. When examining alcohol use, this study found a significant interaction between generational status and ethnicity within the female sample of this study, which showed similar results to that of Johnson and Glassman (1998). The significant interaction, as seen in Figure 1, shows how both generational status and ethnicity were both equally important when determining if there were alcohol use differences. Interestingly, Johnson and Glassman (2008) found that it is common for females to drink alcohol as a way to deal with problems, so seeing a result that demonstrates females drinking alcohol to cope with their problems is really no surprise.

Most of the sexual behavior differences found in this study showed an association between ethnicity within the male sample of the study. Overall, white participants reported being less permissive in their sexual practices compared to non-white participants. This meant that students who were not Caucasian were more open-minded with
their sexual practices, which can be a variety of situations (e.g., sexual toys, masturbation during intercourse). Buhi et al. (2010) found in his study that Caucasians participated more in anal and oral sexual activities compared to other ethnic groups, meaning that the results in this study do not concur with their study. Unfortunately, we did not have a large ethnically diverse sample, which would have given us a more well-rounded sense of ethnically diverse sexual behaviors, should there have been any.

Interestingly, white students reported engaging more in necking, light kissing, and in holding hands compared to non-white students. These results show that even though white students were not as permissive in their sexual practices, they participate in the basic sexual practices of kissing. These differences were very apparent within the male sample of the study as white males reported participating in the behaviors of necking, light kissing, and the holding of hands more compared to non-white males. It is possible that our female sample did not have any differences since they are known for being a little more reserved in their sexual practices compared to males (Scott-Sheldon, et al., 2008). Although these results showed that ethnicity and gender are associated with certain sexual behavior differences, there were not differences based on generational status. The results for sexual practices show differences in sexual permissiveness, yet generational status is not the main factor for those differences. Instead, ethnicity played a more prominent role when analyzing differences in permissiveness within the participants of this study.

There was, however, a marginally significant difference between the generational statuses in the engagement of anal intercourse and age at first sexual intercourse. Overall, first-generation college students reported that they engaged in anal intercourse more than non-first-generation college students. Also, first-generation college students had their first sexual intercourse at a younger age compared to non-first-generation college student. There were no other significant differences in sexual practices such as oral sex or the amount of times they had sexual intercourse. Thus, the hypothesis that there is a difference within the generational statuses was not supported.

Risky sexual behavior was also examined in this study. It was originally hypothesized that first-generation college students would engage more in risky sexual behavior. However, the results showed that non-first-generation college students reported that they had sexual intercourse more if they drank a lot of alcohol. Engaging in sexual intercourse after drinking alcohol heavily is common among college students (Grossbard, et al., 2007; Scott-Sheldon, et al., 2008). Non-first-generation college students also reported partaking more in sexual intercourse when they were on multiple substances. These results have similarities to research claiming that college students engage in risky sex if they are intoxicated or on drugs (Scott-Sheldon, et al., 2008). Considering that only one of nine risky sexual behaviors was significant, and that the results contradicted the predicted results, this hypothesis was not supported.

In light of the results found for this study, limitations, such as having a primarily white student sample and data was collected strictly at one specific northwestern university, may have influenced the results. Though we did have an ample sample of 441 college students, the lack of ethnic diversity does not accurately represent typical first-generation college students. It is suggested that future research should try to have a more ethnically diverse sample and try to collect data from many areas, if possible. It is possible that the results may differ if the sample collected consists of more Latinos, Asians, and African-Americans since they all tend to differ from Caucasians in alcohol use and sexual behavior (Bourdeu, et al., 2007; Buhi, et al., 2010; Meston, et al., 1996). It is also recommended that future research examine the generational status differences when looking at risky sexual behaviors. Non-first-generation college students reported more engagement in risky sexual behaviors.

Information obtained from studies such as this one can help universities assist parents whose children are first-generation college students. As mentioned before, first-generation college students lack parental guidance at the collegiate level since they are the first in their family to go to college (Alessandria & Nelson, 2005; Majer, 2009; Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007). Finding information about college students’ behaviors, not only inside the classroom, but outside as well, can help programs that are geared towards assisting first-generation college students inform parents about what it means to be the first in their family to go to a university. Also, information obtained from studies like this one will help universities prepare their orientation programs for incoming freshmen.

In sum, the results did not support our hypothesis that there are many significant differences between generational statuses in regards to alcohol use and sexual behavior. Instead, our results showed that ethnicity and gender associated with generational status has a significant influence in certain sexual behaviors. In reference to alcohol use, differences within our female sample regarding drinking alcohol to negatively cope were found. More research is needed to examine the differences between first-generation and non-first-generation college students outside of the classroom setting. For that reason, this study’s purpose was to examine whether there were differences between generational statuses in reference to the two mentioned behaviors. It is important to keep researching differences in generational status in order to get a better understanding of sexual behavior and alcohol use among the college population.
References


Interpretations on the Racialized Experience of Video Games

Mario Venegas: McNair Scholar

Dr. Arthur Scarritt: Mentor

Sociology

Abstract

This research seeks to explore how participant video gamers’ cultural capital impacts their interpretations of the racial content in video games. Having cultural capital on the video game world mediates interpretation of video game racial semiotics showing complexity in the reproduction and contestation of race in media. The project seeks to supplement grounds that show complexity in how people interpret racial content from a growing video game industry. Data were collected through personal interviews where participants played the racialized game Grand Theft Auto: The Ballad of Gay Tony for 30-50 minutes. A sample of 23 participants covering gender, gaming experience, and race answered questions assessing racial lens, then played the game introduction, and finally answered questions assessing interpretations of game content. Results indicate two major frameworks in game interpretation. One mode consisted of dismissing racial content as mere jokes or aesthetic game elements which borders colorblind racial notions. The second mode consisted of rejection and criticism of game content. Gamer respondents interpreted through media reference modes while non-gamers, by and large, were critical of game content. Respondents draw from their experiences and knowledge to interpret racial semiotics and do not passively accept content, as content analysis and psychology literature assumes.

Introduction

The video game industry is one of the fastest growing businesses of this century with sales of at least $6 billion in the year 2000 (Leonard 2003, 2006) and $25 billion in the year 2010, outselling the music and film industries in the United States (digitalbattle 2010; vgchartz 2011). Likewise, video games have also made their way into the classroom with the use of educational video games, software, and interactive curriculum that uses alternative methods of teaching (ESA 2011; Everett & Waitkins 2008). In addition, this form of entertainment has evolved from simple pixelated caricatures to more photo-realistic games that sport a large gamut of genres and involve the dynamic use of strategy, music, and wireless global communications (IGN 2009). As a result, on the one hand this has contributed to the creation of a massive community of gamers from varying ages, nationalities, and income levels in which the average gamer is of age 41 (ESA 2011). On the other hand, the rise of this industry has also created controversies by game developers such as Resident Evil 5, accused of racist depictions of black men as zombies in a supposed rape scene against a white woman, 6 Days in Fallujah, which received critical acclaim regarding the simulation of the Iraq occupation, and finally, Grand Theft Auto IV regarding the sexualized and racial content in the game’s open city of Liberty City, a spoof on New York City (IGN 2009; Leonard 2003).

Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, along with many other games in video game franchises spurred research and debate in academia on the impact of video game content on audiences, primarily children. Most notably from the American Psychological Association, research was conducted that sought to establish a causal relationship between violent video games like Grand Theft Auto and violent behavior (Anderson & Dill 2000; DeVane & Squire 2008; Leonard 2003; Barrett 2008; Mou & Peng 2009). The racial and gender content in video games has been extensively studied across video game titles spanning generations, from the Nintendo Entertainment System to more contemporary titles such as the Grand Theft Auto series and Bully, both from the same developing company, Rockstar North (DeVane & Squire 2008; Dietz 1998; Everett & Waitkins 2008; Leonard 2003, 2006; Mou & Peng 2008). The racial content in video games speaks to a large degree to Omi and Winant’s concept of “racialization” in the application of racial constructions to video games (Omi & Winant 1994). Building from racialization, Everett and Waitkins argue that the racialization in video games is a reflection of the current racial order in modern society and a form of modern minstrelsy, similar to the Blackface archetype used in past media (Everett and Waitkins 2008). From this previous assertion, race becomes an important factor central to this research. Most social
scientists agree that race is a socially constructed term that plays a significant role in society (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Gallagher 2003; Winant 2000; Wise 2010) and that US society is now in a “colorblind, post-racial society”, an assertion argued against by Gallagher, Bonilla-Silva, and Wise in their works. Furthermore, Gallagher posits that race has become commodified and that it can be something to be consumed like ethnic products (Gallagher 2003). Building from that thesis, and adding in Omi and Winant’s concept of racialization, Leonard primarily argues about racial consumption in video games through interaction with the video game (Leonard 2006). I will be further expanding on race and video game content analysis in the review of literature.

An aspect in the research literature that needs to be explored is how video game knowledge impacts interpretation of racialized content. In other words, does having technical and cultural knowledge of the video game world mediate the racialized experience of video games in combination with players’ racial perspectives? Video game racial content reproduces race as a lived experience (Leonard 2003; Everett & Waitkins 2008), however this reproduction is often contested through various interpretational modes that involve video game experience or lack thereof. This research project focuses on addressing these questions by obtaining respondent perspectives on the content of a racialized video game they will play. In particular, I will use the game Grand Theft Auto: The Ballad of Gay Tony as a source of content and explore the variety of interpretations and their relationship, if any, to respondent video game knowledge and racial lens. Results discuss the different modes of interpretation of content and how that relates to video game experience. By analyzing these relationships, we can understand how race is both reproduced and contested in video games; this shows complexity in player interpretation of content and how video game experience mediates the reception of racialized content.

Review of Literature

The controversy of video games like Grand Theft Auto (henceforward GTA) that are situated in racialized (Leonard 2003) and gendered (Dietz 1998) content has become part of a larger debate regarding the impact of these games on audiences. Academically, this has become part of literature that seeks to establish a causal link between violent video games and violent behavior primarily coming from psychology. Among that body of work, Anderson and Dill are known for their study that concluded that violent content in video games “increase violent and aggression-related thoughts and feelings” and decreases “pro-social behavior” (Anderson, Berkowitz et al 2003; Anderson & Dill 2000; Bensley & van Eenwyk 2001). Their instrument of measurement was noting the intensity and length of noise that participants directed at a fictional character when told that said character was competing against them. This was compared to a control group who was not told of competition and the study found that participants playing competitively made noises quicker than that of the control group. One limitation in Anderson's study is whether he can generalize to much broader social contexts outside of the game-competition mode; in other words, do violent attitudes associated with competition and playing remain in the context of playing? Anderson is known within the psychology field for studying violent video games and asserting that such games cause more violent thoughts and behavior than movies due to their interaction with players and that the games reward violence (APA 2004).

On the other hand, other studies have become more skeptical as to whether such a causal link exists. One study by Dunkin and Barber concluded that there was “no evidence obtained of negative outcomes among game players” and that gamers received higher scores than non-gamer participants in the areas of school involvement, mental health, family relationships, and friendship networks (Dunking & Barber 2002). This result speaks to some degree that players do not passively receive messages in game content as is often asserted in psychological studies like Anderson and Dill, but rather that a process of interaction takes place between the players and the game and other social factors that play a role in interaction.

Regarding video game racial content, literature from the field of game studies has analyzed the content of video games and provided different theories of interaction between players and the game as a text. Among these studies, games that contain military content such as Call of Duty and Rainbow Six have been studied by scholars regarding the possibility of the games as a form of military propaganda (Andersen 2009; Gagnon 2010; Huntemann 2010; Shaw 2010). Huntemann and Shaw used Winnicott’s concept of transitional space (Winnicott 1971) to assert that video games allow players to dialogue with in-game messages that to some degree can manufacture consent as in the case of military First Person Shooter games for which their studies are centered upon (Huntemann 2010; Andersen 2009; Gagnon 2010; Shaw 2010). Studies have been conducted through content analysis on the effect of military war First Person Shooter (FPS) video games on attitudes of militarism and foreign policy (Gagnon 2010; Huntemann 2010; Andersen, Kurti 2009; Šisler 2008) and similar studies on the racial content of games like the
Grand Theft Auto series and other games are also growing (Dietz 1998; Leonard 2003, 2007; Everett & Waitkins 2008; Šisler 2008).

Likewise, the study of gender roles and to some extent race is growing with the works of David Leonard and Mou Peng. Peng’s study analyzed content of a sample of 19 of the most popular video games regardless of console and analyzed the role of characters, gender, race, attire, character position, and body type. The results demonstrated that characters in these video games were predominantly white male with built bodies and demonstrating heroic masculine acts; female characters were minimal and were given side roles or used as trophies. Peng and Mou conclude that these content characteristics reinforce gender roles that can impact the identity and social development of teens playing the games (Mou & Peng 2009). The authors assert that since males are predominant in the gaming development, video games and the hobby become gendered due to male developers operating from a limited gendered lens. These social factors cause females to lose interest in video gaming (ibid), which is a form of marginalizing females from a hobby that has grown over the past ten years (ibid). The latter assertion speaks to an implication from feminist standpoint theory that situates females in a position of marginalization in the case of the video game franchise which also allows females to critically observe the male dominated franchise (Degler 1956; Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis 2002). Regarding these studies, to what extent are video games a reproduction of the current social order and are video games a causal medium of gender and racial socialization for audiences? (Mou & Peng 2009)

Another example of racial content in GTA is the study by Everett and Waitkins who analyzed the content of Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, the most controversial game of the franchise (McLaughlin 2008) and compared it to Bully, another game developed by Rockstar. This was done by observing elements in the game such as character depictions, story of the game, agency available in the game, and interactions between characters. Their results demonstrated that in San Andreas the main character is a black man who delves in gang criminal life while Bully’s main character is a troubled white youth who seeks moral redemption in a boarding school. Everett and Waitkins also asserted that games like Grand Theft Auto reproduce the current racial order and are a form of modern minstrelsy, similar to the blackface archetype used in past media (Everett & Waitkins 2008). David Leonard is another scholar who analyzes racial content in video games from sports games to military shooters to Grand Theft Auto (Leonard 2003; 2006). His main conclusions are similar to those of Everett and Waitkins as he asserts that “Video games, despite, or perhaps because of, their function as a source of entertainment and a profitable commodity, exist as a powerful medium to disseminate ideologies, talk through racial/gender issues, and elicit approval for the status quo. Contributing to our ‘racial common sense’ while also justifying social policies, contemporary video games are ideological constructs that demand careful analysis” (Leonard 2003). Similar to Leonard and Everett & Waitkins, Barrett asserts of black body commodification through Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas in which players can alter the body of the main character CJ by making him muscular, thin, obese, or of any type to which Barrett asserts is a form of racial minstrelsy and objectification of the black body (Barrett 2006). Underlying the studies of Leonard, Everett, Waitkins, and Barrett are the concepts of racialization (Omi and Winant 1994) and a lack of explanation regarding player reception of racial semiotics in the games. A limitation in these content analysis studies is that inferences are made on the effects that the game semiotics have on players without empirical evidence showing player interaction with game semiotics. The former is demonstrated in that video games are taking a racial meaning through the use of racial stereotypes, semiotics, and language (Leonard 2003, 2006; Everett & Waitkins 2008).

In providing literature to the question of how players make sense of racial and violent content in video games, a study by DeVane and Squire is from a curriculum and instruction lens. Their study utilized focus groups of youth of different gaming, age, and racial backgrounds who were interviewed on what they made of the violent and racial content in GTA: San Andreas. Results demonstrated that players utilized their own knowledge, expertise as gamers, identities, and discourses to make different meanings from the game which suggest that players do not necessarily passively take racial content at face value and often contest such content (DeVane & Squire 2008).

This study also reviewed different modes of meaning-making from texts and asserted that video games be seen as a dynamic text and that “this open reading of a text as a social practice takes place through the interplay of the text and the players’ discourse models, or cultural models” (ibid) as in the culture of gamers and their own personal identities and backgrounds. A limitation in this study is that it racially focused only on white and black respondents when it came to racial semiotics without understanding how other racially identified groups made sense of the content. Another limitation in DeVane’s study is that it did not account for gender in their sample since the GTA games are known for gendered content and depictions of women. Females represent 42% of the gaming population in the United States (ESA 2011) which demonstrates a growing female gamer population with important perspectives, not just on race, but on gender and violence. With new video game consoles, upgraded technology, and more agency in the new Grand Theft Auto games such as GTA: IV and Episodes of Liberty City, it is important
to consider how racial content differs for the newer GTA games. DeVane's study served as a major foundation for this project in understanding racial content and whether it is a reproduction of society’s racial stratification or whether players make different meanings out of them in relation to their experiences and their views of race and racial inequality in society.

It is important then to understand how race operates on this society and how a structural racial system and race depictions can be reinforced through the media and entertainment (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Gallagher 2003). One study in particular, performed by Judith N. Martin et al, used Bonilla-Silva’s tool of the 15 racial groups to see which one is whitest and create a spectrum of whitest to not-whitest groups. The study used those tools along with the seven dimensions of race to assess a sample of hundreds of students’ attitudes and results showed that skin color, culture, and nationality played a major role in defining race among other factors (Martin et al 2010).

Martin's study is based on the contact theory framework of race that asserts that racial prejudice reduces when coming into contact with other racialized groups (Martin et al 2010). Contact theory in race theory has been challenged on many aspects and raises questions as to whether coming into contact with racial groups in a medium like video games reproduces racialization or contests it (Martin et al 2010). Much of the current racial dialogues taking place in contemporary US society include white privilege (Macintosh 1988), domestic race-based policies—Affirmative Action—and white racial resentment (Tuch and Hughes 2011), as well as the denial and rationalization of racism (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Davidio et al 2002; Tuch & Hughes 2011). Reviewing this body of work gives a sense of how participant discourses and socially situated experiences on race can demonstrate the complexity of race and how this understanding shapes interpretation of content. The purpose in reviewing these works is to provide theoretical and empirical grounds for the use of racial lens in participants for this study and to also address that literature on analysis of games like GTA reflect social dynamics in real life and can serve as a means to direct attention away from real social issues on racial inequality and institutional racism. In other words, while players may interact with racial semiotics, it is only a small aspect of a much larger structural societal issue on race (Bonilla-Silva 1997).

Hypotheses

I provide my hypotheses to the research question of how do respondents interpret the racial semiotic content in GTA: BoGT in relationship to racial lens/awareness. These are as follows:

- **H1:** If video games are to be seen as a dynamic text with an open reading of interplay between the text and players’ discursive and cultural models (DeVane & Squire 2008), then I hypothesize that respondents that have extensive experience in video games are more likely to interpret the game’s racial content through a video game technical lens than participants with little to no video game experience.

- **H2:** People with a systemic racial lens are more likely to be cognizant of racial content in game than participants with a more mainstream or colorblind racial lens. The reasoning behind this is that if people with a systemic understanding of race can note the implicit and explicit attitudes of people in society (Dovidio et al 2002; Yamato 1988), then they can be more cognizant of the content and behaviors of characters in GTA.

Methods

Operationalization of terms and variables

In order to assess the racial lens of the participant, it is necessary to put into operation on what constitutes racial lens. A racial lens is the understanding and awareness of race in society, which is supported by the reviewed literature above and by Katz and Hass in their study assessing racial attitudes and their connection to American values (Katz & Hass 1988). To supplement this further, I supply some racial lens classifications that will be used for this project. These classifications of racial lenses and frameworks have been derived from the works of past sociologists and they constitute different views of race and racism in society. The frameworks or lenses have been reviewed by Bonilla-Silva in his work *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era* and are provided as a means to classify respondents regarding their views on race and racism in US society.

**Mainstream/colorblind.** This view of race and racism posits that racism is an ideology or set of ideas that affect individuals and behavior. This view relegates the study of racism to psychology and that as an idealist view, ideas
influence behavior and attitudes towards different groups in society (Bonilla-Silva 2001). Persisting racial inequality then owes to lack of responsibility and cultural deficiencies of minority groups (Brown et al 2003; Wise 2010) and that we now live in a post-racial society (Bonilla-Silva 2003, p. 28-30). Racism still exists, but when it is mentioned, skinheads and the Ku Klux Klan are the groups usually associated with the term. Building from these assertions, racism is individualized and little attention is paid to the system of advantages provided by institutions in a society that privileges one group over others (Bonilla-Silva 2001; McIntosh 1988; Yamato 1988).

*Systemic.* In this lens, racism and racial inequality are seen primarily as a system of advantages that favors one race over other racial groups (Bonilla-Silva 2002; McIntosh 1988; Yamato 1988). In this framework, white privilege is also recognized where whites benefit from institutions such as government, housing, and income, and people of color lag behind whites regarding these institutional factors (Bonilla-Silva 2001, 2003; Gallagher 2003; McIntosh 1988; Wise 2010). While aware that racism is beyond skinheads and Archie Bunkers (Winant 2000), this framework recognizes that discrimination takes place in more systemic ways (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Yamato 1988).

*Marxist.* This lens holds as its main tenet the system of class and exploitation of the working class under the bourgeoisie. Racism and race are viewed as secondary to class interests and the concept of race is used as a means to exploit marginalized groups in a capitalist society (Bonilla-Silva 2001). Much of this framework is derived from Marx and holds as its main tenets the conflict of class in the United States. For example, poverty and uneven distribution of resources in a class-based society are appeals that correspond to this lens.

Participant responses to questions on the topic of race were assessed to find fit within these lenses. That is not to say these frameworks are mutually exclusive since overlap can occur in different areas of social life; for example, somebody can have a Marxist lens and see race as secondary to class while also espousing colorblind racial beliefs. While issues regarding identification of racial lens may arise, a lens will be assigned based on responses to race questions on white privilege, institutional racism (education, justice system, and housing), the race and wealth gap, distribution of resources, personal racial identity, and stereotypes of racial groups in society, and what these evoke in participants.

**Game selection**

Among the diverse gamut of video game genres that contains racial content, I utilized GTA: The Ballad of Gay Tony, the most recent game from the Grand Theft Auto franchise, which has a history of controversy regarding the content on racial, gender, crime, and sexual grounds (Barrett 2006; DeVane & Squire 2008; Everett & Waitkins 2008; IGN 2008). Prior to interviewing respondents, I familiarized myself with the GTA franchise by reading online articles about GTA from popular gaming websites such as IGN and the official GTA website from Rockstar North. I played GTA: The Ballad of Gay Tony and completed the story while taking note of content and themes within the game that were pertinent to the research. Among those themes, the franchise's trademark theme of the American Dream and a crime-filled notion of meritocracy were present in this installment (McLaughlin 2008). The reason this game was chosen was because the game’s contextual setting is situated in a fictional yet close reflection of today’s contemporary society which reproduces racial group depictions such as Asians, Latinos, and Blacks and continues the same racial dynamics of past GTA games (Everett & Waitkins 2008; Rockstar 2009).

**Participant recruitment**

In order to obtain this information, a sample of 23 participants were gathered and asked to be part of the research project. The sample covered different backgrounds such as video game experience. There were participants that considered themselves gamers and had played video games for at least six or more years; likewise, there were participants that had no experience with video games and had no interest in the industry or culture whatsoever. Geographically, my participant sample resided in Idaho, mainly the Boise area, with a small degree of respondents from Nampa and Meridian, Idaho. The Boise State campus helped me obtain a geographically and racially diverse sample in that there were international students and students from out of the state that attended the campus for summer classes. In order to recruit participants, I utilized snowball sampling from informants and made announcements to Boise State University student organizations about the project. I also extended my outreach to communities outside of Boise State and to staff from student affairs departments on campus such as Promotions and the Student Diversity and Inclusion. Through snowball sampling I was able to obtain potential participants that had
different racial backgrounds such as black, Asian, Latino, and biracial respondents. The reasoning for my sampling method to be snowball and non-random is due to Idaho's racial demographics. Idaho lacks much racial diversity with whites representing over 85% of the population, Latino/Hispanics representing at least 10%, and other racial groups between 1-3% (US Bureau of the Census 2010). To draw a random sample would mean that I would most likely have an over-representation of white racially identified people. For the purpose of my research, I needed people from different racial backgrounds which prompted me to search for racially diverse participants through snowball sampling. My sample of 23 participants is broken down as follows in terms of racial, gaming experience, and gender backgrounds.

Table 1. Sample Demographic by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity*</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Racial classifications obtained from the US Census Bureau.

Table 2: Gaming Hobby and Gender Frequency in Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender and Gamer Type</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gamer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Gamer*</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note that I included former gamers in the non-gamer category.

Data collection

In order to obtain data, I used personal in-depth interviews to assess the racial lens of participants and to debrief participants after playing GTA: BoGT in order to obtain their interpretations of the game. Using face-to-face interaction with participants and open-ended questions allowed me to have a more personalized and dynamic conversation, which also allowed respondents to share stories and to express what they felt in response to the interview questions. As a result, it allowed me to better glean perspectives and the context that surveys would not have been able to capture (Babbie 2010). Interviews were also necessary because the process involved having participants play GTA: BoGT and then be debriefed after the experience in order to see how they made sense of the content and of the game experience, especially for non-gamers who may have never played a video game before. I used an XBOX 360 gaming system and I tutored non-gamer participants throughout the gaming session. Interviews took place in one of two areas: the first was in the homes of participants; the other area was in the Student Diversity Center located on the Boise State campus where I was provided with a television and a comfortable space to conduct interviews and provide refreshments. The interviews were then recorded, transcribed, and analyzed through memoing and the constant comparative method (Babbie 2010; Glaser & Strauss 1967) in order to find emergent themes and frameworks of interpretation.

The interview process consisted of three major parts. The first part consisted of obtaining participant demographic information pertinent for this project such as gender, age, racial/ethnic identification, and video game experience. This included questions about the video game industry, culture, demographics, and types of games that participants have played. If participants did not play games, I further inquired as to why they didn’t and if they would if given the opportunity. In this part of the interview process, questions assessing participant racial lens were also asked. These questions addressed respondent attitudes on race and their racial views to see correspondence with the racial frameworks provided in the previous section. Questions addressing institutionalized racism, white
privilege, inter-personal racism, distribution of resources, stereotypes, as well as an inquiry into their own view of race and racism in this society were asked.

After the first set of questions, we proceeded to play GTA: Ballad of Gay Tony from the beginning until the end of the first mission. Players play as Luis Lopez, a Dominican man released from prison who dedicates himself to building a better life in Liberty City working as a business partner for Tony Prince. A mishap with authorities gets Luis sent to prison for years where he learns to not be involved in the drug business despite his friends cajoling him back into it. In working as a business partner for Tony, Luis is torn between facing people from his past like his friends that continue delving in the drug dealing business or working for Tony legitimately and risk being called a sellout by his family and friends. As the story progresses, Luis engages in under the table jobs for Tony in business dealing and must also mediate Tony’s drug addiction problems during the game’s situated economic hardship. Luis also experiences racial issues as he deals with people in power over him calling him by racial slurs.

During gameplay, players enter one of Tony’s nightclubs. They are given the options to dance, drink, or partake in a drinking game. As part of the procedure, I had participants partake in the dancing game where depending on their performance one of two things occur. If players do well, they can take part in a group dance, otherwise Luis and the woman with whom he dances make out and go to a bathroom stall for sex. Participants can see the outside of the stall slightly shaking and hear the sex moans of the woman and Luis. I had participants experience this in the game so as to demonstrate an aspect of the portrayal of women and to help them elicit reactions that they can then talk about in the third part of the interview; this was also the earliest sex scene they could witness. Participants then step outside the club to help the club bouncer deal with two people causing trouble. As part of the introduction, players experience Luis’ interactions with his childhood friends and how they delve in the drug dealing business. Players complete the introduction after dropping Luis’ friends off and arriving in Luis’ apartment. What players did next varied since some chose to explore while others ended the game session.

When the gaming session finished, I proceeded to follow up with participants to talk about their experience of the game and in a sense let them debrief about the game. I asked questions about game content, what they made of it, what they felt the game was telling them about certain groups such as women, Latinos, and gays. Other questions also involved discussing how much of reality the game portrayed and I gave them the opportunity to relate any other aspects that I did not cover that they felt compelled to discuss. While participants cannot obtain the most content and story out of the introduction of the game, it was during this part of the interview process that I supplemented participants with the synopsis of the game from the instruction booklet and in-game information. The information I provided included description of missions, plot twists, background stories on Luis, Tony, and what it is they do under the table in the game. This helped participants contextualize the events that transpired in the game.

Once I collected the interviews, they were transcribed and analyzed through memoing and coding for search of themes, or rather, frameworks of interpretation of GTA’s racial content. I analyzed through memoing by noting respondent answers to interview questions and how their answer corresponded with the beliefs in each of the racial lenses. In terms of interpretation of the game content, I noted certain keywords used that suggested references to other discourses and cultural knowledge as well as words that showed opinions about the content. I focused on interview questions in the post-gaming session addressing the game’s portrayal of certain groups like women, Latinos, and other racial groups. Some words noted as I coded were words like “disagree,” “false,” “objectify,” “stereotypes,” “similar,” “crime genre,” and “story of the game,” among others. Personal experiences were noted as well and codified in the transcripts as were words that dealt with references in the game which were subsequently codified under “elements of the game;” likewise, words and phrases not dealing with video game knowledge from interpretations of content were codified as “personal knowledge.” Through analyzing the data, I was able to codify these modes of interpretation as I will show in the results.

**Results**

Two major frameworks of interpretation emerged that demonstrate the different ways that respondents make sense of the racialized experience of video games.

**Frameworks**

*Game Criticism.* In this framework of interpretation, participants expressed concern regarding the racial depictions of characters, use of stereotypes, language, portrayal of women and Latinos, and the setting in which the game took place. Of the participants whose responses fit this framework, non-gamers were predominant with some
that used to play video games but stopped altogether. Participants in this mode of interpretation drew from their
own personal experiences, identities, and knowledge to interpret the game’s racial content and provide perspectives
on the game’s use of race, gender, and violence.

**Media Cultural References.** This framework consisted primarily of gamer respondents, those who have played
video games for years and continue to do so as their hobby. There was some variation regarding racial lens, but
primarily it consisted of mainstream lens with a small amount of systemic racial lens. A major factor here is that
unlike in the Critical Reflection framework where most respondents were not gamers and did not know much about
the video game industry and culture, being a gamer impacted to a large degree how racial content was interpreted by
respondents because many of them possessed the cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) about the gaming culture and
what goes into making a video game. As a result, respondents here were able to interpret racial content in the
context of game development, aesthetic, and media reference archetypes from other forms of entertainment.

Respondents were tabulated in a 4x2 table reflecting the modes of interpretation and respondent racial
lens/video game background as shown below.

| Table 3: Respondent Game/Racial lens and Mode of Interpretation |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
|                                | Game Criticism | Media Cultural Ref |
| Gamer Systemic                 | 1               | 3                 |
| Gamer Mainstream               | 0               | 7                 |
| Non-gmr Systemic               | 6               | 0                 |
| Non-gmr Mainstream             | 3               | 3                 |

The table demonstrates that by and large non-gamer respondents interpreted racial content in GTA through
the mode of Game Criticism, while gamer respondents interpreted content in a Media Cultural Reference mode. The
non-gamer mainstream racial lens respondents were evenly split in terms of interpretational mode which is
something that will be further addressed in the discussion. To better demonstrate how gaming cultural knowledge
and lack thereof impacted interpretational mode, I provide cases for each type of respondent background.

**Non-gamer systemic.** One respondent who has a systemic racial lens and is a non-gamer is Caz. He is a former
gamer who stepped away from the gaming industry due to what he believes is the industry's use of controversy to
sell such as foreign military conflict with Call of Duty or sexual content as in GTA. He identifies as biracial being
half white and half Mexican, but feels more close to white. His responses drew from his own experiences and
critical racial lens knowledge when asked about racial content in GTA. He mentioned a critical point regarding the
larger perspective portrayed in the game and whose it reflects.

**Interviewer:** Few more questions. In the narrative and things taking place, like whose reality do you think is
being projected in that game?

**Caz:** The media's, I'd say, I guess, what I mean by that is how the media projects these people of color. On
the news you know, you hear about criminal activity and next thing you hear is black man, Mexican
Hispanic, so I think it's giving you that reality right there.

Although Caz makes a reference to the media, his view is more critical in that he is cognizant that the game
reproduces media representations of people of color and suggests that the game further reinforces those views of
people of color. He is aware of the bias in society towards people of color as he mentioned during the interview
how racism not only persists but is reflected in much of the institutions but that poverty also plays a role in
perpetuating much of the inequality. Caz was one of the six respondents in this category who took issue with the game and found the content to be of concern when used for propaganda and further cementing racial stereotypes of people in society. Among the six, most took note of the portrayal of women and expressed concern for impressionable audiences like children. This suggests that racial content is contested through lived experiences and knowledge and not accepted at face value since respondents in this category did not find anything funny regarding racial content in GTA.

Non-gamer, mainstream lens. A case of this mode that interpreted content in a media reference way, albeit not in a gaming sense, but based on his experiences and perspective is Mib. He is a white, former gamer with a colorblind racial lens overlapping to some degree with a mainstream lens who responded by drawing from his own knowledge and experiences to the question of Latino depictions in the game. When asked about the portrayal of Luis, his friends, Luis’ mother, who borrowed money from a loan shark, and the social and physical actions taking place in the game, he responds:

Interviewer: How much of it do you find true of Latinos in society?

Mib: Um, if I took those four and try and extrapolate their personalities, their traits and lives and put it on to all the Latinos that I’ve met, um, it does seem to be a good representation when you add all four of these up because there’s a lot of Latinos that I’ve met that are like the mother, there’s a few that I’ve met that are like Luis who kind of recognizing their situation, they’re not stuck by, I guess we don’t have the best life right now, we’re immigrants so we have to like—it takes like a couple generations to make money and get jobs and kind of learn how to live in America so Luis is trying to take some further steps.

Mib’s response found personalities and characteristics of the characters, in other words, physical attributes to be true to his experience with Latinos. Socioeconomically, it is worth mentioning that Mib used a similar reasoning to the question of Latinos regarding their immigration and socioeconomic status. He mentioned that rather than being systemic stratification and discrimination that worked against Latino immigrants (Durand & Massey 2001), it was rationalized to be that since Latinos are recent immigrants, it would take generations to move up the economic ladder much like whites did in the past. While this response is an appeal to meritocracy that racial realists often use to blame people of color for persisting racial inequality (Brown et al 2003), the game content reinforced his experiences with Latinos and illustrated a case of race as a lived experience that was reproduced in the game.

Gamer, mainstream lens. Among gamer respondents, the mode of Media Cultural References was predominant. Knowledge of the video game world played a major role in mediating interpretation of the racial content in GTA. A case in point is Pog. He is a white male who has been playing video games for at least 30 years and follows the industry still. Although he is aware of how race plays in society, his views align with those of mainstream regarding racism, and his views are largely shaped by his hobby as a video game player. Pog’s knowledge of the video game industry and culture is extensive as he expresses how much goes into making a game; he also believes games don’t drive people to aggressive behavior since he mentioned he has yet to see a study that shows detrimental long term effects of games. When asked about the use of racial slurs in GTA, particularly the scene where Rocko and Vince confronted Luis by calling him a spic and having a verbal altercation that erupted at gunpoint, he expressed the following:

Interviewer: What do you think about the use of racial epithets in the game? Especially with one of the characters, Rocco at the opening scene?

Pog: Yeah, I, um, I definitely, well, I definitely did not seem to be the protagonist of the story, he didn’t seem to be the hero, and I don’t think the game was trying to glamorize or encourage what he was saying. In fact, I think the game was really using that to paint him in a negative light, and I think that again in the genre that the game is which is the crime and heist and gang genre, that type of language and those types of epithets are pretty common...especially with characters throwing insults at each other and that's pretty common dialogue in movies.
Rather than making a connection to impact of the use of racial slurs in real life society, Pog dismissed the use of it as more of a game story element by making references to crime genre films. He recognized that the racial depictions were necessary for the game to be more realistic in its setting and making it reflect many of the current social dynamics. Like Pog, other gamer respondents in this category drew from their technical knowledge of video games and kept the depictions of racial groups inside the game. This mode of reference situated racial content under a cultural media and gaming context that while a reflection of reality, it is limited in such context.

**Gamer, systemic lens.** Among the respondents who fit this category were half the number of gamer respondents with a mainstream racial lens. This group, despite demonstrating a sharp awareness of the role of race in society and how race is embedded in social institutions (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Brown et al 2003; Yamato 1988), interpreted GTA’s racial content within a gamer cultural mode drawn from media references and technical aspects in a game. To illustrate this case is a Latino male gamer pseudonymed Cor; he has been playing video games for at least 10 years and is interested in the art aspect of video games. He expressed how much art and music goes into games and that story is a necessary aspect to make a good game. Regarding his racial lens, he is very aware of systems of racial inequality like white privilege, institutional racism, and has a keen awareness of race in society though he takes it in a parody manner by often making comical and witty remarks on race. Cor played through the introduction of the game and then proceeded to simply drive around a stolen firetruck hosing people down and causing traffic accidents until his death by the in-game police. Cor made connections to other forms of media and focused on the story aspect of the game, what he considered to be the game’s main intent, as shown:

**Interviewer:** In what ways does the game reflect the dynamics, in a sense interactions for minority groups?

**Cor:** I don't think that's the game's intent. The game's intent is to tell a story that's, I mean, something important to think about when you're making a game because that way is more realistic...

**Interviewer:** In how much of the game do you find a reflection of reality? And that can be open minded so it can be about cars, traffic, anything. Does that make sense?

**Cor:** Well in life there are people, buildings, there are cars so that was realistic. But other than that it was more like a movie than real life. Like a bad movie...

**Interviewer:** How do you see power reflected in the game? Power can be anything from owning guns, running clubs, property, anything?

**Cor:** It's usually saying it's supposed to be an edgy game, but it's still got white people in power and their little ethnic servants (laughter) which is a very traditional type of archetypal sort of thing. Race and power.

Cor’s responses speak to how he is able to integrate his own racial lens and his expertise as a gamer to make sense of the semiotics in the game and to identify them with other forms of media. While he is deeply aware of how race plays a role in society structurally (Bonilla-Silva 2001; McIntosh 1988; Yamato 1988), he is also aware of racialization in the game (Omi & Winant 1994) which he interprets as just another traditional use in game story. Another thing to note is that Cor makes a reference to who has access to the game and the intended audience which speaks of accessibility to games with strong explicit content like Grand Theft Auto. Cor is also able to distinguish the racial dynamics in the game, but sees it as secondary to his standards as a gamer like story, gameplay, music, and art; this to a large degree reflects a separation between what is fantasy and what is real since he only saw the depictions of Latinos in the game as mere elements in the game and kept those depictions within the game context only.

**Discussion**

In analyzing the results of this study, both frameworks of interpretation of racial content demonstrated interaction between respondents’ racial lens and their socially situated knowledge of the racial semiotics that GTA: Ballad of Gay Tony exhibited. Speaking to content analysis literature, these results help add a level of complexity regarding reception and interpretation of GTA’s racial semiotics and what roles modes of discursive practices play as in the case of video game knowledge. The Media Reference mode saw the game as a form of satire laden with
references to other forms of media that utilized stereotypes within the context of the game. Knowledge of the nuances of video games played a role with racial lens in interpreting content. In other words, respondents within this framework integrated their technical expertise of video games with their racial lens to view racial content.

On the other hand, respondents that were more critical of the game interpreted the game content by drawing from their personal experiences and knowledge of the groups portrayed. The Game Criticism mode comprised primarily of non-gamers with systemic and, to a small degree, mainstream racial lenses. In support of this framework, DeVane & Squire found a similar result when interviewing black youth who played Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas which showed that “participants from socially and economically marginalized groups—African American, working-class, or working poor—used the game as a framework to discuss institutional racism in society” (DeVane & Squire 2008). By drawing from their experience and knowledge, these respondents contested the racial content and saw them as another reproduction of the racialized system in society. It is also worth noting that the number of non-gamer mainstream lens participants is equal in interpreting content from both modes. This speaks to further research on participants with these backgrounds because other factors besides video game knowledge affect interpretation, such as personal identity and other forms of cultural knowledge not addressed in this research.

Speaking to the hypotheses presented for this project, the results demonstrate that how participants interpreted content involved more than just racial lens and demonstrated complexity of interpretations within these frameworks. I hypothesized that gamers would interpret racial content through a gamer lens only, but my results demonstrated that these participants were able to integrate their understandings of race into their technical knowledge of video games to make sense of depictions; however, the hypothesis is partly correct in that respondents who identified as gamers kept the interpretation within the context of the game and media, and did not see it as something that would be real for all groups depicted. In a sense, video game cultural knowledge mediated interpretation of the game’s racial semiotics.

Respondents with a systemic racial lens comprised a significant number in the Game Criticism mode while those with more mainstream and colorblind comprised a large number in the Media Cultural References mode. It is also important to note that respondents with mainstream and, to some degree, colorblind lens used non-racial factors to interpret content which can be a form of colorblind racist appeal (Bonilla-Silva 2003). This result reflects my hypothesis on racial lens and how it plays a role with interpretation of GTA’s racial content.

The results in terms of modes of interpretation and its relationship to gaming knowledge suggest that respondents see the racial content in video games like GTA, but how they interpret such content is mediated by many factors such as racial lens and video game experience. Video games contain symbolic content that reproduce racial dynamics in society (Everett & Waitkins 2008; Leonard 2003, 2006; Mou & Peng 2009), but respondents do not accept them at face value since interaction takes place between the player and the game’s semiotics; how players draw from their experiences, socially situated knowledge, and various cultural capital impacts interpretation of the messages. These go from accepting the content based on personal experiences, as in Bim’s case, to contesting the racial content by situating the content in relation to experiences, knowledges, and contexts, as in with Cor or Pog. These modes of interpretation address the literature of psychology and content analysis in terms of reception and interpretation of the game’s racial content. Rather than passively accepting the depictions as true, both modes demonstrate that respondents “create their meanings by using their situated experiences” (DeVane & Squire 2008) in which case it involves participant gaming experience (or lack thereof) and racial lens. While these depictions are a modern form of minstrelsy, reinforcing racial imagery of non-dominant groups (Barrett 2006; Everett & Waitkins 2008), video games both reproduce and contest race showing complexity in how race operates in society.

Due to a lack of equal representation in my sample regarding racial demographics, I run the risk of tokenizing my participants and as such this paucity of other non-Latino racial groups is a limitation in this project. Regarding Latino respondents, my sample contained an over-representation of the Latino population; this limitation, while preventing me from generalizing, has some valid reasons as to why my sample contained more Latino respondents. Latinos constitute approximately 48% of my sample of respondents in comparison to the other racial groups (Asians: 22%, Blacks: 8%, Whites: 22%). A reason that this is the case is that the game GTA: Ballad of Gay Tony is centered around the life of Luis Lopez, a Latino man whose life revolves around other Latinos and where cultural content pertinent to Latinos as the use of the Spanish language and the choice of music in radio stations is apparent throughout the game. Obtaining responses and interpretations from Latino respondents was a way to see how respondents from the target racial group which the game depicts would interpret the content in relation to their own racial lens and experiences as Latinos in the United States, and more precisely, in the state of Idaho. The study by DeVane and Squire utilized black and white respondents to obtain interpretations and meanings from GTA: San Andreas that utilized cultural elements in black life such as hip hop, gangster attire, ebonics, and black bodies and representations (DeVane & Squire 2008). Their study did not include other racial groups and what they made of the
content, which was something this research project sought to do despite running into its own limitations in sampling and generalizability.

**Concluding Remarks**

In this preliminary study I sought to explore the relationship between participant video game knowledge and how they interpret the racial content in the video game Grand Theft Auto: The Ballad of Gay Tony. The results of the interview process, which involved playing the game introduction, demonstrated two major modes of interpretation of the game’s content. Racial lens played a role in interpreting content along with video game experience, which together impacted interpretation albeit with limits. One way content was interpreted was through the use of media references and technical knowledge of video games. This was done by drawing from technical aspects in a game such as story, aesthetics, how “real” the game can be, and from their own understandings of race through experiences and knowledge. In addition, these respondents, by and large, held a mainstream and colorblind racial lens to integrate with their gaming experience; there were gamers with a more critical Systemic lens that interpreted content through media references, but were smaller compared to the number of mainstream racial lens gamer respondents. This mode can also serve as a means to rationalize racial content as non-racial, making a reference to one of the frames of colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Gallagher 2004).

On the other hand, respondents who were by and large non-gamers expressed criticism of GTA’s racial content and interpreted said content through their own experiences with race and from their own knowledge. A trend of concern was apparent among this group regarding children and access to this sort of content. By and large, respondents in this group possessed a Systemic racial lens and were keenly aware of how race and racial inequality operates in society, as was reflected in questions about white privilege, institutional racism, and their meanings of race and racism. There were non-gamer respondents with a mainstream lens that interpreted content through media references which serves as ground for future research on further analysis of their views as to what other factors beside racial lens and lack of video game experience can influence their interpretation of racialized content from media like video games.

In addition to these results to the research questions, this project raised other questions that can provide points of departure and directions for future research. One way to conduct this research in a much more systematic fashion is to utilize focus groups for the interview process. Instead of gathering participants one by one and conducting personal interviews, it may work to have a group of similar folks that share common variables such as race, gaming experience, or gender. Doing focus groups is more likely to keep consistency in sampling and help address issues of representation in racial diversity. Another departure point is to what extent does my own identity as a Latino with a linguistic accent affect respondent answers to questions pertaining to race and racial stratification? Would responses differ if the interviewer was white? Would quality of responses be affected if I ask the same question to different racial groups and how would they respond to me? This preliminary study may serve as a launching point to a much larger project regarding respondent attitudes, reactions, and responses to questions of race asked by different interviewers and whether respondents would say anything pertaining to say, Latinos, in front of a member of said group. A second point of departure for future studies is to also analyze the depictions of LGBT characters in these types of games and explore how that is interpreted by heterosexual and LGBT respondents under a similar theoretical framework as this study.

In addressing the larger body of literature, I sought to address how players interpret the video game racial content that reproduces the current racial order (Barrett 2006; Everett & Waitkins 2008; Leonard 2003) through their own experiences, lenses, and knowledge. Video games like Grand Theft Auto reproduce race and create spaces of interaction where factors like video game experience mediate the semiotic content and both reproduce and contest racial meanings that come from the experience. This brings complexity in that actors can both accept and contest the meanings from a medium that is racialized (Barrett 2006; Everett & Waitkins 2008; Leonard 2003, 2006), as supported by DeVane and Squire, “Not only can players contest the dominant meanings in the space, they can also continually reconstruct the game as text through their choices in play” (DeVane & Squire 2008).

**Acknowledgements**

This project would not have been undertaken had it not been for the support of the following people who saw me develop through the process of research and have seen the growth of my work and life. I would like to recognize my mentor, Dr. Arthur Scarritt, for his tremendous insights, sense of direction, and very helpful feedback during the stages of development of this project. Without his sharp criticisms, perspectives, and expertise, I would
not be where I am at this point. I would also like to recognize the support my McNair cohort has given me during this major process; we vented, listened to each other, and built insights from our experiences as researchers. We have been through so much. Another person I would like to thank is Helen Barnes for her support and her way of making an otherwise hopeless situation into something much brighter and full of hope so as to continue in this arduous work. Next, I would like to thank the McNair program and Greg Martinez and Diana Garza for their support behind the curtains as we presented our work at conferences and as they watched us grow as a cohort during such tumultuous times of experimenting with research. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of my family and friends who understood the situation in which I found myself and supported me in many indirect and direct ways; the same people who didn’t stop believing in me and whose strength lent to mine and carried me through these ordeals.
References


The Challenges of Interdisciplinary Research for Tenure Track Professors

Lesley Yang: McNair Scholar

Dr. Samia Islam: Mentor

Economics

Abstract

Interdisciplinary research is the collaboration of people fusing knowledge, theories and methodologies from two or more disciplines. Interdisciplinary collaboration can advance fundamental understanding to form a more inclusive means of examining complex issues beyond the scope of a single discipline. The increase of public monies being dedicated to interdisciplinary research is one way federal agencies like the National Science Foundation are trying to foster more collaboration among people of different disciplines. Data is collected from published articles in the Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics from 1996 to 2010. Information on authors of each article—occupations, departmental affiliations, positions held, institutional affiliations, and sources of funding—is collected. Since agricultural economics is strongly tied to policy and the increase of funding for interdisciplinary research, I anticipate there will be a rise in the number of interdisciplinary research articles published in the Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics. I also anticipate that if there are no barriers to joint collaboration between disciplines there will be an increase in the number of tenure track professors engaged in interdisciplinary research. This is a critical issue for professors who are required to publish research in order to receive tenure. This study also has implications for understanding whether difficulties from engaging in interdisciplinary research as opposed to intradisciplinary research for tenure track professors is still relevant.

Introduction

Over the last several years there has been a greater initiative to fund interdisciplinary research. The concept of interdisciplinary research, however, has been around since the 1930s and was brought into scientific discourse in the 1980s (Klein, 1996 & Geertz, 1980, as cited in Broto et al., 2009). The recent push for interdisciplinary research has come about for several reasons, but particularly because it has been regarded as the foundation and the driving force of current policy-making decisions.

Agricultural research is particularly shaped by the concept of providing solutions to the agricultural sector and is especially sensitive to the current demand for applied, or “problem-solving,” research (Locke and Anderson, 1993, as cited in Duffy et al., 1997). Governments favor investing in research that has applicable results because collaboration between academic and commercial interests is seen as a major driver of national economies (Lowe & Phillipson, 2006). Furthermore, we can see this push for interdisciplinary research initiatives from public and private organizations that set forth requirements for research proposals has a direct relevance and potential application to policy-making decisions.

This study explores whether the initiative to fund more interdisciplinary research has actually created a visible increase in the number of interdisciplinary research published, looking specifically at the Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics. Also, it will look at how frequently tenure track professors are cited in the Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics over a time span of 14 years. This study is significant because it is a critical issue for professors who are required to publish research in order to receive tenure and this study has implications for understanding whether difficulties from engaging in interdisciplinary research as opposed to intradisciplinary research for tenure track professors is still relevant.

Literature Review

Human endeavor to understand the world is traditionally fractured into disciplines, so the rise of interdisciplinary research is spawning a vast amount of literature examining its role in the advancement of science.
There is an ample amount of research suggesting that collaboration between individuals in different disciplines can enhance the overall research. Levitt and Thelwall (2010) note that collaborative research tends to be more highly cited than non-collaborative research and that encouraging behavior associated with high citation can be conducive to higher quality research. Gardner et al. (2002) also suggest that collaboration “enhances the entire research process and generates benefits beyond the research project” (as cited in Liao, 2010). Oh et al. (2005) indicates that collaboration can lead to groundbreaking research (as cited in Liao, 2010). The conclusions of these studies imply that collaboration from diverse members simulates more productive brainstorming, creativity, and innovation than a research team with no diverse members (Liao, 2010).

A large body of research has also been devoted to developing tools to measure the quality, or contribution, of research. The most common tools used are traditional bibliometric indices such as citation analysis, impact factor, and research awards. Citation analysis measures the number of citations an article receives by calculating the frequency at which an article is cited by other papers. A journal’s impact factor is calculated as the average number of citations per article published in a specific journal. The research awards tool is calculated based on the number of awards a particular article receives. Traditional bibliometric indices, such as citation analysis, impact factor, and research awards, have also been criticized for being bias in their measures and assessing research outputs as if they were consumer goods rather than providing descriptive data (Wiles et. al., 2010).

Research done by Broto, Gislason, and Ehlers focuses on the practice of interdisciplinary research and its relationship with institutionalized disciplines. Through the analysis of nine qualitative interviews, they identify the motives of the researchers to engage in interdisciplinary research and discuss the characteristics of interdisciplinary research practice they found to be important. They conclude that “interdisciplinary research practice relies on disciplinary institutions as points of theoretical and methodological reference.” but because interdisciplinary research is the interplay of disciplines at the border area, tensions “occur between the practice of interdisciplinary research and the practice of more traditional disciplinary research” (Broto et al., 2009). They define disciplines as institutions because “disciplines can be understood as institutions that coordinate the production of knowledge” (Broto et al., 2009). More specifically, they use a definition from Vatn (2005) to define institutions as “conventions, norms or formally sanctioned rules coordinating human action,” and in this case, the practice of research. Thus, the norms and set of instructions on how to generate knowledge within disciplines can create difficulties and constrain research between disciplines. In their conclusion, they emphasize that disciplinary traditions are still important for interdisciplinary research because interdisciplinary research occurs with reference to disciplines; however, because of disciplinary institutions, like the university, research organizations, and funding bodies, research participants may experience challenges when undertaking interdisciplinary research.

In Heberlein’s study “Improving Interdisciplinary Research: Integrating the Social and Natural Sciences” (1988), he interviews several social and natural scientists to address specific barriers they encounter when engaging in joint collaboration between social and natural science disciplines. The five barriers addressed in this study are: weakness of the social sciences, a perceived illegitimacy of the social sciences, the punishments associated with interdisciplinary research, the lack of disciplinary support structures, and the conflicts over power and control. Heberlein asserts that there is a perceived weakness of the social sciences structurally because they are “less developed than the natural sciences in terms of theory, data, method, and tradition” (1988). Social sciences are also regarded as a much softer science compared to natural sciences because natural sciences are often more quantitative and believed to be more rigorous. Heberlein notes that “people denigrate the social sciences by referring to ‘science’ when they mean science that deals with physical and biological issues, and using the terms ‘social science’ or ‘social studies’ when referring to science that deals with human behavior” (1988). This perceived weakness and illegitimacy of social sciences in turn creates tension between social researchers and natural science researchers.

Professional risks and punishment for participation in interdisciplinary projects is also a major barrier. Interdisciplinary research often requires more time and effort, yet this type of research produces fewer professional rewards because it is often times more difficult to publish in one’s own disciplinary journal. There is also less disciplinary support. In Heberlein’s conclusion, he points out several solutions his participants discussed. Several main points are more administrative and institutional support and a revision of the reward structures for interdisciplinary research.

**Methodology**

This analysis of interdisciplinary research uses data from the Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics. Data is collected from all published journal articles from 1996 to 2010—a total of 558 articles. Access to journal articles was through WorldCat online. Information on the author of each article—occupations, departmental
affiliations, positions held, institutional affiliations, and sources of funding—is collected into an Excel spreadsheet separated into different worksheets by year.

Since agricultural economics is strongly tied to policy and to the increase of funding for interdisciplinary research, I anticipate there will be a rise in the number of interdisciplinary research published in the *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics*. I also anticipate that if there are no barriers to joint collaboration between disciplines there will be an increase in the number of tenure track professors engaged in interdisciplinary research.

**Results**

Each year the total number of articles published in a volume of the *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics* varies greatly, so I decided that a better measure would be to take averages and percentages. In order to look at the percentage of interdisciplinary journal articles published per year, as shown in Table 1 below, I defined interdisciplinary as any journal article with individuals from different affiliations. For example, an article with a researcher affiliated with a university and a researcher affiliated with an institution, like the USDA, I would consider to be interdisciplinary. To calculate the percentage of interdisciplinary journal articles per year, I added up the number of interdisciplinary articles and divided the total by the total number of articles published in that particular volume. As you can see from the results, there is no distinct trend. I would have expected there to be a positive linear trend given the push for interdisciplinary research from funding agencies.

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I also looked at the percentage of interdisciplinary research articles co-authored with a tenure track professor. To calculate the percentage, I added up the number of interdisciplinary articles with a tenure track professor listed as an author and divided that number by the total number of interdisciplinary articles published in that volume. Looking at the results in Table 2, there is a positive linear trend.
Table 2. Percentage of Interdisciplinary Research Articles Co-Authored with a Tenure Track Professor

Conclusion

In summary, I cannot conclude that the initiative to fund more interdisciplinary research has created an actual increase in the number of interdisciplinary articles published in the Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics. An explanation for this maybe the strict requirements disciplinary journals set forth for publication. An interdisciplinary research article may not be as well received because it is being reviewed by peers in a discipline with rules and norms on how to conduct academic research. This supports the claims that there still is tension between disciplines. Even though there is a linear trend to the percentage of interdisciplinary research articles co-authored with tenure track professors, the actual number of articles identified as interdisciplinary was still significantly less than articles that were intradisciplinary.

I am not able to make any generalizable conclusions because I only looked at journal articles published in the Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics. Further research should consider including a variety of agricultural economic journals to better determine if there is a correlation between the push for interdisciplinary research and actual publications of interdisciplinary research.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those who helped make this project possible: Dr. Samia Islam (Faculty Mentor), Helen Barnes (McNair Advisor), the McNair program staff, and the entire McNair cohort.
References


Class of 2009

Christen Belden  Communication  Boise State University
Arturo Gutierrez  Materials Science Engineering  University of Texas, Austin
Brian Lawatch  History  George Washington University, DC
Anile Nina  Psychology  Boise State University
Phillip Price  History  University of Denver
Bryce Reeder  Political Science  University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Matthew Reinhold  Materials Science Engineering  University of California, Santa Barbara
Carolina Valderrama  Sociology  Boise State University
Alberto Varela  Psychology  University of Utah, Salt Lake City

Class of 2010

Shawn Davis  Mathematics  University of Illinois, Chicago
Heather Gifford  Multi-Ethnic Studies  University of Illinois, Chicago
Ernest Maiteri  Civil Engineering  Lehigh University, Bethlehem
Cindy McCrea  Social Science  Pennsylvania State University, University Park
Ian Mosley  Social Science  Idaho State University, Pocatello
Bernice Olivas  English – Writing  University of Nebraska, Lincoln
Caleb Sutherland  Biology  University of Arizona, Tucson
Andrew Vissotski  Mechanical Engineering  Texas A&M, College Station
Randi Walters  Geosciences  Stanford University

Class of 2011

Lori Henderson  Psychology  Boise State University
Marilyn Hiller  Social Work/Sociology  Eastern Washington University, Cheney
Lilia Juarez-Kim  Psychology  Clark University, Worcester
Ben Larson  Political Science  Northeastern University, Boston
Alex Ornelas  Sociology  University of California, Santa Barbara
April Raine  History  Boise State University
Christy Richardson  Sociology  Portland State University
Blair Vanderlugt  Economics  University of Maine
Levin Welch  Sociology  University of Nevada, Reno

McNair Program Staff

Gregory Martinez – Director, TRiO College Programs
Helen Barnes – Program Coordinator
Memo Cordova – Library Faculty Mentor

Boise State University Administration

Dr. Robert Kustra – President
Dr. Martin Schimpf – Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Diane Boothe – Dean, College of Education
Dr. Scott Willison – Director, Center for Multicultural & Educational Opportunities
McNair Scholars Program
Education Building Room 206
1910 University Drive - Boise, ID 83725
(208) 426-1194 - mcnair@boisestate.edu
http://education.boisestate.edu/mcnair