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Sarah K. Ebert
College of William and Mary

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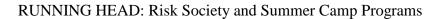
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by

Sarah Ebert

Accepted for _____
(Honors)

_____
Professor Graham Ousey, Advisor

_____
Professor Amy Quark

_____
Professor Danielle Dallaire

Williamsburg, VA
May 3, 2011

The Influence of Risk Society on Summer Camp Programs: A Comparative Analysis of

Two Enrichment Programs in Distinctive Contexts

Honors Advisor: Professor Graham Ousey

Written by: Sarah Ebert

The College of William and Mary

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine how themes related to Ulrich Beck's Risk Society framework have affected organizations that are positioned intermediately between the institutions of education and family. Specifically, the study explores how notions of risk and risk management have become fundamental in the goals, organization and activities of summer camp programs. In addition, the study considers how social class conditions, the range of perceived risks, and organizational responses to them across camps located in two communities characterized by very different socioeconomic conditions.

For many children in the United States, summers are about swimming pools, vacations spent with friends and family, watching television, and many other extracurricular activities. Without the demands of homework, tests, curriculum, and academic oriented activities, children eagerly anticipate summer months as a time when they can rest, relax, and have fun. Parents, however, often view the summer differently. For them, summer presents at least two major concerns: 1) issues of safety and supervision; and 2) the potential academic setback that comes from the absence of structured educational programming. While the former concern seems obvious, evidence indicates that many parents are increasingly concerned about negative consequences of their children being academically idle during the summer (Bell and Carrillo 2007). In an attempt to avoid the "summer drop" (Downey 2004), these parents seek academically enriching programs in which to enroll their children during the summer months.

Summer camps may be promising options in regard to both of the aforementioned concerns. At the very least, these camps provide physical activity, social opportunities, and supervision, the latter of which is especially important in areas where drug abuse and gang violence are present (Afterschool Alliance 2010). Prior research has shown that structured supervision in low socioeconomic areas can help prevent drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and gang involvement, among other socially unaccepted behaviors (Chuang et al 2005; Small and Eastman 1991; Warner and Curry 1997). But increasingly, summer camps also are seen as attractive options because they may include academic enrichment activities that serve as a bridge between academic years.

Although providing structured activity for kids during the summer has long been a practical goal of summer camp programs, some argue that the growing availability of

summer camps, as well as the organizational functions of these organizations, is driven by a risk framework that some sociological theorists (e.g., Beck 1999) suggest is becoming a dominant theme of life in modern societies. In general, this framework argues that in post-industrial modernity, individuals are increasingly aware of and go to great efforts to manage, risks and insecurities regarding future outcomes. For parents, this often translates into intricate efforts to manage the details of their children's lives so as to reduce perceived risks and produce a desired outcome (e.g., a well-adjusted and economically successful adult). While schools often are a willing partner in these efforts during the academic year, the summer break disrupts this arrangement and therefore creates a risk that must be managed in an alternative manner. Parents come to rely on summer camps as a major tool for managing the perceived risks associated that come with summer vacation.

A number of researchers have recently examined how fears and anxieties affect the organization of modern social life (Glassner 1999; Kupchik 2010). These studies indicate that fears about undesirable outcomes (teen pregnancy, violence, terrorism) provide a rationale for the introduction of many types of preventative or preparedness plans across various social institutions (Glassner 1999). These efforts have been documented particularly in regards to education. Aaron Kupchik (2010), for example, argues that fear of violent events in schools has radically altered practices in education, leading to "zero tolerance" disciplinary policies, which actually may work against instructional goals. Moreover in <u>Preventing Violence and Crime in America's Schools</u>, Lassiter and Perry (2009) discuss how nearly all school policies have been reshaped so as to reflect a preventative stance against pervasive risk factors.

Although some scholars have examined risk management behaviors on the part of the parents (Herrenkohl 2011; Miller 2008), none of those studies have examined how the risk framework has impacted child development programs that take place beyond the traditional school setting or school year. This is a noteworthy omission because summer camp programs are a prevalent but somewhat distinct location in which the impacts of the risk framework may play out. Because of their missions and practices, it can be said that summer camp programs occupy a space somewhere between education and family institutions, and as such they must grapple with, and are likely influenced by, some of the same risks and insecurities that shape those broader institutions.

The aim of this research project is to use summer camp programs as a setting in which to build further understanding of the ways that prevailing concerns about risk have modified the structure and functioning of education and child development programs and practices. Specifically, using interview data from summer camp staff as well as direct observational data, the study explores ways that concepts of risk and risk management have become integrated into the goals, physical setting, social environment, and daily practices of summer camps. In addition, by comparing summer camps that differ widely in terms of their community structural context (e.g., extremely poor vs. upper-middle class) and organizational details (e.g., publicly sponsored secular versus privately sponsored church-related), the study reflects on how social class and organizational motivation lenses may condition perceptions of and practical responses to the risk environment.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Risk and Risk Society

The term "risk" has varied definitions, with a common understanding being that risk is "the probability that a particular adverse event occurs during a stated period of time, or results from a particular challenge" (Wilkinson 2010:38). Ulrich Beck (1999:3) defines risk in sociological terms as "the modern approach to foresee and control the future consequences of human action," and "a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself" (Levitas 2000). His conceptualization includes the notion that in the modern world, social groups and institutions are increasingly aware of risks they face in society, and they are preoccupied with implementing strategies to minimize and manage their risk exposure. Beck claims individuals contemplate risks and consequences, both absolute and potential, and adjust their own lives in order to deal with these insecurities.

Beck (1999) introduces the idea of *risk society*, referring to it as a "phase of development of modern society in which the social, political, ecological, and individual risks created by the momentum of innovation increasingly elude the control and protective institutions of industrial society." During this phase of development, protective institutions, such as the family and education become plagued by and associated with social problems such as poverty, divorce, and corruption. In response, there is increasing concern with minimizing the "bad" things (Lupton 1999) and social institutions and institutional practices change their structure and functioning to accommodate the rising prominence of these modern risk concerns. For example, because of rising divorce rates the traditional marriage becomes a risky venture and we respond, in part, by viewing

alternate family forms, such as cohabitation, as more normative. New trends, though often unexplored, are generally weighed as less risky in the minds of society, but they may ultimately feed back into the risk cycle and create more insecurity and perception of risk, as when we worry about the consequences associated with the loss of the traditional family.

The idea that individuals can actively control their fate is one of many aspects of the risk society framework. Life in a risk society is an individually lived and experienced journey, where each person chooses what is best for them. This high level of individuality is associated with high responsibility for one's own actions and outcomes, so that social circumstances are no longer seen as the cause for failure (McGuigan 2006). Shifting from collective to individual responsibility implies a loss of tradition, meaning that previously natural and agreed upon beliefs and behaviors no longer hold true. Beck claims that in new modernity, what are previously viewed as natural aspects of life become dimensions of life that can be judged, but this raises the possibility that individual choices can be judged as "wrong", making all choices risky (Beck 1999). In addition to individualization, the risk society framework suggests that modern life is characterized by an overarching air of uncertainty and a fear of the unknown, (Wilkinson 2010; Beck 1999; Levitas 2000; McGuigan 2006).

Although risk is not a new phenomenon, the emergence of risk society is a reflection of modernity (Glassner 1999). This "new modernity," as Beck (1999) calls it, occurs because modern societies are simultaneously exposed to several stressful social revolutions. Therefore, contemporary risk feels very different than that which existed in the previous stage of modernity (Bessant, Hil, and Watts 2003). To subdue this new risk,

people revert to previously utilized discourse and concepts (Beck 1999; Bessant et al. 2003), because of previous positive experiences. However, when old tools do not work in new social revolutions, we are left with panic about how to avoid negative consequences.

The Management of Youth "Outcomes:" Risk society in the family and school

Recently, "moral panics" have manifested themselves particularly in areas related to youth and adolescence, particularly juvenile delinquency and conceptions of youth culture (Bessant et al. 2003; Lassiter and Perry 2009). Concerns about violence in youth culture can easily become a major source of insecurity. Parents interpret society through a risk-aversion lens, and in an individualized society where undesired outcomes are a matter of personal failure, parents come to see their children as an "outcome" that must be managed so as to minimize the risk of a bad result. There becomes a "right" way to parent your children and to advocate for their success until they are steady enough to do so for themselves (Beck 1999). Until then, they are seen as "under siege" and most at risk (Jackson and Scott 1999) of harms by modernity, leaving parents to not only care for them but worry for them and teach them how to worry for themselves.

A child's socialization can set up the framework for the rest of their lives. Children are socialized through several social institutions, most notably those of the family, school, social class, and the media. Through family interaction, parents pass along their cultural capital to their children, providing them with access to structures and practices that help them in the further accumulation of economic, social and cultural capital (de Carvalho 1999). In this way, children learn about norms, values, beliefs and belief systems, and patterns of interaction which they can replicate on their own. But parents are also "deemed responsible for facilitating education" (de Carvalho 1999 p. 19). Teachers

expect parents to be an integral part in facilitating homework and projects, completing

forms, chaperoning field trips, joining parent-school groups, and otherwise being

available, as necessary, in promoting the child's educational experience (Leuder 1998).

These expectations create an image of the "ideal parent" as one who actively engages in

and cultivates their child's education toward specific desired outcomes. Hence, parents

face an external pressure to employ the "right" parenting strategies toward their children.

Reflecting the idea that parents are supposed to guide educational processes, parent

handbooks sometimes suggest that extreme involvement is normal behavior for a "good

parent" (Shore 1994). Shore notes that teachers can and should expect parents to get

involved and should encourage parents who do not engage on their own accord to

become more involved. Being the good parent requires participation in such ways as

asking specific questions of the school's principal about school safety before allowing

one's child to attend (Shore 1994:30). Warner (1997:51) suggests that they only ways in

which parents can give their child the best education is to stay in constant contact with

the school and to ask for more resources, commitment, and safety from schools (Warner

1997).

Reacting to the desire to parent correctly, heavily involved parents put tremendous

time, effort and financial resources into ensuring educational quality (Muller and Kerbow

1993). But while incurring the costs of private schools, supplemental materials (tutors,

extra books, SAT prep courses, etc.), athletics fees, equipment costs, artistic lessons

(piano, dance, etc.), and other fees (purchasing lunches, book fairs, field trip fees, etc.)

help provide parents with a sense that they are guiding their child toward a secure future,

they also help foster a set of firm expectations regarding their child's educational

experience and the institutions and organizations that provide it (e.g., schools or other educational programs). Having spent quite a bit of money to give their children "the best," parents expect their child to receive an experience worthy of the investments made (Muller and Kerbow 1993). Aware of this fact, many schools offer extracurricular or special programs as a way of "pumping up" their "resume" and attracting parents interested in cultivating a secure future for their children (de Carvalho 2001). In other words, the careful choice of schools or educational programs—such as summer camps—is means by which parents attempt to parent the "right" way in order to manage the risk and anxiety of new modernity.

Just as there is a "right" way to parent your children, there is also a "right" way to do education in order to minimize risks and achieve desired outcomes (Lassiter and Perry 2009). New modernity suggests a strategy that keeps youth in school as long as possible, and for as much of the day as possible when they cannot be within a nurturing family environment (Bessant et al. 2003). This protects children, keeping them from becoming "at risk" youth who are on a track to social failure (Bessant et al. 2003). Supervision and safety of children has long been a taken-for-granted quality of our country's educational system. But in new modernity, concerns over these issues are more prominent as well as qualitatively different. According to Spring (2010), schools have historically been seen as institutions geared around educating all children in hopes of leveling the class divide and promoting unity across social classes. The anxieties of modernity, however, have turned schools into institutions geared around security, justice and policing, wherein students as are objects of distrust and anxiety and where harsh punishments are doled out for minor

infractions, in order to preserve safety and minimize risk (Lassier and Perry 1999; Glassner 1999; Kupchik 2010).

Social Class and Risk Management in Education

Parental commitment to education as a fundamental part of their responsibility to effective child socialization affects their involvement in schools. But, involvement also is likely impacted by work schedules and other competing professional and personal commitments. But these effects may be shaped by social class. More specifically, parents in lower- and working-class families may have less work schedule flexibility and therefore have greater difficulty becoming heavily involved in educational support activities. Literature for educators points out these issues (Lueder 1998; Warner 1997), offering motivation and strategies for encouraging lower-class adults to become more involved (Reglin 1993).

But class differences in parental involvement in their children's educational career may have roots in class-related cultural differences regarding childrearing. For example, Annette Lareau (2002) suggests that the approach to childrearing is different between middle/upper class parents on one hand and working/lower class parents on another. She contends that middle and upper class parents utilize a strategy of "concerted cultivation", actively fostering in their children a sense of entitlement and control with regard to future opportunities, resources, and interactions (2002). In contrast, she claims lower/working class parents use a "natural development" approach in which children are allowed to "just be kids", needing only "love, food, and safety" to thrive and grow (2002:749). Ostensibly, lower class parents assume either that the right outcome will occur on its own, or that fate, not parental intervention, controls their children's future.

This discourse on social class and parenting style relates particularly well to the discourse on Beck's new modernity. Parents who "cultivate" their children interact with and influence aforementioned changes in educational systems. They treat their child as an investment. Putting their time, energy, and money into their child's education and socialization is purposefully done so as to eliminate risks of failure and to ensure that their investment yields the right return. In this sense, Lareau's description of the "concerted cultivation" strategy can be seen as a risk management tool used to respond to the individualization aspect of the risk society. Parents who engage in cultivation see this as normative and the "right" way to parent a child. And failing to do so not only elevates the probability of an undesirable outcome, it also leaves parents open to judgment by other parents or by the school, especially if the latter expects high levels of parent involvement (de Carvalho 2001; Leuder 1998).

Middle class parents who actively cultivate child outcomes are likely to question the safety and integrity of the schools which their children attend. They follow the advice of Shore (1994) and inquire about faculty and facility safety concerns before letting their children attend. They are affected by the risk society's claim that things which may have once been safe are now seen in the light of new modernity, where school shootings are perceived as common, even though they are statistically rare events (Glassner 1999; Munn 1993). Lower class parents using the natural development approach likely infer that the school is a safe place to be because of the goals of the education institution. They may associate safety more with the institution's historical reputation, than with the risks brought about by new modernity. Perhaps this is because greater dangers on the streets in their communities make the school one of the safer environment around them (Muller

and Kerbow (1993). Regardless of the reasons, the central point is that parents in different social classes exhibit different perspectives on and behaviors in relation to their children's socialization. Consequently, they interpret and interact with social institutions somewhat differently and hold varying perspectives on what is safe and what is not.

So strong are these patterns that, increasingly, one can see in the impact of the risk society/risk management framework at work in areas beyond the traditional school. Indeed, auxiliary educational organizations such as summer camps are also an arena where these effects take place. An interesting aspect of these organizations is they are sort of a hybrid, performing necessary supervisory and safety functions of the family as well as, in some cases, educational functions of schools. But in a modern world in which risks and insecurity about the future must be managed and minimized, summer camps are an important tool for parents. Not only do they provide a means of helping to steer children clear of risks such as juvenile delinquency, drug use, gangs and teen pregnancies, they also reduce the "threat" of academic underperformance that could occur during summers of unstructured academic programming.

But social class may act as a modifier of the risk framework and class differences may be evident in summer camp programs. Families in upper classes may have better ability and interest in "managing" their child's educational development, much like they manage their financial portfolios to minimize risk and ensure good return on investments made. In doing so, they choose summer camp programs with qualities that match up with their risk management concerns. This puts an external pressure on camp programs making them shape their goals, structure, organization and practices in ways that put risk management issues in the foreground.   Lower class families may not negotiate risk

anxiety regarding their children in quite the same way. Due in part to a different

perspective on child rearing, their concerns about summer camp programs revolve

primarily around providing basic supervisory and recreational necessities that allow their

children grow "naturally" and on their own timeline. To extent this is the case, risk

management should be evidenced differently in the goals, structure, organization and

practices of summer camp programs in a lower class context.

METHODS

As a regular volunteer, my recent experiences exposed me to two interesting but

distinct summer camp organizations. The first is a not-for-profit Christian organization

that offers after school programming as well as a summer camp for youths. It is located

in Camden, New Jersey, a city with high rates of poverty, crime and other social

problems. The second is a county-government run before and after school and summer

camp program for youths in Williamsburg, Virginia, a primarily white and upper-middle

class community.

Despite having similar purposes, the starkly different social and environmental

contexts, governance, and funding structure of these organizations and their camp

programs led me to initially consider how their organizational characteristics,

functioning, and staff experiences may vary. To study these issues, I conducted

observational research as well as structured in-depth interviews with all levels of program

staff in two camps in each city. Issues regarding safety were not a focus of my interview

questions. Rather, it was through the analysis of my observational and interview data that

the themes of risk and risk management emerged. In the following paragraphs, I provide

details on the two data collection sites as well as the observational and interview methods employed to gather the data used in my analysis.

New Jersey: Urban Camp Setting

The summer camp in New Jersey consisted of a total of seven sites, two of which were used in this study. Begun 25 years ago, the program is faith based and run by a non-profit organization which funds all of the camps activities, including staffing the camps and yearlong programs. The half-day program schedule for all sites in the city involved free breakfasts and lunches which were donated for the children. There were four classes with children rotating through them in groups assigned by grade level. The four classes were Art, Recreation, Bible class, and a class called "Hodgepodge" where any number of topics could be discussed, from cooking to life skills lessons. Free play opportunities existed at the beginning of the program and at the end, when children were arriving and when they were waiting to be picked up or walked home. The camp staff included: a camp director, who is a permanent staff member and leads the program throughout the year; unpaid summer interns, usually college aged students who come for the summer or for the year and volunteer to teach the classes and lead the activities with the kids in the camp; street leaders, who are youth who live in the urban area and are employed by the organization to help supervise camp and program activities; and volunteers, who come in on a weekly basis for a one-week service trip experience and are there to do projects around the organization's campus, but help with the children during camp hours. Afternoon activity opportunities existed for children interested in playing on a basketball team twice a week (including games) and for children seeking small group discipleship

through an activity entitled "bible buddies," where groups of children were paired up with an intern for two afternoons each week for guided worship and fun activities.

The physical environment of the camps was a major factor in choosing this as one of the environments for this research. Based in a large, urban city, the camps reflect the troubled history of the city. Once a thriving place to be, the city fell victim to issues of white flight, urban decay, outsourcing, and hard economic times. The city suffers from lack of funding for basic programming (city officials, safety and rescue, education), corruption of government, debts owed to the state, gang violence and drug trafficking. There are also environmental concerns associated with various waste and trash removal facilities that pollute the air and contribute to citizen health problems. The physical environments around the camps reflect these issues. Trash and waste litters the ground, parks are covered in graffiti and broken glass, and buildings nearby are falling down or boarded up. The camps themselves are well kept due to the volunteers who come in each week to help clean and fix up the camp organization's property. The building used by one camp is owned by an unaffiliated church which volunteers its space for use during camp, and this structure is kept in decent condition.

Virginia: Suburban Camp Setting

The camps in Virginia used in the study are on opposite sides of a county well known for its colonial history and for the college located within the small city located within the county boundaries. This program has six sites, but again, only two were observed for the research project. The parent program organizing these camps began about 20 years ago and is funded by the city government, which pays full- and part-time staff members to run the programs throughout the year. During the day, children have plenty of

opportunities to participate in both recreational and artistic activities as they rotate from arts and crafts and games in the gym to quiet time and unstructured time. Children bring their own lunches from home but snacks are provided to them as a part of the program. This camp lasts longer than the camp in New Jersey, providing a full day's worth of activities for and supervision of the children. Camps are located in public schools through a partnership with the county, so that the camp program has full use of the gym, cafeteria, playgrounds, and outside equipment. The staff at these camps include: a program director, who travels off site occasionally during the week for meetings with the county's staff members; the "Recreation II" leaders, who have experience working in the camps as well as the before and after school care programs, and are considered senior members when the director is gone; the "Recreation I" leaders, who spend the most time with the kids in hands-on settings; and the volunteers, who appear periodically throughout the summer and are involved of their own accord.

The county itself is very suburban, with some areas more densely populated than others. The schools differ depending on when they were built. One school was built very recently and boasts the amenities and architectural integrity of a new building, while the other is several decades old and well worn, though hardly antiquated. The program is uniformly structured in each site, with the same resources and protocols. One school is on a secluded lot, away from houses, other buildings, or businesses of any kind, while the other is set near the historical area of the county in the midst of a grid of houses and public buildings (though the school area and playground are fenced off from the neighboring buildings and lots).

Data Collection

I used two methods of collecting information about the camps and staff, participant observation and structured interviews. The initial goal was to gather data that would permit an examination of how variations in the broader social context shaped the activities and perceptions of the organizations' purposes, goals, and constrains as viewed from the perspectives of the camp staff.

Observational data: At each camp, I observed the entirety of the setting for the duration of one day at camp. This was a day when the camps were not having special activities and were spending an average day on their site, following their normal routine. I spent time with all grade levels and in all classes and rotations, writing down notes about the physical environment of each setting as well as the children's actions and the staff's reactions.

Interview data: I interviewed a total of 5 individuals in each camp site. Descriptions of each staff member by position and location can be found in Appendix A. Pseudonyms were used for all staff interviewed. The interviews with representatives of each level of camp staff were selected to provide a range of perspectives. I interviewed the overall program coordinator for each program, as well as the director of each camp at which I observed, and one intern/counselor at each program who had direct interaction with the children each day. The program coordinators and camp directors were selected because they had more experience with the camp's ideologies, goals, and detailed information about the inner workings of the camp. Moreover, because they supervise other staff, they also are likely to have greater awareness of the patterns of social interaction that occur between staff members as well as between staff members and children. This meant that

their responses were likely to capture the bigger picture of the summer camp. However, they may have had little direct contact with children during a given camp day. Program coordinators were involved in managing all of the sites and their collective actions, whereas camp directors were responsible for a single site which they supervise daily. I interviewed the interns/counselors (each camp had a different name for them) to get a perspective from those who work "on the ground" with the camp children. Most of these individuals had little training prior to the start of their current position and mostly knew daily camp routines of each day, as well as the general program goals. Interviews took place during the camp day in Virginia and at the end of the camp day in New Jersey. All participants signed a consent form and volunteered their time to complete the interviews.

Program coordinators picked which interns/counselors I interviewed at both sites. This was convenient for scheduling reasons, since the program coordinator knew which interns or counselors would be free and when they would be able to talk with me. The program coordinators also distributed the questions prior to the interview to help prepare the interviewees. Each coordinator informed me that they picked individuals for the interview based on who was willing to participate and who they thought might be most helpful in providing me with information. I do not expect this had any bias on my data collection; however it is possible that coordinators picked individuals purposefully to provide me with a "particular" perspective.

Interviews ranged from just under fourteen minutes to just over forty seven minutes. Some participants shared more information than others, and I asked more questions of the higher ranking staff members, so their interviews tended to take longer. The questions asked during these interviews can be found in Appendix B, and generally regarded

describing daily interactions, routines, and special events, as well as rating their own opinions of camp success, outside influences, and thoughts about strengths and weaknesses of the programs. Counselors were asked 28 questions, with many of them on a Likert scale to rate particular aspects of camp. Ten additional questions were asked of directors and coordinators, to obtain more information about the programs they coordinated and directed. One question was thrown out during the interview process, because the responses given to the question were irrelevant since there was a great amount of variance in responses. This has been indicated on the Appendix.

Coding: The first round of coding was completed by reading through all they typed transcripts from the interview and observation data collected. After several readings, initial themes began to emerge. These were centered on the camp's physical and social environment, child development, and references to parental involvement in camp activities. Interview transcripts were color-coded with a highlighter to indicate where examples of these themes were evident. Working within the structure of these initial categories, I began to see some connections between interview data and two sociological frameworks, Ulrich Beck's (1999) risk society framework and Annette Lareau's (2002) framework for understanding class differences in child-development strategies. Using these frameworks, I again reviewed and all interview transcripts, employing a focused-coding strategy that highlighted passages in the textual data that directly or implicitly referenced or was reflective of risk society, risk management, child socialization and the intersection of these concepts. Below I present my analysis of these issues, attempting to show how the broader themes of risk and risk management play out within my initial coding categories of physical and social environment, child development, and parental

involvement. Finally, I also reflect on how differences in how the risk management

framework differentially shapes specific safety practices across the New Jersey and

Virginia camp sites.

ANALYSIS

The themes of risk management and frameworks of interaction involving risk,

education, parental influence, and class differences were not the focus of the questions

asked in the interviews. Interviewees were asked a series of questions related to the

environments of the program (social and physical), goals of the programs, daily routines,

experiences in the camp setting, and basic background questions to gauge their previous

involvement and training with their position. Initial coding of the data yielded dialogue

surrounding themes of environment, goals and developmental issues of the camps, and

parental influences (or lack thereof) on the camp. Discussion of these initial themes

differs by level of staff position; that is, as I interviewed staff at three levels of

involvement in the camp programs, I received responses that were seemingly consistent

across each staff position. Each theme's discussion follows separately, with a breakdown

of how the staff members' positions affected their responses to the questions asked. In

some cases, these responses also differ by location, and those differences are also noted.

In further cases, responses vary by position and site, and these individual opinions will

also be discussed.

Secondary coding of interview transcripts revealed the themes involving risk

management, as it became apparent that the individuals interviewed expressed concerns

about risk or uncertainty as they responsed to my questions. The risk framework was not

the initial focus of my research, but through the data coding process, the role of safety,

risk management, and risk was an evident subtext of daily operation of camp as well as programs and the staff running the programs. In addition, it became clear that social class was an important lens that helped shape perspectives on risk issues across the two city contexts. Most interesting is the difference in frequency of responses that reference risk and safety at the two camp locations in Virginia versus the two camp locations in New Jersey. In Virginia, whether the interviewees were discussing environmental, child development, or parental influence themes, they nearly always comments about safety of physical environment or risk of falling behind developmentally without camp programs, or risk of displeasing parents and losing customers. In New Jersey, however, the references to safety and risk management appeared narrower, primarily focusing on making sure the children were in the company of trustworthy people who cared about them and loved them.

As these themes played out in the dialogues I had with each staff member, the primacy of risk management for the middle class environment, became plainly evident, particularly in the Virginia camps. Risk management in the New Jersey camps had somewhat different connotations. Furthermore, I began to notice that Lareau's (2002) discussion of class differences in parenting and child rearing strategies also appeared to influence differences in comprehensions of risk definitions between the two camps. As the culture of the community surrounding the Virginia camps would suggest more cultivated child rearing, the culture of the community around the New Jersey camps implies a more relaxed and "natural" development attitude toward child rearing. Thus, parental demands on the Virginia camps perpetuated concerted cultivation throughout the summer program by setting strong expectations of what the camp enrollment fee bought

for their child. The New Jersey camps, in contrast, reflect an ideology where parents'

only primary expectation is that their children are allowed to have fun with friends in a

reasonably safe environment during the summer. These differences were surprising, as

the structure of the camp appeared to be fairly similar to me at the onset of my research.

The camps share many similarities, but there also are many interesting differences

between them. In the following pages, I present an analysis of the central themes that

emerged from my observations and interviews. I do this in two ways. The first is a

discussion of risk and the physical environments of the camps. The second is a discussion

of risk and the social environments of the camps. Through these two discourses I make

my case for the major theme of risk anxiety and management that was found in the

second coding.

Risk and Physical Environment

Interviewees answered several questions about the social and physical environments

of their respective camps, as well as their interaction in each type of environment. Each

type of question is discussed separately, as there were different trends in responses based

on what type of environment was discussed.

Cleanliness and Safety: Responses differed greatly by location when interviewees

were asked about the physical environment of their camps. Coming from the more urban

environment, physical space was discussed in terms of its quality relative to the needs of

the camp. Yet when staff in the more affluent area described their physical space, their

descriptions were more often discussions of what was in the space that made it stand out

as acceptable for use and what made the space particularly useful. Directors and

coordinators had more to say about the resources at their disposal than the actual

conditions of the camps, whereas the interns and counselors made many more comments about the camp itself, though they were rather broad and general remarks at best. This distinction probably has founding in the amount of experience each group had relative to the other; most coordinators and directors had been in their position for several years or longer, while the interns most often had worked for a few months to a year. Their limited exposure to the program gave them a more generalized view of the camp's structure, resources, and use of facilities. Directors and coordinators, meanwhile, are tasked with seeing the bigger pictures involving all the staff, resources, scheduling, and the families involved in the camp itself, and are less concerned with immediate use of space and more preoccupied with overall daily functioning of the program.

In the New Jersey setting, interns' responses were almost exactly the same, saying they were in a place that was "pretty safe" and there wasn't "much pollution." These descriptions are interesting relative to my observations regarding the camps to which these comments referred. While I observed that there was not much pollution in the buildings themselves, each building was directly connected to a parking lot containing plenty of wrappers, bottles, and other trash items. In addition, the facilities were next to roads that were fairly heavily traveled. The interns' judgments in regard to pollution are likely relative to the rest of the city's neighborhoods, with camps being located in what is considered the "better" part of the city. However, the whole city is plagued with airborne pollution from waste treatment facilities that are located on the waterfront, but camps are located on the side of the city furthest away from these facilities and the smoke and smog they produce.

Camp staff in New Jersey indicated that they feel "pretty safe," (Jessica) yet businesses within sight and sound of the camp draw a significant amount of traffic past the camps as the children play outside. This could be considered unsafe because the children have no barrier between themselves and the street. In one camp setting in New Jersey, I observed that the ball that the children were playing with went into the street several times, and children blindly ran into the street to retrieve it each time. On at least one occasion, multiple cars drove directly past the children, coming close to a child and/or the ball.

I also followed one New Jersey camp to their basketball facility, a city park located a mile's walk from the camp. None of the basketball hoops had nets, the courts were cracked and littered with glass, aluminum cans (mostly beer), bottle caps, bottles, fast food boxes, concrete bits, and cigarette butts. Some kids played in sandals and others played without shirts; no one cleared off the court so the children played amongst the litter, some avoiding it as best they could, others just completely ignoring it and stepping through it. Interestingly, the interns and one director still described it as a functional, "pretty nice" space for them to be. My own observations and reactions were quite different. I suspect the disparity may be reflective of the social class lens. In a context of urban decay and crime, the fact that the children were being supervised by loving individuals who are giving them valuable lessons in teamwork, integrity, and fun is more important than risks of the physical environment. As long as the children are supplied with the basics they need to survive, as Lareau (2002) wrote, perhaps the community does not believe the quality of resources matter that much. More on this idea will be discussed in the section on social environment.

<u>Ownership of Space and Resources</u>: In the Virginia camp settings, counselors reported little in relation to the camp's physical appearance and setting other than that they were located in "nice" facilities and there were a lot of resources at the kids' disposal for entertainment and play. In this case, the counselors' basic descriptions matched my own observations. All of the camps in the Virginia setting take place in the county's schools, which are either relatively new or very well maintained. The facilities are also all inclusive: each building has a cafeteria, gym, and bathrooms located in close proximity to playgrounds and outside spaces used for recreation. The grounds are closed off from public access or at least are clearly defined as school zones where outsiders should not be unless they working with the children. Thus the interns' broad comments here on the facilities included that there was a lot of space to play and a lot to do "everything to do is right there" at the kids' disposal. They have "all the typical board games" for the kids and "all the typical things" on the playground, as well as organized places where "we typically keep our materials" and equipment.

The Virginia camps are extremely organized and standardized. Each had the same number of locking cabinets that contained the same types of equipment, games, books, puzzles, art supplies, and other materials related to camp business. In addition, they had a refrigerator for storing snack supplies and tomes of notebooks with game ideas, activity ideas, and references to rules and regulations. Differences in resources between the two camps in New Jersey and Virginia are clearly influenced by differences in funding levels. But they also show elements of different ideologies of child development and child rearing. In Virginia, the diversity of games, art supplies, program planning ideas and tight organization reflects a concerted cultivation mentality; there appears to be explicit effort

to cultivate desired outcomes by supervising and educating the "right way." In New Jersey, there seems to be a notion that as long as basic facilities are available and kids are kept safe, loved, and 'allowed to be kids," that the right outcomes will naturally happen. The counselor who described everything as "typical," Julia, makes a case for the "right way" to do childrearing. In a setting where adults value "cultivated" childrearing, one would expect them to place this emphasis on the "typical" resources every child ought to have access in order to develop as well rounded. This stands in stark contrast to an environment where quality of resources is a priority second to making sure the child is in the company of maternal and paternal figures who provide for their basic needs. Yet this contrast shone through as a major difference between the two camps.

As the interns gave responses that detailed the general aspects of the camps' physical space, the directors gave responses about the physical space of camp as a resource they are able to use. This perspective likely comes from their years of experience in planning their camps around the space. Space, for them, was considered a resource that could either be utilized or not, based upon its availability and physical condition and its ability to be converted for the type of activities the directors would plan. This means that when space was shared, as it often seemed to be, the space had to be open for their use in order for it to be a resource on that particular day, week, event, etc. This also means that when space was guaranteed for their use, they still had to be able to work with the space to make it useful. Each director mentioned difficulties of space and resources, and how their desires did not always match up with the reality of their situations, as well as the ways in which they may be surprisingly cohesive.

In the New Jersey camps, both directors had a similar viewpoint, noting that sharing their space with others affects their daily functioning. Amy is the director of one camp and shares her space daily with "many programs" which she says "leads to a constant battle of people taking resources and double booking space." In my observations at this camp I did in fact note that there were people coming in and out of the building during camp: adults looking for staff members whose offices were between the bible classroom and the art classroom, kids from other camps running from the playground to get water at the water fountain at the far end of the building, mail and package deliveries, visitors and potential donors on tours of the facilities to see the progression the organization has made in recent years. Each time the children witnessed one of these visitors they were distracted by new faces and the interesting things they carried into the building. Amy also mentioned that their resources are kept in the building's basement, the same place where the whole non-profit organization stores its extra supplies as well as donations that are not immediately used. This creates problems because other groups or individuals use the camp's resources instead by mistake. According to Amy, this means the camp often does not have the resources they need.

The other New Jersey director, Tony, echoes the idea that sharing building space poses the most significant obstacle in the way of his camp's daily functioning, but for different reasons. In Tony's camp, the building used is a church owned by an unaffiliated group who keeps a watchful eye on the camp, seemingly concerned about how the camp threats their space. In Tony's words:

> It's always a constant because like, the church you know wants us
> there but they kind of don't, like they kind of interfere too much and that's
> a constant obstacle every day…They want something good but they don't

> really want it you know, they don't want the things that come with it like possibly your floor getting a little dirty you know which we clean up…it makes you feel like you're being watched constantly and it's like "aw man give me a break…let me run my camp."

Tony's remarks point out that not being able to control the space can hinder programs at the camp. I noticed while I was observing that there were chains and locks on several doors both inside and outside of the building, and that the church owners themselves were wandering around the camp during the day, watching the staff and sitting in on the camp classes. Tony describes this close observation as "frustrating" and says that if they could "get rid of the church people, that would make the camp perfect." This tension illustrates a two sided aspect of the risk framework. On one hand, the church owners appear to have risk on their minds, believing their investment (the church building) is at risk and needs to be closely monitored when the camp is in session, but also seemingly believing their ministry to be at risk if they do not help facilitate the summer camp program. On the other hand, Tony faces the risk of not having a successful camp program because of the constraints he feels the church owners place on his program through their watchful eye.

Directors at the Virginia camps highlight the ample resources their physical space gives them, which helps to maintain a program that meets the expectations of parents who are trying to cultivate their children's educational experiences. Andrea, director of one camp program, had this to say about her camp's physical environment:

> I think the setting is excellent. It's right here in the school, and we have a big cafeteria and we have a very good gym, playground…so it does give us the option to set up different things that we want to set up in here, like if we wanted to do a carnival…so I think the setting is excellent.

Andrea sees the space as having potential for many activities and still being a reliable part of the camp that she can use to facilitate varied activities, like mini carnivals and talent shows (Andrea).

Although the directors and coordinators in Virginia agreed their buildings were in great condition and were "good, safe places" to have a camp, ownership of that space seemed to be an issue, as was the case in New Jersey. Gwen, the coordinator of the Virginia camp program, told me that their program has an agreement with the school system wherein they are granted unlimited use of the gymnasium and cafeteria areas of each school that runs a camp. The caveat is that if the school or school district decides to use that space for any other reason, they have the first claim and at a moment's notice can tell the camp that they need to suspend use of the space for however much time the school system needs it. She adds that this requires a certain amount of "adjusting and not always having a place to keep your stuff stored away or you can't always keep it…set up and leave it because others are using the facility after us. We have to clean it up at the end as if we were never there." Despite this inconvenience, the contract with the city and schools gives them the space to provide a camp with "excellent" facilities that can meet middle and upper class parent demands for a "cultivated" experience.

State Licensure: Jake, Andrea, and Gwen, the directors and supervisor interviewed in Virginia all mentioned their state licensure as a signal indicating that their camp was operating in the "right" way, meaning risk was managed in an appropriate way. Jake describes how conforming to state risk management policies play out in daily camp practices:

> We make sure we provide training of the staff to make sure they know sight and sound supervision. And there's a counselor to kid ratio and you can't exceed that and you know just basically being able to conduct whatever activities whether it's in the gym whether its outside on the playground you know we have to keep in mind how hard is what kind of activity you're going to be doing, if the kids are going to be running, do the kids have the proper footwear with them…just making sure that all safety aspects met and are addressed.

Rather than view these regulations as a burden, each higher level staff member mentioned that these guidelines have made the program "better" in recent years. This finding is consistent with Bessant et al. (2003) and their discussion involving methods for coping with risk anxiety. Creation of these standards was borne out of a desire to control risks, and the staff's ready acceptance and appreciation of them demonstrates the impact that the risk society and risk management frame has exerted on summer camps. In this context, state certification is seen as a resource or tool by which the summer camp staff is able to convey to parents and outsiders that their program effectively manages relevant risks. That is, it provides activities needed to ensure "correct" academic and social development while effectively minimizing physical safety concerns.

Risk and Social Environment

Interview questions about the social environment of the camps, focused on interactions between the staff members, camp children, as well as any other interactions taking place in the camp setting. In addition, I inquired about the broader social goals the staff believe the program is working toward.

Emphasis on Risk: Again, interns gave more generalized responses than directors and coordinators. In both cities, the interns and counselors claimed their goals and duties were mostly to "play with the kids and have so much fun" (Jessica). Charlie's belief was

that her job was to "play with the kids and to love them." This, of course, seems like one

of the more important goals of the camps, for if the children were not having a good time,

then what would the point of the camp really be? It is interesting to note, though, that

these were the words chosen by the staff with the most direct experience with the

children to describe the goals for and interactions with those kids. Only one member of

the lower level staff (Julia) mentioned that there was a need to make sure the kids were

safe while they were having fun. The interns and counselors appear to primarily see the

fun and enjoyable aspect of camp as the motivation for the camp's existence.

Director Commentary on Staff as Risk: The directors and coordinators, with their

larger view of the organization's inner workings, discussed the social environment in

ways that were similar to their discussions of the physical environment. Their concerns

seemed to focus primarily on resource management. They viewed their staff as a resource

that serves a particular purpose. The main focus seemed to be on how their staff is a

resource that can be improved upon, better facilitated, and lost or gained.

In the Virginia setting, Jake and Andrea comment on how well their staffs get along,

but also note that it is the quality of the staff that makes the difference in how well the

camp is run and programming is delivered. Jake noted that directors must struggle to

"find that balance with high staff turnover." This problem of staff turnover is one many

summer camps encounter and for directors, this can be seen as a threat, a risk that must

be managed in order to meet camp goals and parent expectations. While some of his staff

(and thus, Andrea's staff as well) is employed for him year round, many staff members

are hired for just the summer because enrollment is higher during the summer than during

the school year. Jake claims that the staff members who interact most with the kids have

the greatest impact on how the children and parents will view the camp and their child's

experience. Thus, any insecurity created by staff turnover or staff conflict is a serious

problem that could threaten the ability to meet goals and expectations. Andrea would

agree with this statement, saying of her own staff members:

> the staff here get along very well and I'm not saying that's every year but
> they, particularly, here I find that the staff is getting along very well…the
> staff wants to please the kids and make sure that they have a good summer
> camp experience and its happening so I think that's very neat.

Andrea also noted that she previously had staffs which were not cohesive and those years

were not as successful, but made sure to emphasize that her staff this year was ideal, at

least.

    Yet the differential motivation of the volunteers who work at the New Jersey camps

does not impact whether or not the directors there concern themselves with staff as a

resource for their camp. Just as in the Virginia camps, the New Jersey camp directors and

coordinator all mentioned how staffing issues were central to their concerns over the

social environment of camp. Amy says they strive for a "social environment [that is] a

friendly, family atmosphere" but find that pursuit a moderate struggle with the high staff

turnover rates of their interns, who are typically college aged students coming to serve

the camp for a short time. Tony claimed that one aspect of camp he would like to see

changed is the amount of time spent on deciding which individuals are given the summer

position. He said that he has noticed some interns are allowed to return in future summers

though they may not have received the best feedback from other staff members or

directors, and that causes problems in his own camps. And Thomas, the coordinator,

stated he would love if his organization had the resources to "hire the necessary

personnel" and that the revolving intern positions were not ideal, but they were a historic

way the organization got free labor and found its staff members. This particular aspect of

the staff as resource issue calls back thoughts of Beck's (1999) discussion of treating new

situations with old methodologies as risk society moves forward and the past falls behind.

While Thomas was not saying that the camp would be at risk on account of these staff

issues, the directors certainly made clear that the wrong staff choices can ruin their

chances to reach some children; therein lies a risk that the directorial staff must manage,

but they must manage it without the proper tools, thereby amplifying anxiety for future

outcomes.

Staff Payment and Motivation: The coordinator for the Virginia camps agrees that the

most important decisions they make regarding camp organization are related to staffing.

About hiring, Gwen says "We try to get it right the first time but there are people who say

that they love working with kids or they like kids and we find that sometimes that's not

the case." Such risk in hiring staff makes it so that payment of the staff is a risk

management tool the county can utilize to ensure that the staff members are appropriately

qualified individuals for the job. Gwen acknowledged that paying their staff was their

largest expenditure, yet she claimed that she would not have it any other way: "We would

never design a program run completely by volunteers because you need

consistency…and you need dependable people and you need to know they're going to be

there."

This distinction is important to keep in mind when comparing the program to the

program in New Jersey, where the intern and counselor staff is made up entirely of

volunteers. This appears to have no immediate impact on the functions of camp, but it

may affect the interactions the staff has with the children. Motivations in the Virginia camps were clear, with the counselors feeling their job is to work with the children. In the New Jersey camps, however, the social environment appeared to be impacted by the personal motivation to enlist in the intern role. Jessica stated that the compensation she receives from her work is the "joy and the happiness that the kids bring," giving her role a glossy image rooted in the belief that she is taking advantage of an opportunity to work with the kids, not simply showing up for a job. Charlie talks about how she is "there to enjoy" the children, and how this is her primary description of the social environment. Clearly, the type of staff does have a slight impact on how they conceptualize their interaction with the children on a daily basis.

Child Development

The goals, rules, and daily camp routine gave particular insight into the child development focus of each camp setting. This theme will be discussed relative to responses regarding the goals of the programs and observations I made about how the staff members go about enforcing rules and policy relative to those goals Lareau's (2002) discussion of difference in childrearing styles by social class provides a useful framework for making sense of the responses I received in the interviews.

Goals: In the Virginia camps staff described numerous goals but all focused on themes related to childhood development. The coordinator, Gwen, asserted that the foremost goals of camp include "trying to develop their physical, emotional, social, and cognitive [abilities]" as well as developing healthy adult relationships. She claims camp activities "promote self appreciation, improve personal skills, learn service, develop honesty, and bridge the gap" between the previous and subsequent school years. These

goals are well engrained in the minds of directors and interns. Julia, a counselor, stated

that their goals for the children were "developing their mind and their social and their

emotional and their physical all in one program," and Jake stated that "fun and

socialization skills" are a major focus. Andrea, the other Virginia camp director, adds

more to the goals, saying at her camp "we like them to have ownership and feel special"

and she tries to "focus on diversity" as they supervise the children and give them "social

skills, preventative education…[and] *more* than they would get in school [emphasis

added]. "

Many of the goals mentioned above are related to the idea that summer camp is a

resource driven by parental concerns that their children will fall behind in the summer

(Downey et al 2004). In aiming to develop the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive

aspects of childhood, the camp sets itself up as a bridge and an enhancement to the

education and socialization function of the school and the family. By focusing on these

goals the Virginia camps are actively engaging in risk management, they provide parents

with tools to help "do child rearing right," avoiding the summer drop and other risks

(criminal victimization, juvenile delinquency) that could derail progress toward a

desirable future.

In comparison to the Virginia sites, the goals expressed in the New Jersey sites were

somewhat less specific, with one key exception. The goal of spiritual development was

specifically emphasized, owing to the religious nature of the organization which sponsors

the camp. Amy, director of one New Jersey camp, said that "homework support, life

skills, recreation, and spiritual development" are the main focus of the camp. Tony, the

other director, adds "developing positive attitudes" to the list of goals. Thomas, the

coordinator, suggests their goals also include "developing academic abilities… spiritual growth [and] Christian leadership" in a "nurturing place where kids can find meaning [and] develop vision for [their] lives." Differences in stated goals between the New Jersey and Virginia sites may reflect social class or demographic differences, but an undeniable influence comes from the religious affiliations of the New Jersey camps. In these latter sites, the descriptions of goals were more concerned primarily with knowing the children were in the company of Christian people looking out for the children's best interests. Thomas' description of goals especially suggests that the mission of the organization is largely spiritual with child development aspects coming second. Moreover, as a non-profit volunteer organization these camps are not in a position of responding to paying customers for whom the long term management of investment is common. The New Jersey camps serve a highly impoverished demographic, and consistent with Lareau's (2002) ideas, their efforts seem to be less about specific achievement outcomes beyond moral character and basic life skills development. This follows trends discussed by Bessant et al. (2003) who claim that when the family or other primary institutions fail, the school must take responsibility for addressing those issues and educating the child of even these basic life skills and personal development. In a social setting where many children come from nontraditional homes, the school, and in this case the non-profit is providing the education, takes over in teaching those basic skills and works to develop the child as one would expect family members to do.

In both settings, the goals reflect how social class moderates the role of risk management in the camp's everyday operations. Whereas the Virginia camps clearly focus on cultivating the children in a manner acceptable to the parents who have a clear

sense that they are guiding children toward a specific developmental outcome, the New Jersey camps seek to compensate for failures of basic life skills education in the family, but appear to follow a childrearing strategy based on the idea of natural development (Lareau 2002). In the lower class setting in New Jersey, risks of involvement in gang related activity or other undesirable consequences are much greater and a much more salient focus than in the Virginia camps. Thus, the supervision aspect of camp becomes its most attractive quality, taking precedence over the range of enrichment activities that are offered to the children. In the Virginia camps, the marketable qualities that parents choose likely has as much to do with specific programming as it does with basic supervision. Discussion of these different focuses of the camps relative to their location and social class setting continues in the next section, when I discuss parental influence on the camp program.

Parental Influence and Expectations

As the primary "gatekeepers" of their children's safety, parents are a driving force behind summer camp programs nationwide (Jackson and Scott 1999). In the Virginia camps, parents pay a substantial weekly tuition for camp programming. In New Jersey camps, parents only pay a small fee (four dollars) each week if they want their child to participate in the weekly swimming trip, otherwise camp attendance is free of charge. Regardless, each camp requires parents to pre-register for the camp for planning purposes. Outwardly, parents' reasons for choosing a camp seem simple but my interviews with staff suggest that the parents have a large influence on the camp activities in Virginia locations, but a negligible influence on the organization of the camp in the New Jersey locations. The prominence of parents mentioned in staff interviews is

interesting because I asked few questions about parents, yet I got many responses about them in regards to other questions asked during the interviews.

In the Virginia camp setting, there was a definite influence of the parents on the camp's structure, operation, and facilitation. The coordinator, Gwen, noted that camp "provides a service to customers." Parents are the customers of the summer camp service, and camp staff often must try to organize camp relative to their demands. In responding to a question about the obstacles faced in her job, Andrea, a director, mentions parents:

> A parent may get upset, "Well why didn't you change the field trip date" or "my child didn't get to go on the boat trip" or "why did you have the talent show over there and not here"…trying to accommodate everyone and that's impossible…every parent is really looking out for what's best for their child and they might want us to do more things and maybe we can't because maybe we don't have a staff person that can do that, so we probably can't give the parents everything they would love to have in a program.

Beyond this, staff members were cognizant of the fact that parent feedback about programming was important to receive support from the city government, which affects licensing and contracts with the school system in which camp takes place. They are aware that parents choose the camp carefully. Andrea mentions that parents "may be seeing, well this one gives you tennis lessons but they're not there for you the same hours that we're there for you," and these costs and benefits weigh heavily on parents as they decide. Because parents often believe the choice of programming affects future outcomes for their children, they apply an ideology of risk awareness, insurance, and future return on investment, making choices carefully to maximize chances of the desired outcome (Jackson and Scott 1999; Baker 2002).

As the coordinator of a large child-centered program where changes are made based,
in part, on parent feedback, Gwen mentioned that camp programs have shifted focus in
recent years. Based on twenty years with the program, Gwen has argues that:

> the needs of the kids have changed, they're more complex and a lot of it is
> probably due to the family structure and how that has changed you know
> more divorced families more single parent families and it changes the role
> of the counselor where we used to honestly just strictly have fun, we're
> having to play so many roles now you know you're the nurse you're the
> mom in absence of the mom you're the friend you're trying to be the
> teacher

In a context of changing family structure and two-career families, parents may feel as if
their children are at a greater risk (Jackson and Scott 1999; Wilkinson 2010).
Consequently, they demand that the parent role be carried out by camp counselors. In
essence, parents pay for risk management services, asking schools and summer camps to
help them manage their anxiety about physical safety as well as about appropriate
development (academic, social, etc.). Moreover, parents may develop similar minded
communities of risk anxious parents who share the burden together (Beck 1999), and take
actions, such as suggesting changes to camp, to keep their risks minimized. Reflective of
this, Andrea told me they use parent evaluations to find out parent likes and dislikes so
they can "try to put them into place" and incorporate them into their program the next
time around. Gwen furthers that thought saying "This…one single program…connects
with so many families in our community which equates to a whole lot of citizen
participation." Through that community of risk management interested parents, risk and
concerted cultivation framework affect bureaucracy and functioning.

The New Jersey camp, however, shows less evidence of parents rallying to influence
programming in order to prevent their children from being identified as at risk of failing

according to social standards (Beck 1999). The parents of the children at the New Jersey

camps appear to have more limited motives for enrolling their kids in the program. As

Tony says about the parents' feelings toward camp, "[we] keep the kids out [of] the house

and out [of] their hair, they don't care you know what I mean, they love it." On average

these parents have a more relaxed attitude, just wanting programming that keeps their

children occupied, supervised, and entertained. In their community, where various social

programs abound, parents are most concerned with finding a safe place for their child to

spend time, not a place that necessarily cultivates their children toward longer term goals.

Members of communities which are at-risk (which implies having a setback due to

difficulties or disadvantages) try to find unity in safe places (Bessant et al. 2003; Jackson

and Scott, 1999). Thomas, coordinator of the New Jersey camps, claims that theology, for

Christians, is a safe place, and it unifies the community around the area of the camps,

where the organization has a reputation for being a good place for kids. It appears that in

this lower class environment, concerted cultivation is less of a concern and consequently

camp programs are less influenced by parental demands. There is less pressure to keep

their program competitive and in tune with parental feedback or evaluations. Instead,

camp need only be a reliably "fun place" for kids so that they can develop via a natural

progression.

Safety Practices and Risk Management

The previous sections have discussed the ways in which I made sense of the data

during the first round of coding. It seemed interplay of the dialogue on environment,

development, and parental influence was going to be my focus until I read through the

data and found all of the instances where individuals were discussing risk as it pertains to

their camp. This could mean risk for the children who need continued educational experiences during summer, or risk for the parents who are investing in their children, or risk for the staff who are striving to please the parents or the children, etc. However, I did notice that there was an emphasis that each staff member put on some kind of risk relative to their work in the summer camps. Further, I noticed how the two sites differed in their perception of this risk and in what ways (if any) they worked to manage the risk. The conception of risk in the Virginia community where the camps met appeared to be more rooted in new modernity, as stressful personal revolutions happen simultaneously and individuals strive to eliminate the risk anxiety prevent such consequences in the future (Glassner 1999; Beck 1999; Bessant et al. 2003). In the New Jersey camps, however, the conception of risk was more along the lines of encouraging children to continue education and promote friendship with individuals who could help them negotiate their at-risk status (Bessant et al. 2003). These differences are connected to the differences in parenting styles in each of the two communities, which may have had direct effects on the facilitation of the camps and could have potentially direct effects on the development of literature surrounding risk society's expansion in recent years.

As other institutions become affected by the risk anxiety mindset, where anything could be a danger to one's future and one must manage those risks with preemptive thinking that supposes danger to be lurking nearby at all times, the mindset becomes a part of that institution (Wilkinson 2010). Parents affected by this thinking are influenced by wider social forces to comply with the risk anxiety framework for fear of missing out or falling behind in new modernity's fast-paced society (Wilkinson 2010). Gwen, who has been in her position coordinating the camp program for several years, has watched

this trend take hold in the community around her. The most defining response she gave,

regarding how her program has changed in its time, was certainly as follows:

> We're safer than we've ever been and it's a couple of things that
> happened there. I think as society changed and people in society changed,
> you know it's not like people talk to their neighbors anymore…but crime
> changed and parents actually were more afraid so you have to respond to a
> lot of that type of deal. We weren't state licensed when we started either,
> you know, now we are…and that means it's like a whole book of you
> know hundreds of standards that we have to abide by and it's been a good
> thing because I think our programs got better, but it makes you think about
> things that you don't think about like physical plant things down to water
> temperature down to operation to structure of how you design a room or
> set up the room because it impacts the behavior of the kids and what they
> do.

This statement really gets at the heart of what Gwen thinks makes her program great and

successful. Yet, it reflects the risk society framework that there is always potential

danger, and parents and other want assurances that risks are controlled and minimized.

My analysis suggests these risk anxieties and methods of managing the anxiety have

become important and essential policies especially in the Virginia camp's daily operation.

In the New Jersey camps, there is less preoccupation with risk assessment. Instead, one

finds an atmosphere more focused on developing evangelical relationships and a program

which can become a safe place for children living in the harsh environment of the inner

city.

Health and Personal Safety: One particular area in which these differences were made

evident is the realm of health and personal safety issues. In the New Jersey camps, while

I observed at each camp, I took note of any health or safety incidents, such as injuries,

illnesses, and moments where there was something to worry about in terms of personal

safety. Aside from the few children who fell and scraped themselves or were hit with a

ball on the playground, there were not many incidents. The events that did occur often

did so without note from staff members. A child may have pointed out the injury to the

staff, but the staff members simply said something comforting and then the child went on

his or her way. In a few instances, some of the children hit each other. There are no

immediate sanctions but there was no immediate threat to any of the children who were

hit. As one of the counselors, Jessica, described it, "Kids will be kids. Some of them are

going to be hitting each other, but overall I think they get along really well." Charlie

agreed, citing that "the kids have lots of energy" and claiming this was the reason for

their rambunctiousness. Neither of them were particularly surprised when the small

injuries or fights occurred, instead they, and the other counselors, stopped the fight or

consulted with the injured child to see if they were okay, and then they encouraged the

children to go about their business as usual.

Injuries and safety incidents looked very different in the Virginia camp setting. There

appeared to be more incidents in these two camps than the two in New Jersey. However it

is possible there were similar incident rates but those that occurred were treated more

seriously in the Virginia camps thereby making them more noticeable. They required

paperwork to document the injury, and a note to inform the parents of the incident.

Protocols for injuries included this process of paperwork and parental notification, while

other preventative habits were also a part of daily camp procedure. Tasks such as putting

on sunscreen and washing hands took up a significant amount of time during the day. The

Virginia camps also had instances where allergies and medical conditions such as

diabetes were the central focus of the counselors who were working with the children;

Staff were well trained on how to deal with these situations, helping one girl to find a seat

that would not put her in jeopardy due to her peanut allergy, and helping a pair of siblings manage their blood sugar when it was discovered to be low.

These routines make it obvious the extent to which safety comes to be a major part of the Virginia camp's procedures. Most of the staff interviewed in the Virginia program noted that "safety comes first;" Jake, a director at one of the Virginia camps, said that "the kids know I am a cool nice guy to get along with but [I'm] going to make sure that everybody in this program is safe." Jake's other responses show the depth and extent to which this idea is engrained in his philosophy on directing a camp. During his interview, Jake referred to safety measures, precautions, protocols, and avoiding hazardous situations and conditions over twenty times without being asked a single question related specifically to safety or risk management. His comments on safety made up a significant portion of his interview, and it stood out to me that safety was a large focus of his approach to directing a camp. His responses demonstrate a fear for tangible dangers, but also a tendency to rationalize the fear of remote dangers and hazards, thereby creating a risk ideology that he, and the other staff members in the Virginia camps, incorporates into daily camp routines (Wilkinson 2010). In sum, from my observations and interviews, it seems that camps in the middle class setting in Virginia are more preoccupied with notions of risk and insecurity and design and market the program around its preventative prowess. The camps in the lower class environment see fewer risks inside the camp environment and incorporate fewer preventative measures to address them (Kupchik 2010).

Rules at Camp: A second area where I noted social class differences with respect to the application of the risk framework centered on the treatment of the camps' rules. Both

camps addressed their rules with the children during the day. In the New Jersey

programs, their camps had four simple rules: participate, respect the leaders, respect each

other, and have fun. They sing these rules to a catchy tune at the start of camp before

their opening program. These rules are open to interpretation because they are so broad,

and the staff struggled on occasion to enforce them. These rules also appear to reflect the

natural development model of child rearing; so long as the kids participate and respect the

authority figures of the camps, then they are following the camps' rules and just being

kids. This stands in contrast to my observations from the Virginia camps, although rules

were treated a little differently at each site I visited. In one camp, the rules were clearly

posted on the wall, and the staff used the display to point out rules when they needed

reinforcement among the children. In the second Virginia camp, not only were the rules

posted clearly, but the staff led the children through a recitation of the rules during lunch

and on the playground, times when children tended to be rowdier than they were during

the rest of the day. These rules were lengthy and specific, such as "always tell someone

where you go; keep safety first; keep all body parts to yourself at all times except when

playing tag," and these children were the most well behaved of any of the camps visited.

Because the rules were so specific, the staff had little trouble enforcing them when the

children started to get even a little out of hand. Being able to keep the kids under control

helps them to create a more peaceful atmosphere in camp, which presumably gives the

staff the freedom to assist in cultivation of childhood.

The staff members in the Virginia camps mentioned so often the influence of parents

on their camp's scheduled activities, the types of safety details they manage to avoid risk,

and their desires to holistically develop the children they supervise, not just entertain

them. Where there are resources enough to assist in the cultivation of children, the camps

certainly try to follow that protocol. Julia, counselor in the Virginia camps, says part of

their job entails "pushing [the kids] to get involved, [become] more well rounded, more

tolerable of other children, aware of their differences and aware of boundaries, and

develop their own interests." But, as Andrea says, "you could have all the ingredients of a

cake and it may still go down." This second quote demonstrates the method of thinking

that that directors and higher level staff at the Virginia camp follow, preparing

themselves and their camps for problems that may arise in the future, even if there seems

to be nothing that would lead to those problems. They fear the risks of failing the children

and not providing them with the "right" kind of education, fun, and experience during

their time away from the education institution in the summer (Beck 1999). These fears

make risk management a very salient issue that takes precedence over all other issues,

and has become a driving force behind the types of reform made to the Virginia camps in

the past twenty years.

The New Jersey camps, on the other hand, do not demonstrate this need to provide

the children with the "right" education and avoid all of the risks associated with the

middle class culture in the Virginia setting. In the New Jersey camps, they simply aim, as

Amy said, to "keep the kids safe, provide a safe environment, and fun." These goals are

much less lofty and easier to justify (than unnecessary risk management) in the lower

class, at-risk environment from which the children are coming. The fact that the camps

can run similar programming to similar aged groups of children, yet have such different

responses to my interview questions demonstrates that the risk society effects that can be

seen in many social institutions are seemingly dependent upon certain social conditions, namely class, to take root in branches off those institutions.

Conclusions

The aim of this research project was to use summer camp programs in two widely-varying socioeconomic settings as arenas in which to build further understanding of the ways that modern society's preoccupation with risk and risk management has modified the structure and functioning of education and child development programs. Using interview and observational data from two sites located in Camden, New Jersey and two sites in Williamsburg, Virginia, the study explored how concerns about risk and practices related to risk management have become reflected in the goals, physical setting, social environment, and daily practices of summer camp programs. In addition, by comparing summer camps in communities characterized by distinct socioeconomic conditions (e.g., extremely poor vs. upper-middle class), the study also gave consideration to how social class may modify perceptions of and practical responses to the risk environment of the summer camp. Theoretical themes from Ulrich Beck's risk society framework and Annette Lareau's discussion of class-based child-rearing cultures are used to help make sense of the data. In this final section, I conclude by briefly summarizing major findings pertaining to each of these theoretical frameworks, followed by a discussion of the limitations of the current study and possible suggestions for future research.

Summary of Major Findings: One important finding is derived from a comparison between comments about the physical space of the camps made by staff in the Camden program and my own observations of that space. The staff in Camden generally provided a positive evaluation of the physical space of the camps, describing it as safe and

functional place that met the needs of the kids. My own observations and field notes documented a different story. Although the camp facilities were reasonably maintained, the broader physical community in which the camp facilities were located appeared somewhat unsafe. My observations noted that the Camden camps sites were filled with traffic, pollution, and varied signs of urban decay, all of which suggest heightened levels of risk.

Given my observations, I was surprised that the staff gave such positive reviews of their camp space. But I suspect social context and social class differences may be the source of the contrasting observations. The favorable comments of the Camden staff are surprising when viewed through the lenses of upper-middle class suburbia, which might emphasize more the heightened risk and therefore produce less-than-favorable comments. The favorable comments, however, are more expected when the camp environments are evaluated in relation to the broader context of Camden, which involves abundant decay and sources of danger and risk. In this context of socioeconomic disadvantage, it may be that the summer camps are viewed as an oasis of relative safety in that they are places that keep these kids insulated from surrounding troubles that may ensnare them. In the face of problematic issues in the larger city environment, the Camden staff appear to view their camp space as a safe haven in which they are able to provide mentorship, love and attention in order to counteract the risks encountered outside of camp.

A second important finding was centered on the difference in the level of risk anxiety between the two camp settings. In the Williamsburg program sites, where the physical and social environment is much safer in objective terms, there is actually a greater emphasis on safety rules and precautions than in the Camden programs, where objective

risks appear to be higher. From the interview data, it became clear that safety concerns

were at the forefront of the minds of the directors of the Williamsburg camps, even

though I did not ask specific questions related to safety. Interestingly, camp leaders in

Williamsburg pointed to their state license as a sort of certification that they were

adhering to proper safety standards and taking all precautions to make sure that risks in

the physical environment were capably managed.

Camp directors in Williamsburg expressed concern over the hiring of staff members

and about staff turnover. They worried in particular that bad hiring decisions might

lessen the desirability of the camps to parents. In addition, they worried more about how

constraints on the physical space, particularly ownership issues, might raise difficulties

that would impede their ability to develop programs and schedules that would meet with

parental approval. The camp staff in Williamsburg discussed, and I also observed,

clearly defined routines for managing risks for camp kids. For instance, I observed

several routine procedures to prevent sunburn (regular application of sun block), the

prevention of new illness (frequent hand washing), and the management of existing

medical conditions (detailed policy for the distribution and use of medicine).   Moreover,

every "injury," including minor scrapes, was accompanied by the writing of an injury

report, a copy of which (or verbal account) went to the injured child's parent(s). These

routine policies and procedures were a major part of the camp organization and were

viewed as being necessary so that the camp could maintain its reputation as a "safe" place

with the anxious parents, as well as to ensure that its state license would be renewed.

The pervasive concerns over safety and doing summer camp in a "risk minimized"

way, which were plainly evident from observations and interviews in Williamsburg, were

less prominent in the in the Camden program. Although the broader environment of the latter camps was much more risk-laden on its face, there generally seemed to be less staff preoccupation with risk management, and there was little evidence to suggest that goals and practices of camp staff were directly motivated by a perceived need to accommodate the demands of parents or state regulations. Perhaps the most easily observed difference is that staff in Camden brushed off the minor and expected injuries—such as cuts, scrapes and bumps—that occur when kids play, making no permanent record of these events. Instead, the staff concerns seemed to be with a bigger-picture objective; to create and maintain a family-like, trustworthy, and reliable atmosphere for the children as a reprieve from the stresses of life in Camden.

A third important finding is related to how risk management differences across the camps are reflective of Lareau's (2004) discussion of social class differences in perspectives on child rearing. Recall that her argument suggests that lower class families utilize a more "natural" childrearing approach, while middle and upper middle class families practice a strategy of concerted cultivation. Viewed from the risk management framework, these alternative child-rearing approaches may also be interpreted as reflective of class-differences in the perceptions of risk and risk management, which make their way into the practices of summer camp programs.

Managing risk is a central theme in the goals of the Williamsburg camp program, but risks come in many forms. One concern is the risk of parenting incorrectly, wherein one's children would not achieve their full intellectual, social and physical potential. To prevent this consequence of risk, each area of the child's development requires active "cultivation." As evidence of the idea that middle- and upper-class parents put great

importance on fostering specific desired outcomes for the children, the goals of the camps in Williamsburg seek to develop all aspects of the child; it is not enough to simply provide a caring and safe place for kids to have fun. Activities should also cultivate other individual abilities, including such as intellectual and academic growth. In the Camden program there appeared to be some, but less, evidence that camps were concerned with fostering individual academic growth. Instead, if the cultivation of any particular individual outcomes were evident, they were focused primarily on trying to develop the spirituality or moral character of the kids. These findings suggest that in addition to social class, the child-rearing strategy implemented in summer camps are shaped, in part, by the nature of their sponsoring organizations. Since the Camden programs are sponsored by a religious based non-profit organization, most of the staff work on a voluntary basis, and parents pay little if anything in the way of tuition and fees, the spiritual goals of the organization appear to be more central than child rearing objectives of parents. On the other hand, because the camps in Williamsburg are part of a for profit government organization and parents pay a regular tuition, the child rearing objectives of parents, who are also "paying customers," seem to be of greater concern in shaping how the camp programs are organized and run. Although more evidence is needed to explore this issue, my data provide some evidence that Williamsburg camp parents expect a certain amount of concerted cultivation in the summer camps their kids attend, while in Camden, the focus is more on providing a safe environment that will keep kids away from socially unhealthy behaviors so that they can follow their path of natural development.

In summary, my data provide preliminary evidence that the conceptual framework provided in Beck's risk society thesis and in Lareau's arguments regarding class

differences in child-rearing can help understand many aspects of summer camp programs, especially their structure, goals and practices. Simply put, my work suggests that these programs are an important tool which parents use to manage risks that they perceive may affect their children. These risks include obvious things like criminal victimization, drug use, and juvenile delinquency and less obvious things, like the achievement of desired long-term academic, occupational and social objectives as defined by parents. In the interest of attaining these goals, parents may be selective in choosing a program that includes essential supervision and academic enrichment features. In a context of upper-middle class suburban life, the concerted cultivation ideal appears to be paired with policies and practices that are designed to minimize a wide variety of risks, some of which could be seen as minor and trivial. In the impoverished urban setting, the objective probability and magnitude of "dangers" are likely greater. But in those places, there seems to be less preoccupation with detailed procedures or practices aimed at minimizing risk. Moreover, the data suggest that the Camden program staff perceive less need to tailor the organization, schedule, or operations of their programs to accommodate parent-defined goals, a finding that may reflect the more limited "cultivation" efforts of parents in the Camden location.

    Study Limitations: There were several limitations to this study. First, I only interviewed a small number of individuals for this research. This limitation was primarily a function of time and resources. While efforts were made to interview an individual that represented each layer in the camp organizational structure, each camp did have multiple people occupying the role of intern/counselor and I only interviewed one in each camp site. Clearly, this pattern of sample selection has the possibility of truncating variation in

the information and other perspectives which may be evident in each camp. Second, each city/program had several additional camp locations besides the two that I observed. In Camden, there were two more sites in the same age group as the two where I observed and interviewed, as well as three more sites with older children. In Williamsburg, there were four other sites, some consisting of older children and some of similar ages to the two camps where I observed and interviewed. Branching out to observe and interview at these other sites might have made for a richer collection of data and a more thorough understanding of how risk affected all of the camps involved in each location. A third limitation of the current study is that the depth of information that I obtained was constrained by my utilization of structured survey interviews, rather than unstructured field interviews. This limitation reflects an external constraint; the Protection of Human Subjects Committee required that   all questions to be utilized in my interviews receive pre-approval, which prevented me from delving deeper into issues that emerged organically--e.g., risk concerns--in the course of my interviews.

Implications for Future Research: Ultimately, my study may have implications for studies of risk, and especially for helping to shape a future agenda dealing with the intersection of risk, fear, social class and childhood socialization practices. Although constrained by empirical limitations, I have attempted to explore how summer camps are somewhat of a hybrid education and family institution in which social class linked child rearing strategies interact with societal efforts to practice risk management, particularly as it relates to our children. From an academic perspective, these efforts may help stimulate additional theorizing as researchers give further consideration to the interaction of these issues. In particular, future research should seek to expand further our

knowledge of how concerns with risk, danger and insecurity have infiltrated society and the daily lives of individuals. While my research envisions summer camps both as a tool that society uses to manage these concerns and as an institution that is shaped by those concerns, other researchers could explore whether other organizations in society relate to the risk framework in similar ways.

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APPENDIX A: Interviewees

Virginia Camps:

Program Coordinator: Gwen, 35 year old female, worked for the program for 20 years and in her current position for 5 years

Camp Director 1:   Jake, 40 year old male, worked with the program for 22 years and in his current position for 15 years

Camp Director 2:   Andrea, 61 year old female, worked with the program and in her current position for 13 years

Counselor 1:   Kate, 19 year old female, worked with the program for 9 months and in her current position for 3 months

Counselor 2:   Julia, 25 year old female, worked with the program and in her current position for 3 years

New Jersey Camps:

Program Coordinator: Thomas, 47 year old male, worked with the program for 23 years and in his current position for several years (no exact number specified)

Camp Director 1:   Amy, 31 year old female, worked with the program and in her current position for 2 years

Camp Director 2:   Tony, 23 year old male, worked with the program and in his current position for 2 years

Counselor 1:   Jessica, 19 year old female, worked with the program and in her current position for 1- 2 months

Counselor 2:   Charlie, 19 year old female, worked with the program and in her current position for 1-2 months

APPENDIX B: Interview questions

These questions were asked of counselors/interns:
Name: _____   Location:_____
Pseudonym: _____   Camp: _____
Date: _____   Camp Age Range: _____
Age: _____   Position: _____

-Describe briefly the program you work for
   -How did you find out about this program?
-What capacity do you serve in the camp? What is your role?
   -How long have you worked in this capacity?
   -Did you receive training for this role? **Yes   No**
   -Did you have previous experience with this role? **Yes   No**
   -Did you feel prepared for this role before entering it? **Yes   No**
   -Do you receive compensation (payment, any other compensation) for your work? **Yes No**
      -How do you think this affects your performance?
-How do you get along with other counselors? **1   2   3   4   5**
-How do you get along with the kids? **1   2   3   4   5**
-How do you get along with directors? **1   2   3   4   5**
-Describe a typical day at camp
   -What obstacles do you regularly face in a typical day?
-Describe the **physical environment** of your program (in terms of facilities, location, resources, etc.)
      -The physical environment of the program affects my ability to perform my role **1 2 3 4 5**
      -The physical environment of the program affects the potential success of the program **1 2 3 4 5**
-Describe the **Social environment** of your program (in terms of relationships, opportunity to form relationships between the kids, the staff, and the staff and kids, etc.)
      -The social environment of the program affects my ability to perform my role **1 2 3 4 5**
      -The social environment of the program affects the potential success of the program **1 2 3 4 5**
-If you could think of any one thing that might help your program succeed, what would that be?
-How favorably do you think that the _____ view the program?
   (a) children in the program **1 2 3 4 5**
   (b) parents of the children **1 2 3 4 5**
   (c) larger community **1 2 3 4 5**
-How favorably do you think the _____ view your role in the program?
   (a) children in the program **1 2 3 4 5**
   (b) parents of the children **1 2 3 4 5**
   (c) larger community **1 2 3 4 5**
-On a scale of 1-10, one being not at all, and ten being extremely successful, how successful would you say the program you work for is, and why? **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

-What kinds of trips are taken during the course of camp?
      -What do the trip experiences provide for the kids?
-*On a regular basis, what percentage of the kids misbehave or behave in a manner disruptive to you and to the other students? *(THIS QUESTION WAS THROWN OUT)
-Would you be interested in being contacted with follow up questions in the future ? **Yes   No**
      Contact info:

<u>Directors were asked the following additional questions:</u>
-Has the program changed since you started working with it? **Yes   No**
      -If so, how?
-What are the specific goals of the program?
-What are the top three issues that must be dealt with to make the program successful?
      1.
      2.
      3.
-Have these top three issues changed in the past (x) years of the program's operation?
-Describe what you know about the political/economic climate of your program/its location (local government and community attitudes, funding) as they relate to your program.

<u>Coordinators were asked the following questions in addition to all previous questions:</u>
-How long has this program been running?
      -What do you know about its history?
            -Has the program changed since it began? If so, how
-Where does the funding for this program come from?
-What kinds of expenditures are there for your program?
      -How Does the organization fund trips?
      -Do you pay any workers? **Yes   No**