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Studies of Contemporary Social Issues:Political Agency, Social Problems, and Life Transitions

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**Studies of Contemporary Social Issues:
Political Agency, Social Problems, and Life Transitions**

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR OF
Silicon Valley Notebook, Volume 14
Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, Professor of Sociology

The Sociology Department at Santa Clara University is proud to present, in this volume of Silicon Valley Notebook, six research papers written by students from the class of 2016. As in the past years, these papers reflect the substantive, theoretical, methodological, and applied content of the Sociology curriculum at SCU. Originally prepared as part of the Research Capstone course (Sociology 121), the student authors further refined their work during the following quarter for inclusion in this volume.

Taken together, the authors investigated important contemporary social issues in the areas of political engagement, juvenile delinquency, adult deviance, and transitions in the lives of immigrants and children. Each student used a sequential mixed methods research design. They conducted rigorous quantitative analyses of national secondary survey data to test predictions grounded in sociological theoretical traditions and reflect on their potential social applications; narrative interviews with sources knowledgeable about their respective topics supplemented the quantitative findings.

Political activism was the theme in the first section, *Political Agency and Digital Movements*. **Bowen Shi**, in his "Success of Digital Activism: Roles of Structures and Media Strategies," combined analyses of the 2013 Global Digital Activism survey data with six case studies and interviews with four digital activists to find that digital activist movements were least successful when they targeted "structural inequalities." But, strategic and "value-added" deployment of digital tools enhanced success probabilities of digital social movements.

The authors in the second set, *Risk-Taking and Drug Use by Adults and Adolescents*, examined the social environments that posed strains and protected against adult deviance and juvenile delinquency. **Eryn Olson**, in her "Relationship Connectivity" Counts: Lifetime Relationships, Family Structure, and Risk-Taking in Adulthood," used data from the 2012 New Family Structures Survey and interviews with eight health professionals. "Supportive" relationships with parents in childhood and romantic relationships offered the best protection against "strains" and associated risk-taking in adulthood. On the other hand, childhood bullying and healthy relationships with parents in adulthood were associated with adult risk-taking, but only if they were raised in non-conventional families. Transitions from legal to illegal drug use by twelfth grade students surveyed in the 2013 Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth study, with feedback from eight helping professionals, was the research question that Jenna R. Harrison addressed in "Adolescent Transitions from Licit to Illicit Drug Use: Impacts of Protective and Risk Factors." The "social control" exercised by and "support" offered by families and academic engagement reduced the likelihood of licit drug, and only indirectly illicit drug, usage. However, being "differentially associated" with peer drug culture increased the risk of both legal and illegal drug usage; pro-drug opinions and accessibility to drugs indirectly did so through licit drugs.

The third set included two papers that examined **Life Transitions and Rebuilding** of the lives of immigrants and children. Milenna Smith in "The Search for the American Dream: Interpersonal, Cultural, and Structural Constraints on Immigrants" identified constraints that hindered immigrant progress towards the American Dream. Data from the 2004 survey,

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Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles, with qualitative interviews with immigrant professionals, illustrated how "systemic racism" was a "fundamental cause" of the constraints immigrants faced in rebuilding their lives in their new environments. Children who were transitioned from their natal families into non-parental care, and ways in which their emotional and academic lives of children can be rebuilt, were the focus of Juliet Heid's "Natal Family Disruptions and Lives in Non-Parental Care: Impacts on Children's Emotional Health and Academic Success." She used data from the 2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care and interviews with five child care experts to document that while "strains" generated by natal family disruptions negatively affected the emotional, and indirectly their academic, health of children in non-parental care, their bruised "self-concept" can be repaired through healthy supportive relationships with their caregivers.

We end this volume with a research note by **Alec Kwo** who studied political moderates, the forgotten middle. In his "The Ideology and Praxis of Political Moderates: More Liberal than Conservative?", using the 2014 Chicago Council Survey on American Public Opinion and two professional interviews, moderates were closely aligned with liberals on most foreign and domestic policy issues but were more conservative on their praxis ideologies. The symbolic "partisan sorting" model did not fully capture political moderates, whose ideology did not often match their praxis.

As a collection, student research presented in this volume exemplified the evidence based social science curriculum that is offered by the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. The social issues explored have important policy implications that resonate with the University's mission to not only prepare students of competence, conscience, and compassion but who will also help fashion a more just, humane, and sustainable word.

THE UNDERGRADUATE SOCIOLOGY CURRICULUM AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

Drs. Jack Gilbert (Interim Chair) and Charles Powers (Professor of Sociology)

In the 1990s, Santa Clara University embarked upon an ambitious effort to re-make its Sociology curriculum, informed by "best practices" discussions then taking place within the American Sociological Association. These efforts garnered special recognition when, in 1998, the program won the American Sociological Association's Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award.

Since that time, the Sociology Department has continued to consciously improve the structure of its curriculum in order to insure that all students (1) acquire methodological tools and conceptual frameworks for analyzing the world around them, and (2) have meaningful opportunities to apply their sociological skills through two vehicles for professional preparation: by designing and executing a professional quality research study (research capstone) and/or participating in an applied project (applied capstone). The research capstone experience illustrates the level of academic sophistication Sociology students can achieve by the time they complete their undergraduate study at Santa Clara University.

Research papers included in Volume 14 of *Silicon Valley Notebook* demonstrate the very high quality of student work produced by undergraduate sociologists in the Santa Clara University's graduating class of 2016. It is with great pride in our students, and eager anticipation for the bright future that awaits each of the authors showcased in *Silicon Valley Notebook*, that we share Volume 14 with you.

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Success of Digital Activism:
Roles of Structures and Media Strategies

By

Bowen Shi[1]

ABSTRACT. This research explored how the structures of digital activist movements (movement causes, target audience, and duration) and the strategic use of media applications affected their final outcomes. Survey data from the 2013 Global Digital Activism Data Set (Digital Activism Research Project) were supplemented with insights from four professional interviewees who had experience and knowledge about activism in both offline and digital fora as well as several case studies of successful and unsuccessful digital movements. The mixed methods analyses offered three insights. Digital activism about human right and political issues was less likely to succeed than ones about civic development concerns. Activism that targeted governments was also less likely to succeed than if the targets were informal groups/individuals or institutions/organizations. These findings were supported by the structural inequality axiom. In addition, as predicted by the value-added proposition in social movement theory, the strategic use of media applications (using public media applications for collaboration purposes) as well as multiple fora (combining online and offline) increased the possibility of activism's success. Sample case studies were used to illustrate the broad contours of the survey findings.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of activism is to bring about social transformations. Activism empowers individuals and groups to speak out about, and if possible change, the unfairness of governments and other organizations on issues of social, political, economic, or environmental importance. Traditional activism, by organizing demonstrations, strikes, parades, etc., engaged in physical practices to pressure the authority. But, in a world infused with the internet and information technology, new channels for activism have opened up.

Digital activists have capitalized on a variety of digital media to develop and carry on the work of their social movements. Different from the conventional methods of parades, sit-ins, or strikes,

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digital activities, by accelerating the expansion and spread of activist information, upgraded the scale and influence of social movements. Within a few hours, even minutes, activists can reach every corner of this world. Therefore, this study of digital activism is timely so that scholars and activists can identify the ideal combination of digital and traditional tools to maximize the impact of movements and enhance their chances of success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Black power historian Judson Jeffries (2006:10) noted that "The use of the written word, art and culture heightened the consciousness of the Black community" as he proceeded to highlight the crucial role of material objects in the development of the Black Panther Movement in the 60's in the United States. Mislan (2014:212) added, "It was through print media that the Panthers communicated global activism, calling for solidarity among oppressed communities throughout the world." Literature and other information that predated the internet required more physical or material coordination. Newspapers readership created the space for the offline conversational interactions among people. But, now that the location of movement activities can be transferred to the digital world, it is worthwhile asking: how have movement activities and their success potential changed?

In recent times, there have been a good number of studies on digital activism. Some provided additional information and knowledge about issues while others demonstrated different aspects unique to digital activism. Three prominent themes can be seen in the digital activist literature: *Breaking the Cage of Authority Control*, *the Movement of Many*, and *A Physical and Digital Combination.* Digital activism, unlike traditional activism, has been able to break through the monopoly that authorities had over information dissemination. Also, it has democratized control and access to heretofore unavailable information. However, even though digital activism has enabled ordinary citizens to organize and participate in social movements, digital media by themselves are not effective. Blending traditional activism with digital methods is often necessary to enhance the potential success of activism.

Breaking the Cage of Authority Control

Traditional activism often required a leader to lead the movements and a long lead time to prepare and implement the actions. Indeed, authorities could pressure the leader to stop the movements or intervene in the preparation such that the movement would be stopped even before it started. Fortunately, digital technology enabled activists to "fight" against authority when the authority tried to intervene. In other words, digital activism could break the cage of authority control. For example, in countries that had strong censorship on traditional activist activities like parades and boycotts, it was hard for activists to even initiate an activist movement, let alone see it through completion. Often the activism was quickly shut down by police or security personnel. In the words of Howard, Browne, Murphy, Skre, Schmidt, and Tharoor (2013:10), "the powerful political elites could tax newsprint, shut off the power to broadcasters and censor the news." In contrast to the traditional methods, digital activism challenged government censorship. Howard et al. (2013) concurred that the same degree of traditional censorship could hardly be applied to the Internet or mobile applications.

Deibert and Rohozinski (2010:43) articulated the power of digital media thusly: "No other mode of communication in human history has facilitated the democratization of communication to the same degree." Digital activism created a much larger space for social activism so that activism

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could start, survive, and take the time needed to develop and mature. Thus, by breaking the cage of authority, it was possible for digital activism to grow into a movement of many.

The Movement of Many

How has digital activism become a "movement of many"? The digital world created a platform for providing emergent just-in-time information (Bonilla and Rosa 2015). For example, in their *Digital Protest, Hashtag Ethnography, and the Racial Politics of Social Media in the United States*, Bonilla and Rosa (2015) discussed the significant role of digital activism in the 2014 shooting case at Ferguson, Missouri (#Ferguson): "within the first week of protests, over 3.6 million Twitter posts documented and reflected on the emerging details about Michael Brown's death. '#Ferguson' was used more than eight million times on Twitter by the end of the month." Hashtags, in this case #Ferguson, allowed people to learn more about this event quickly as it created a straightforward retrieval system to look for updated news on the unfolding events. By using digital tools, not only did activism spread across the globe but it also gave people a sense of participation, even if they were thousands of miles away from where the events physically took place.

Yet, despite the large number of participants involved, digital activism has its limits. As Bonilla and Rosa (2015) cautioned, there was concern that messages in the social network were often re-contextualized into irrelevant topics or used for self-promotion. Velasquez and Larose (2015) added that activists had to be skilled in the effective use of media tools. Lim (2013) captured the potential limits of digital media with the phrase, "many clicks, little sticks": many people viewed or commented on the social problem at the moment, but only a few stuck with and followed the case. She also worried that while a lot of information commuted fast in real time, the contents were too thin. Therefore, the physical "thick and striking moments" in social movements were necessary in activism to keep people interested in and committed to the issue. The ideal movement strategy seemed to be to combine the digital with the physical.

A Physical and Digital Combination

Even though digital activism has become common in the contemporary technology driven society, digital activists have continued to encounter issues such as "many clicks, little stick." In fact, many activists, while promoting digital activism, also acknowledged that traditional physical activism was still needed. Often, a combination of the two enhanced the effectiveness of the activism as a whole. For example, in #Ferguson, thousands of activists protested police's brutality on the Internet, but they did not attain the result they wanted from the jury, namely an indictment of the police officer. As a consequence, protestors walked onto the street that evening. In other words, when digital activism failed to bring about the desired changes, activists had to resort to physical methods that were more difficult for authorities to ignore.

Sometimes, online and offline activists collaborated spontaneously. Zhang and Nyiri (2014) studied the digital tools used to announce the 2011 Jasmine Revolution, a non-violent demonstration for pro-democracy in the major cities of China. The announcement about the Jasmine Revolution on Twitter, immediately made the Chinese authorities nervous resulting in the Chinese government employing Internet censors and erasing any information online about the Jasmine Revolution. Consequently, all on-line discussion about the Jasmine Revolution in China ceased. However, even under such extremely difficult government control, demonstrations still took place in many Chinese cities, albeit for a short period of time.

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On the other hand, when the activism was supported by the government, collaboration between online and offline activism could make an extraordinary impact. During the 2008 Beijing Olympic Torch Relay (BOTR), many activists, who were concerned human right violations in Tibet and environmental problems in Beijing, demonstrated at the relay routes in order to stop the relay. In response, to ensure the planned opening of Beijing Olympics, the government-controlled media denounced the anti-China movements as well as recruited oversea volunteers to assist with the security provided by the People's Armed Police that "were selected to accompany the worldwide Olympic torch relay" (Brady 2012:23). In short, the strategic combination of online propaganda with offline volunteering by the Chinese government successfully helped the delivery of the Olympic torch. Zhang and Nyiri's (2014) also noted that the political authorization in BOTR was an essential determinant in the development and success of digital activism. Without the support of the government, activism in China, as with the 2011 Jasmine Revolution, would have had dramatically different outcomes. Hence, it was necessary to consider how the structure, media strategies, and other parameters of digital activism would impact movement outcomes.

In sum, scholars have studied the advantages and disadvantages of offline and online social activist movements. Yet, few have parameterized the specific movement components that led to the success or failure of digital activism. The research presented in this paper attempted to identify some critical parameters that have affected the outcomes of digital activism.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This research explored how the success of digital activism has been affected by the structural scope of movements as well as the media strategies used. The Structural Scope or components included the following elements. The first component was the Issues - human rights, political rights, or and civic development rights - on which the movement focused. The Target Audiences of the movement, the second structural component, could be individual/informal group(s), institution/organization(s), or the government. The Duration of the activist events was the third structural component. The Media Strategies used in the digital movement work indicated whether public media applications were used for collaboration purposes and whether multiple fora, such as online and offline, were used simultaneously or independently. The extent to which these elements enhanced the success of digital activism was the primary focus in this analysis.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND HYPOTHESES

This study of digital social movements was broadly framed within the traditional and new social movement theories as well as the structural inequalities that the movements attempted to address. Structural inequality was a fundamental cause (Link and Pheland 1995) that has endured for many generations. All societies, even the democratically organized ones, had groups with varying degrees of privilege and disadvantages. Besides, these unequal privileges and disadvantages in economic resources and associated capital (like education, cultural capital and other related opportunities), were systemic or built into organizational structures. To follow the elaboration offered by the realistic group conflict theorists (Baumeister and Vohs 2007), structural inequality often led to intergroup hostility as groups compete over limited resources (when seen from a zero-sum perspective) to get a bigger share of the limited resources or even to correct the inequalities.

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Despite the enduring nature of systemic inequalities, the grievances built up within disadvantaged communities have often resulted in attempts, often voluntary, to work collectively to enact (or even block) change on behalf of the disadvantaged groups (rather than individual). The goal was to correct the imbalance or at least attempt to gain more of a piece of the limited resources by targeting organizations in the centers of authority, be they the polity, economy, law, religion, and education (Snow and Soule 2010; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tarrow 1998; Turner and Killian 1987). On balance, systemic inequalities, if they were to be redressed, required collective action and broad social movements.

Smelser (1962) and other traditional social movement theorists (Knottnerus 1983) outlined the following critical components in a social movement. They were: a social situation where there was some type of collective deprivation ("structural strain"); "structured conduciveness" or a social situation that permitted or encouraged some types of collective action as in a democratic society where social mobility and change were accepted; "generalized understanding" of the possible sources of the strain, characteristics of the sources of strain, and possible solutions to address the imbalance and resulting strain. Under these conditions, social movements were typically initiated and participants mobilized, particularly when there was a set of "precipitating event(s)" that further confirmed the generalized belief or even exaggerated the strains. No doubt, social movements, particularly those that tried to correct entrenched inequalities, would encounter counter-controls that inhibited, prevented, and perhaps even deflected the movements from their original mission.

Further, even after a movement was initiated, its success was theorized to be contingent on a set of value-added resources (Weeber & Rodeheaver, 2003). Movements needed the following sequential resources: Clear set of values or the goals/ends of social action; a set of norms or rules governing the actions of movement participants; actions (roles) appropriates to the goals; and requisite resources that needed to be mobilized. In the value-added scheme, values were the foundational resource for the social movement.

Recently, in the new internet and knowledge based environment, scholars (Fuchs 2006) have redefined the broad contours of social movement theory. While many traditional social movements (like the labor movements that were engaged in class conflict) attempted, even if unsuccessfully, to dismantle existing political and economic structures, the new social movements and related theories have focused on enacting structural reform within the existing system by capitalizing on the new technologies. New social reform movements, such as environmental, anti-war, or civil rights movements, were loosely organized networks of supporters (rather than traditional movement members), mostly middle-class, who through life style changes attempted to bring about change on a mass or even global scale. Scholars in the new tradition focused on how groups used digital resources to manipulate information, identities, and the structures to achieve movement goals.

Applying ideas from the traditional and new social movement theories to an evaluation of factors that contributed to the success or failure of digital movements, the following set of three hypotheses were tested.

Hypothesis 1: Digital movements that attempted to target the government and address political right or human right issues will be less likely to succeed than movements driven by civic development concerns (Baumeister and Vohs's realistic group conflict theory).

Hypothesis 2a: Digital movements that combined and tailored their resources (public media applications versus individualized media applications) to the movement purpose

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(collaboration, resources mobilization, or technological challenges) will be more successful than others (Smelser's value-added principle in social movement theory).

Hypothesis 2b: Digital movements that were of longer duration would be able to amass more resources and adapt/tailor their message and strategies to changing circumstances resulting in a higher success rate for digital activism (Smelser's value-added principle in social movement theory).

Hypothesis 3: Digital movements that employed both online and offline strategies, in contrast with the digital movements that only used online media, will be more likely to succeed. Online-only movements would encounter "many clicks and little sticks". But, robust combinations of offline movements and the media power of online movements would empower the activism to success.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

A mixed-method approach was used in this research to capitalize on the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods. The secondary survey source, the 2013 Global Digital Activism Data Set, was from the Digital Activism Research Project. Four qualitative interviews with professionals who have participated in or were knowledgeable about digital activism supplemented the survey findings. In addition to interviews, sample case studies of digital activism were investigated in order to illustrate the broad contours of the survey findings.

Secondary Data[2]

The secondary data used in this research, from the 2013 Global Digital Activism Data Set offered by the Digital Activism Research Project, was conducted at the University of Washington in Seattle. The principal investigators for the project were Mary Joyce, Antonio Rosas, and Philip Howard. In this research, I used the Coded Cases from the Digital Activism Research Project. The Coded Cases dataset contained 1179 coded cases of digital activism from 1982 through 2012 from 151 countries and dependent territories.

Primary Qualitative Data: Interviews and Case Studies

In addition to the secondary Digital Activism survey data, narrative interviews and movement case studies were used. Four interviews were conducted to expand on the quantitative findings. Two interviews were conducted in person. The first in-person interviewee, a Sociology Professor, (Interviewee #1) taught at a private university in Northern California. The second interviewee, a College Activist (Interviewee #2), held a leadership position in the activist organization, U4. She has been organizing and participating in activism about college racial issues for more than four years. The other two interviews were conducted via E-mail. Interviewee #3, the Digital Program Director, and Interviewee #4, the National Online Campaign Manager, both worked in a nonprofit organization concerned about environment and food safety for more than four years. The consent form and interview protocol can be found in Appendix I.

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[2] The original collector of the data, or ICPSR, or the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for use of the data or for the interpretations or inferences based on such uses.

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Six different sample case studies of digital activist movements were also reviewed for this research. They were *Beijing Olympic Torch Relay (BOTR), Coins for Prita, Jasmine Revolution in China, #Ferguson, Hong Kong Umbrella Movement (HKUM)*, and *Syrian Refugee*. They not only supplemented the quantitative analysis and interviewees' perspectives, but also introduced additional dimensions that might affect the outcome of digital activism.

DATA ANALYSES: SURVEY AND QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS FROM CASE STUDIES AND INTERVIEWS

Outcome of Digital Activism

Outcome of digital activism, whether successful or not, the primary focus of this study, was judged by the initiators of digital activism movements who responded to the Digital Activism survey[3]. If the goals of the digital activism movement had been achieved, they acknowledged it as a success and vice versa. Success or failure was measured by a simple binary measure; success was numerically coded as 1 and failure was assigned a 0.

Of the 935 cases[4] of digital activism covered in the Digital Activism survey, the ratio of success to failure was 2:1 (Table 1.A). The activists claimed that the majority of digital activism was successful (67.3 percent). Only 32.7 percent of cases were deemed to have failed.

Table 1.A Outcome of Digital Activism (n = 935)
2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey

Concepts	Indicator	Values and Responses	Statistics
Outcome of Digital Activism	Outcome	0 = Failure 1 = Success	32.7% 67.3

Structural Profiles of Digital Movements

From both theoretical and practical stand points, the structural features of digital movements were conceptualized to be important predictors of success probability. The structural characteristics considered in this analysis were the Issues, Target Audience, and Duration of Digital movements.

Movement Issues and Locus of Redress

The movements in the Digital Activism survey addressed three types of digital activism causes which reflected the scope of the movement events. They were Human rights, Political rights, and Civic Development rights. The theoretical prediction was that of the three concerns, activism aimed at redressing human right or political right issues would be less likely to succeed than activism about civic development right issues. Human right or political right issues based

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[3] Digital Activism Research Project Survey.
[4] Of the 1179 cases of activist movements, only 935 cases were determined successful or failed by the initiators. The remaining 244 cases had either no information or had unclear information about the result and were therefore omitted from the current analyses.

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activism often directly questioned the interests of those in power. On the other hand, civic development rights, which were more about economics and technology, were less likely to directly question the interests of those in power. Rather, such activism sometimes even benefited the power elites.

In any digital movement, an issue besides being its primary focus could also be considered a secondary or ternary cause as well. As indicated in Table 1.B, civic development right was the most common thrust (44%) of the digital activist movements in the Digital Activism survey; 42% of digital movements primarily addressed civic development rights and roughly 2% had civic development rights as the secondary or ternary cause. The next common issue was political rights with 36 percent (33.8% primary and 2.2% combined of secondary and ternary). The least common cause of social movement was human rights; only 29% of all Activism cases (27% primary and 2% combined of secondary and ternary) had human rights as their focus.

Table 1.B Issues of Digital Activism (n = 1179)
2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey

Concept	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Digital Activism Issues[1,2]	Human Rights Issues[3]	0 = No 1 = Yes	71.0% 29.0
	Political Right Issue[4]	0 = No 1 = Yes	63.9% 36.1
	Civic Development Right Issues[5]	0 = No 1 = Yes	55.9% 44.1

1. Recoded into dummy interval.
2. Activism primarily had one cause, but sometimes it also had secondary or ternary causes.
3. Human Right Issues = Human Rights, Women's Rights, Age-Specific Rights, Contested Citizenship Rights, Ethnic Identity, LGBT, Workers' Rights, Religious Rights, and Anti-Violence.
4. Political Issues = Intolerance, Anti–Corruption, Against Unlawful Detention, Government or Regime Change, Democratic Rights and Freedoms, National Identity, Cyber War, and Crisis Response.
5. Civic Development Issues = Freedom of Information, Media, Technology, Economics, Health, Legal, Education, Nature and Environment, Private Sector.

The Case Studies of digital movements reviewed for this study offered more "thick" narrative details about the different issues covered by the movements. The individual was the locus of human right movements. Some examples of human rights movements have been the Ferguson Unrest and the Black Lives Matter movement. These two movements originated in 2014 after unarmed Michael Brown was shot to death by a local police officer. Other human rights movements have been about women's rights, age-specific rights, contested citizenship rights, ethnic identity, LGBT rights, workers' rights, religious rights, or anti-violence.

When civic development was the primary concerns of activists the locus of action was the community (not the individual). For instance, promoting freedom of information, media freedom, technology, economic, health care, legal issues, education, nature and environment, and private sectors represented the civic development issues. The locus broadened even further in political movements which had a national focus, and addressed issues such societal intolerance, anti-

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corruption, unlawful detention by authorities, government or regime change, democratic rights and freedoms, national identity, cyber war, and crisis response. It was posited that movement loci, whether human rights, civic development, or political would differentially affect the probability of success.

Movements also varied in whether they focused on a single-issue or multiple issues. Recently, there have been a few well known cases of single issue movements, where the movements were initiated to call attention to one particular problem. The 2015 Syrian refugee crisis that blew up primarily across Europe was a useful illustration. Moved by the photograph of a dead three-year-old boy's body lying on the beach, the general public grew concerned about the inaction of the governments. Soon, hashtags, "#SyrianRefugees" and "#KiyiyaVuranInsanlik" (humanity washed up ashore), were forwarded and frequently used on Twitter seeking to protect the refugees' human rights (Mackey 2015; Moyer 2015). In the end, on 4 September 2015 (3 days after the photo was posted and went viral), Germany and Austria agreed to accept immigrants that had been detained in Hungary (Neuman 2015).

Other movements were initiated to protest and redress more than one grievance. A case in point is the protests about the 2008 Beijing Olympics torch relay. The human rights activists who were concerned about violations of civic development rights (pollution and censorship) and human rights (riots in Tibet) in China, tried to stop the relay ("Torch Relay" 2008; "Protesters Interrupt" 2008). Soon, a non-violent battle took place between the human right activists and Chinese patriots (Chinese who were working or living in Europe or the United States and supported the Beijing Olympics). The Chinese patriots considered the Beijing Olympics to be an opportunity to showcase China's development; they feared that the failure of relay would diminish China's political reputation. With the assistance and support from the patriots, the government officials were eventually able to bring the torch to Beijing. But, human right activists were also somewhat successful; the Olympic organizers and runners had to change the original routes a few times (Brady 2012).

Target Audiences

The second important structural aspect of digital activist movements was the target audience at whom the protests were directed. The target audiences are critical to the success or failure of a movement because of the sheer variability in the power and resources that different audiences could muster, either to assist or thwart a movement. For example, activist movements targeted at the government would certainly be expected to be out-powered by the vast reach of governments. That is, activism directed at the government, whether local or national, would face different scales of obstacles than activism directed at a community or local institutions.

Once again, three illustrative case studies. The HKUM (the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement) during the fourth quarter of 2014 demonstrated the power of the government to stifle and even shut down activism. On 26 September 2014, HKUM was initiated to protest the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress's decision (the Chinese government) about the process for the election of Hong Kong's governor, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong (Tilly and Tarrow 2015). The Chinese government decided that the Chief Executive of Hong Kong shall be elected from a nominated committee instead of through universal suffrage ("Ren Da" 2014). After two more days, on 28 September 2014, Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP), the main movement event, was initiated by an Assistant Professor of Law, an Assistant Professor of Sociology, and a Minister of the Chai Wan Baptist Church in Hong Kong. The protestors started by occupying the Central Government Office in the Central area of Hong Kong. Even though the

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movement was supposed to be non-violent, conflict erupted between the protesters and the police and security officials who tried to shut down the occupations. Tear gas was frequently used by police and in response the protestors used "umbrellas" as shields ("Xiang Gang" 2014). Then on December 3, the three initiators surrendered to police and by December 15, the Umbrella Movement ended. In fact, even though the occupation in Hong Kong did not officially stop until the middle of December, the peak of the event lasted only for about a week. HKUM targeted the government, resulting in violent resistance by the police, an arm of the government, and ended as soon as it started. Similarly, the success of the 2011 Jasmine Revolution in China was tempered by the fact that the activists had to confront the power and authority of government officials.

Coins for Prita in Indonesia, a digital movement in Indonesia, offered a contrast in locus. *Coins for Prita* was successful in taking on a local institution. In 2009, Prita Mulyasari, a mother of two, was accused by the Omni International Hospital of defamation due to her complaints about the hospital to her friends and relatives in private E-mails. Not only was she arrested and detained for three weeks, she was also fined Rp 204 million (about $22,000 US dollars) and sentenced to six months in jail by the Tangerang High Court. Soon, news about her case was spread by activists on commercial television, Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs. Besides discussing the incidents on the social media, the activists also founded the "Coins for Prita" Facebook page to fundraise on behalf of the mother. Two months later, on 29 December 2009, the Indonesian court reopened the case, rescinded their previous decision, and proclaimed Prita's innocence (Lim 2013). Even though the court system mediated this case, the hospital (non-governmental institution) was the main target audience. And unlike the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, no force was used to physically stop the demonstrations or to censor the activist information online.

Table 1.C Target Audience of Digital Activism (n = 1179)
2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey

Concept	Indicators	Values and Reponses	Statistics
Target Audience[1] of Digital Activism	Individual/Informal Group[2]	0 = No 1 = Yes	60.9% 39.1
	Institution/Organization[3]	0 = No 1 = Yes	87.4% 12.6
	Government	0 = No 1 = Yes	48.9% 51.1

[1.] All target audiences were recoded into dummy interval.
[2.] Individual/Informal Group = Informal Interest Group(s) and Private Citizen.
[3.] Institution/Organization = Regional or International Intergovernmental Organizations, Private Institution(s) (For-Profit), Private Institution(s) (Non-Profit).

Despite the enormous challenges in taking on the government, revealed in the Case Studies, the Digital Survey data indicated that the government was the most common target audience of digital movements (Table 1.C). More than half of the activism was directed towards governments. The China Jasmine Revolution and Hong Kong Umbrella Revolution were movements aimed at the national governments. On the other hand, individuals/informal groups were the targets of only one third of digital activist movements. Activism about sex education in college or high school was an example of individuals/informal groups as target audience. Institutions/organizations (12.6%) were the least common target audience of digital movements;

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Coins for Prita was a story about activists fighting against a hospital institution and the justice system in Indonesia.

Movement Duration

Duration of activism was another structural element of movements considered in this analyses; the success or failure of activism could be affected by the length time the movement has been in place. On the one hand, a successful movement might last longer than the unsuccessful ones. Movements that last longer had time to refine and adjust their messages to reflect shifts in resources and pressures. On the other hand, a case could be made that the longer the duration, the less successful the movement would be. As movements continue for many months and even years, there would be corresponding increases in the need for resources that required to keep the message alive, the members excited, audience's interest focused, and movement energy strong.

As seen in Table 1.D, most movements (n = 1179), at the time of the Digital Activism survey, were on-going (31.1%) or had been going on more than a year (13.9%). Only about a third of the movements were of short duration: 19.6% lasted less than a week and another 15.5% lasted than a month.

Table 1.D Approximate Duration of Digital Activism (n = 1179)
2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey

Concept	Indicator	Values and Responses	Statistics
Duration	Approximate Duration Time of Digital Action	1 = Less than One Week	19.6%
		2 = Less than One Month	15.5
		3 = Less than One Year	19.9
		4 = More than One Year	13.9
		5 = On Going	31.1

All movements, irrespective of their duration, have undulating peaks and valleys. To get a visual portrait of peaks and dips in interest in the movement and their activities, the varied time spans of three major activist movements during the last two years were mapped in Figures 1 – 3. The timeline of the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement is presented in Figure 1; this movement was a protest against the Chinese National People's Congress Standing Committee's decision about the process of Hong Kong governor's election (political right issue). This movement lasted roughly three months with the streets being cleared of protestors and three movement initiators surrendering. In contrast, even though the #Ferguson movement made a huge impact on raising the awareness of police brutality, especially against minorities in the U.S., the #Ferguson duration was episodic. The "many clicks, little sticks" in the #Ferguson movement lasted about half of a month (Figure 2). On the other hand, although the 24/7 attention around the Syrian refugees' movement cooled down after three months (from September to December 2016), "Syria" and "Refugee" continue to hold the attention of the digital world, albeit in peaks and valleys (Figure 3). The beginning, development, peak, and end of the three movements were completely different. The duration of these events varied as well.

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Figure 1. Search about Hong Kong Occupy Central and Umbrella Movement on Google Search in 2014

Search about Hong Kong Occupy Central and Umbrella Movement on Google Search[1] in 2014

Sep. 28: Occupy Central Begins

Oct. 3: Protesters Attacked by Occupy Opponents

Oct. 21: Talks Ends without Results

Dec. 11: Clearncae of Occupation

Dec. 3: Surrender of Three Initiators
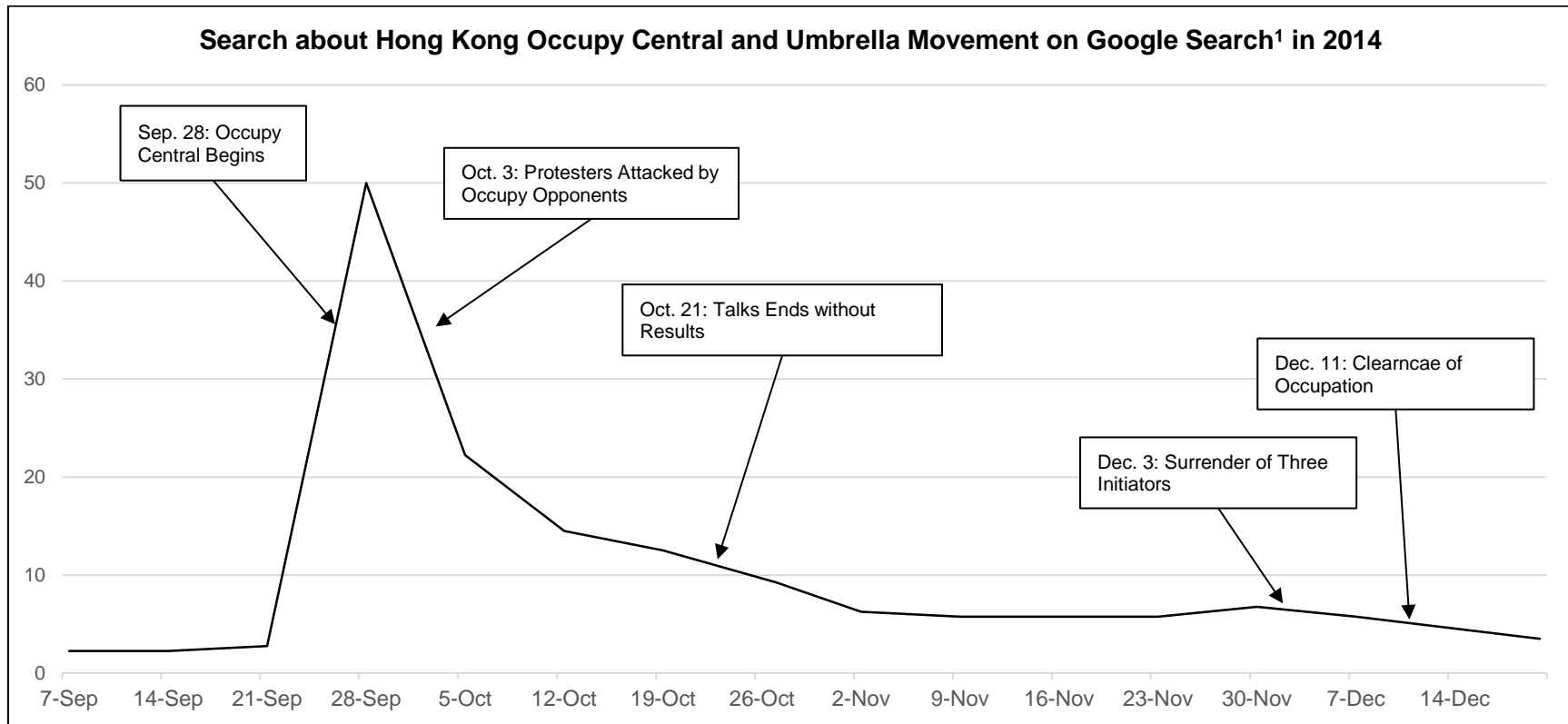
[1]. Search about Hong Kong Occupy and Umbrella Movement on Google Search was based on the average values of data that Google Trend provided by four key words: Umbrella Movement, Occupy Central, 占中 ("Occupy Central" in Simplified/Traditional Chinese), H

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Figure 2. Search about Ferguson Shooting Case in Missouri on Google Search in 2014

Search about Ferguson Shooting Case in Missouri on Google Search [1] in 2014

[Chart annotations: Aug 9: First Wave Started; Aug 25: First Wave Ended; Nov. 24: Second Wave Started; Dec. 2: Second Wave Ended]
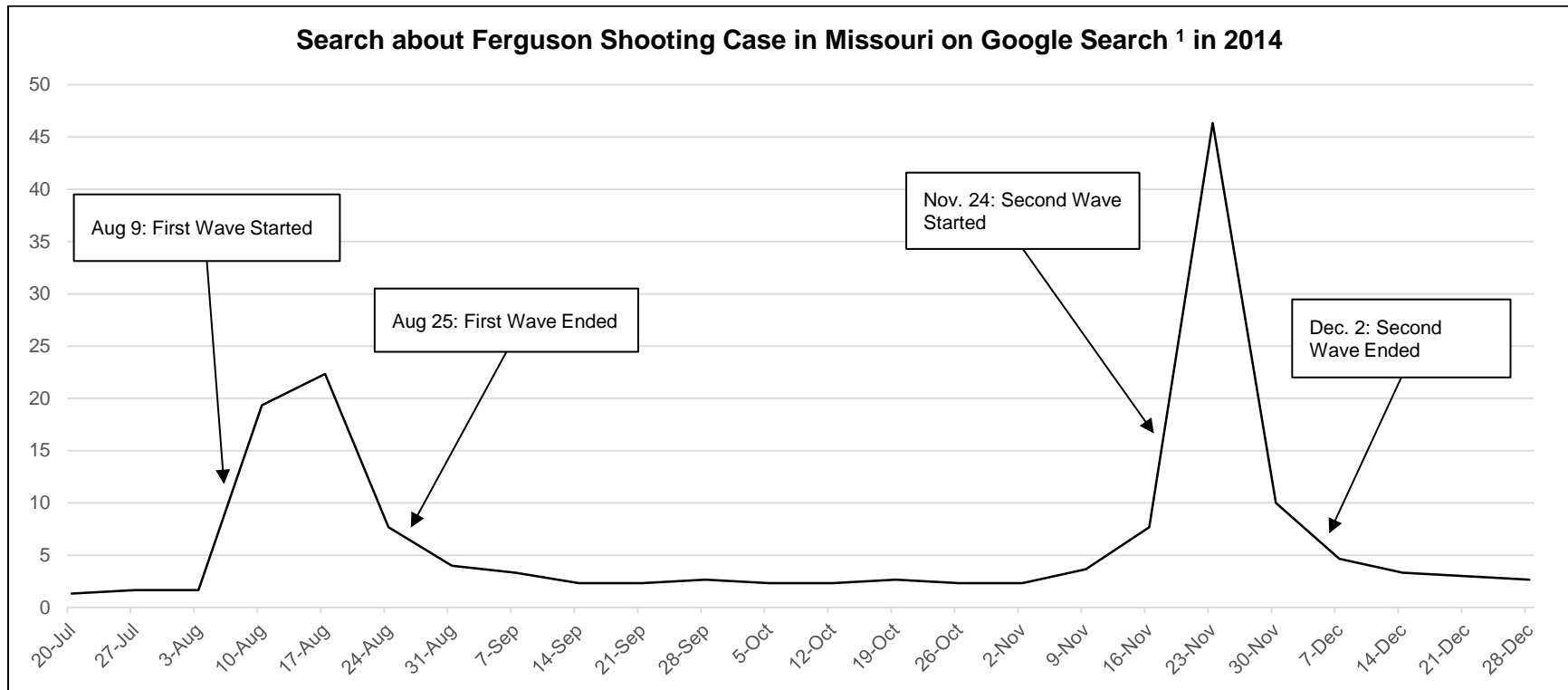
1. Search about Ferguson Shooting Case in Missouri on Google Search was based on the average values of data that Google Trend provided by three key words: Ferguson, Michael Brown, and Darren Wilson.

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Figure 3. Search about Syria Refugee Crisis in Europe on Google Search in 2015
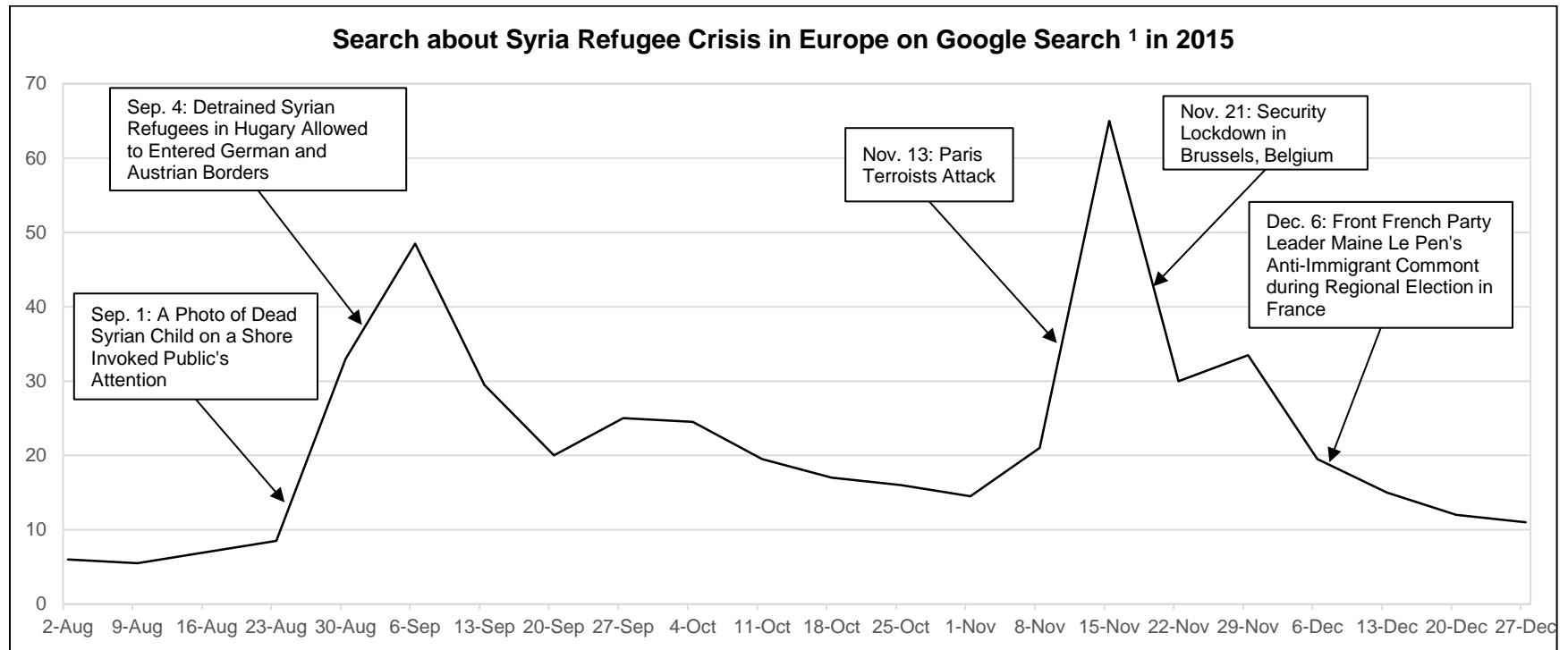
1. Search about Syria Refugee Crisis in Europe on Google Search was based on the average values of data that Google Trend provided by two key words: Refugee and Syria.

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Structural Dimensions of Digital Movements: A Summary

On balance, civic development issues were the most common thrust of digital activist movements in the Digital Survey, followed by political and human right issues. More often than not the government was the target; individual/informal groups and organizations/institutions were less frequent target audiences of digital movements. The most common movements were either on-going or lasted more than a year. Case studies of BOTR, Coins for Prita, #Ferguson, HKUM, and Syrian Refugee helped illustrate these statistical characterizations.

Movement Strategies and Digital Resources

In addition to the structure of digital movements, the success or failure of movements, as per the social movement literature, was also contingent on the availability and allocation of resources and other strategies. An important element of digital movements was the types of digital resources and media strategies used to disseminate activist information and rally supporters. To maximize the efficiency of communication and promotion of messages, movements often tailored specific media applications to specific purposes.

Media Applications Used: Public or Individualized

In the face of limited time and resources, movement organizers had to use media applications strategically to efficiently promote digital activism. On the one hand, even though movement organizers had a wide range of online media applications from which to choose they had to make decisions about selecting the right set of media applications. Typically, public media platforms and individualized media applications were two categories of platforms that activists have used. Public media applications range from Facebook, Twitter, blogs, mobile-and internet-based social networks to digital videos and digital photos; these public media applications allowed activists to reach broad audiences easily and quickly. However, public media applications were not suitable for transmitting personalized or confidential information. Individualized media applications were better suited to connect activists with each other and to transmit sensitive materials such resource allocation strategies or technology resources. Some common examples of individualized apps are: emails, websites, e-mail, internet forum, chat or instant messaging, mobile application, digital map, wiki, digital voice application, and circumvention tools.

As for the digital movements surveyed by 2013 Global Digital Activism Data Set, public media applications were more frequently used (85.8%) than individual media applications (75.1%). However, as seen in Table 1.E. (on next page), for every two cases of digital activism, at least one would use both media applications (μ = 1.61). Public media applications were used to provide information to movement outsiders. But, individualized applications were also widely used in digital activism.

In the digital activism Case Studies reviewed earlier, hash-tagging on Twitter was a common method used to promote their causes. Activists have used #Ferguson, #SyrianRefugees and #KiyiyaVuranInsanlik to raise the public's attention and awareness. Yet their digital activism was not limited to only Twitter. In fact, Facebook page was the fundamental tool for Coins for Prita, even though Indonesia was a Twitter-addicted nation (Radwanick 2010; Lim 2013).

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Table 1.E Media Application Used (n = 1179)
2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey

Concept	Indicators	Values and Reponses	Statistics
Media Application Used[1]	Public Media Application[2]	0 = Not Used 1 = Used	14.2% 85.8
	Individualized Media Application[3]	0 = Not Used 1 = Used	24.9% 75.1
	Index of Media Application Used[4]	μ/σ Range	1.61(.51) 0 – 2

1. Both media applications were recoded into dummy interval.
2. Public Media Used = Blog Used, Mobile-Based Social Network Used, Internet-Based Social Network Used, Digital Video Used, and Digital Photo Used.
3. Individualized Used = Website Used, E-mail Used, Internet Forum Used, Chat or Instant Messaging Used, Mobile Application Used, Digital Map Used, Wiki Used, Digital Voice Application Used, and Circumvention Tool Used.
4. Index of Media Application Used = Public Media Application + Individualized Media Application.

Purpose of Using Media Applications

Every digital message from social movements was sent out for a specific set of purposes. Recruitment was at the heart of digital activism. It was axiomatic that without the base of massive audience and public activists, who needed to be recruited, no goals of digital activism would be successfully achieved. Once recruited, movement organizers had to make it possible for activists to connect with other movement participants to build networks and create the special bonds needed for digital movements to survive and effectively function. Through collaborations activists could synthesize, co-create, and keep the movement energy alive.

Other digital movements were started to confront and redress technical challenges such as Internet censorship and to restore more fluid flow of information exchange. Technological solutions to bypass government restrictions had sometimes included technical sabotage or violence. In addition, digital movements had to mobilize and reallocate human and other capital resources as needed. For movements to remain healthy and robust activists might adjust the combination of online and offline platforms used, reallocate or transfer money, material, or human resources as needs arise.

The most common purpose cited in the Digital Movement Survey was resource mobilization (63.7%, Table 1.F), followed by collaboration (53.3%). Media used for technological purposes was the least frequent (13.3%). In other words, in most occasions, activists were concerned about resource mobilization and collaboration than confronting technological obstacles.

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Table 1.F Purposes for Using Media Applications (n= 1179)
2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey

Concept	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Purposes for Digital Media Use[1]	Collaboration[2]	0 = No 1 = Yes	46.7% 53.3
	Technology[3]	0 = No 1 = Yes	86.7% 13.3
	Resource Mobilization[4]	0 = No 1 = Yes	36.3% 63.7

[1.] All purposes were recoded into dummy interval.
[2.] Collaboration = Synthesis, Co-Creation, and Network-Building.
[3.] Technology = Bypass and Technical Violence.
[4.] Resource Mobilization = Mobilization and Resource Transfer.

The digital movement Case Studies reviewed above offered examples of digital media being used to mobilize the public and to facilitate collaboration. The respective human rights violations were broadcasted on Twitter with the purpose of inviting the public to collaborate in finding appropriate solutions. For example, Hashtags on Twitter, such as #Ferguson, #SyrianRefugees, and #KiyiyaVuranInsanlik, offered the public who were angered by the police brutality and government's indifference to human rights violations, respectively, a digital platform to collaborate. Similarly, the Facebook page "Coins for Prita" became a shared platform on which those who sympathized with Mulyasari's experience could mobilize and collaborate to help her.

Purpose Driven Media Usage

Following the value-added principle of social movement theories about maximizing limited time and resources, professional activists had tended to choose appropriate media applications and combine them to achieve their purposes. Once again, the Case Studies of digital movements offered thick descriptions of how the synthesis of media and purpose has happened in digital social movements. Twitter hashtags, #Ferguson and #SyrianRefugees, and the Facebook page for "Coins for Prita" offered the public, both internal and global, information about the respective human rights crisis, in order to recruit the general publics and to call them to action on the open digital platforms. As a result, more than 8 million individuals had used the #Ferguson Twitter handle by the end of August 2014 (Bonilla and Rosa 2015).

To demonstrate how movements combined multiple media applications to promote specific purposes in the Digital Movement survey, types of media used were synthesized with their stated purposes. Public or individualized media applications were combined with whether the purpose was collaboration, technology, and resource. As shown in Table 1.G, when the movement purpose was collaboration, multiple public (39.8%) and individualized (35.1%) media applications use was common. However, when digital movements wanted to mobilize resources, they were more prone to combine multiple public (43.1%) than individualized (33.5%) media. It was interesting to note that when only one type of media was used, it was most likely to be individualized media for resource mobilization (17.1%).

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Table 1.G Media Strategy (n = 1174)
2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey

Concept	Indicators	Values and Reponses	Statistics
Media Used and Specific Purposes[1]	Public Media Application Used for Collaboration Purposes	0 = Not Applied 1 = One Media Application was Used for One Purpose 2 ≤ One or Multiple Media Applications Were Used for One or Multiple Purposes	54.9% 5.3 39.8
	Individualized Media Application Used for Collaboration Purposes	0 = Not Applied 1 = One Media Application was Used for One Purpose 2 ≤ One or Multiple Media Applications Were Used for One or Multiple Purposes	55.1% 9.8 35.1
	Public Media Application Used for Resource Purposes	0 = Not Applied 1 = One Media Application was Used for One Purpose 2 ≤ One or Multiple Media Applications Were Used for One or Multiple Purposes	45.5% 11.4 43.1
	Individualized Media Application Used for Resource Purposes	0 = Not Applied 1 = One Media Application was Used for One Purpose 2 ≤ One or Multiple Media Applications Were Used for One or Multiple Purposes	49.4% 17.1 33.5
	Public Media Application Used for Technology Purposes[2]	0 = Not Applied 1 = One Media Application was Used for One Purpose 2 ≤ One or Multiple Media Applications Were Used for One or Multiple Purposes	91.0% 3.7 5.3

[1]. Public/Individual Media Application Used * Synthesis/Technology/Resource Mobilization Purposes.

[2]. Individualized Media Application Used for Technology Purposes was not counted because of the insignificance of correlation between Individualized Media Application Used and Technology Purposes.

[3]. Correlations among the variables ranged from -0.1*** to .68*** (***p ≤ .001, **p ≤ .05, *p ≤ .1).

Online/Offline Strategies

Finally, in the digital world, social movements had the luxury, in a value-added way, of combining online with offline platforms. A strategy of adopting both online-only method and online-offline methods would affect the scale and robustness of digital activism. Due to resource and time restrictions, using both digital and physical forms of activism would increase the scale of influence and decrease the cost to sustain.

Perhaps because digital tools were relatively new to social movements, the strategy of combining digital with off-line tools was not widespread among the movements in the Digital

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Survey. As indicated in Table 1.H, movements were equally likely to rely only on on-line strategies (49.0%) as they were to combine the use of online and online-offline methods (51%).

Table 1.H Online-Offline Status (n = 1179)
2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey

Concept	Indicator	Values and Responses	Statistics
Online-Offline Strategies	Online Only or Offline Plus Online	0 = Only Online 1 = Online and Offline	49.0% 51.0

The Case Studies offered some insights into the progressive transitions that movements had made in operationalizing value-added principle. No doubt, activists valued both online and offline methods. Yet, offline strategies were often turned to after a series of on-line operations. Digital tools were used to open a broader window for activism to continue offline. For example, in #Ferguson, an off-line peaceful memorial was set up in the evening of August 9, 2014. On the following day, the movement gathered steam when the local people voluntarily gathered to physically register their protest (Williams 2014). Yet, the discussion of Michael Brown's death heated up substantially once it moved to the Twitter sphere. Within the first week, there were more than 3.6 million Twitter posts about Michael Brown's death. At the end of the month, the keyword "#Ferguson" was used over 8 million times. Unfortunately, because the protestors did not receive the expected result from the court, they returned to the street demonstrations (Bonilla and Rosa 2015). Use of digital activism upgraded a local event into a national topic and enlarged the scope of the activism. The 2011 Jasmine Revolution in China had a different starting trajectory, even though Twitter has been blocked in China since 2009 (Wauters 2009). The Jasmine movement initiators broadcasted the start and operation of Jasmine Revolution on Twitter in order to recruit movement participants. The physical demonstrations then followed.

Summary of Resources and Strategies

In the movements surveyed in the Digital Survey, activists used both public and individualized media applications; no doubt, public media was slightly more popular than individualized media. In fact, for every two activist cases, at least one used both public and individualized media in their work. When collaboration and resource mobilization were at the heart of movement concerns, activists used different media applications to achieve their goals. For example, when movements had multiple purposes, collaboration and resource mobilization possibilities were repeatedly discussed on both public and individualized platforms. Technology was the least talked about topic in digital movements. As for the singular use of individualized media, resource mobilization was the most desired topic. The case studies of Coins for Prita, 2011 Jasmine Revolution, #Ferguson, and Syrian Refugee also illustrated these strategies.

Bivariate Analyses

Bivariate analyses, the second step in the analytic process, explored the potential influences of the structures and media strategies on the success of digital activism (Appendix II: Table 2). Some highlights: movements for civic development issues ($r = 0.10^{***}$) had a better chance of achieving their goals than activist movements concerned with human right issues ($r = -0.11^{***}$) or

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political issues. A similar contrast was evident in the connection between target audience and outcomes of digital activism: when the government was the target audience, the movement outcome did not meet activists' expectation (r = -0.17***). On the other hand, targeting individual/informal groups enhanced the possibility of accomplishing activists' goals (r = 0.12***). Duration of a social movement was irrelevant to its success or failure.

Media strategies were also relevant to the success of collaborative digital activism, especially when public media applications (r = 0.08*) and individualized media applications (r = 0.09*) were used. Media applications used for either technology or resource mobilization purposes were not determinant of the digital activism outcomes. Movements that used both online and offline for a most benefited the activists (r = 0.10*).

Binary Logistic Regression Analyses and Qualitative Insights

Finally, the robustness of the bivariate associations of outcomes of digital activism with the structures and media strategies used was tested using binary logistic regression analysis. Starting with the simple odds of success at 3:1 (Constant = 3.4), the multivariate analyses clarified the contributions that structural and strategic dimensions of digital activism made to enhancing the success of movements.

Which of the structural dimensions and strategies made the biggest difference for movement success? As seen in Table 3, when the digital activism was used to protest against human rights (β = 0.47***) and, to a less extent political issues (β = 0.70*), the probability of success was reduced more than half or a quarter, respectively, than when protesting against civic development issues. Additional structural barriers to progress in social movements were noted in the audiences targeted by the movements as well. As predicted by realistic group conflict theory, having governments as the target audience increased the chance of failure by almost 50% (β = 0.43***) more than when institutions/organizations and informal groups/individuals were the target audience. In other words, when changes were sought on a macro scale, as with redressing human right or political right violations, activists were inevitably confronted by governmental authorities and their structural inveteracy or structurally unequal playing fields.

For example, when the Jasmine Revolution in China was announced on Twitter, the Chinese government immediately became nervous because the digital revolution sought transformations in the Chinese political system. The government immediately stepped in to control both cyberspaces and public spaces (Zheng, 2012). More than fifty Chinese activists who complained about political and human right violations were arrested and over two hundred activists were placed under strict supervision or house arrests in 2011 (Zhang and Nyiri, 2014). The Hong Kong Umbrella activists who protested for political rights were similarly treated. These movements about political and human right issues were not successful because they threatened those in power. Yet, in Coins for Prita, Mulysari and her supporters successfully got the court to revoke its original decision. Even though the court was a governmental institution, the hospital, a non-profit organization, was the primary target audience. The powerful government authority compromised with the activists because the former's essential interests were not threatened or harmed.

<div align="center">25</div>

Table 3. Binary Logistic Regression Analysis of Digital Activism's Outcome on Structures and Media Strategy
2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey

	Outcome of Digital Activism Exp (β)
Structural Dimensions:	
Human Rights Issues[1]	0.47***
Political Issues[2]	0.70*
Government Target Audience[3]	0.43***
Institution/Organization Target Audience[4]	0.81
Duration[5]	1.0
Strategic Dimensions:	
Collaboration Purposes with Public Media Used[6]	1.05*
Online-Offline Practices[7] (vs. Online Only)	1.55**
Constant	3.4

1. Human Right Issues = Women's Rights, Age-Specific Rights, Contested Citizenship Rights, Ethnic Identity, LGBT, Workers' Rights, Religious Rights, Anti-Violence, and other human right issues. Reference category = Political Issues and Civic Development Issues.
2. Political Issues = Intolerance, Anti–Corruption, Against Unlawful Detention, Government or Regime Change, Democratic Rights and Freedoms, National Identity, Cyber War, and Crisis Response. Reference category = Human Rights and civic development.
3. Government = a government, government body, state, public institution or an individual or individuals representing a government body or a public institution (i.e. United States, Barack Obama, etc.). Reference Category = Individual/Informal Group and Institution/ Organization.
4. Institution/Organization = Regional or International Intergovernmental Organizations, Private Institution(s) (For-Profit), Private Institution(s) (Non-Profit). Reference Category = Individual/Informal Group and Government.
5. Duration: Less than One Week = 1; Less than One Month = 2; Less than One Year = 3; More than One Year = 4; On Going = 5.
6. Public/Individualized Media Application Used * Synthesis/Technology/Resource Mobilization Purposes. Other strategic combinations did not significantly increase the success odds.
7. Online Only = 0; Online-Offline = 1.

Furthermore, strategic use of media applications also benefited and ensured the success of digital activism as predicted by value-added theory: media applications used for collaboration purposes (β = 1.05***) positively contributed to the success. In the experience of the College Activist (Interviewee #2), because different digital movements had distinctive audiences, they used media applications selectively. The Digital Program Director (Interviewee #3) added: "campaigners have limited time and resources, so using the right handful of tools strategically is usually more effective than trying to blanket all digital channels." Yet, the Activist Campaign Manager (Interview #4) pointed to the importance of repetition across different media outlets in digital activism, "the more times (we post on digital media), someone sees something." Her idea of repetition echoed the "many clicks, little sticks" idea, "if they hear from their constituents one

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time on an issue, they aren't that likely to do anything about it; but if they are hearing every day and from different directions, then they are more likely to act" (Interviewee #4).

The media strategies used in the Beijing Olympic Relay movement also fit the strategic usage of media model. Once the protest of the government relay program by human right activists started, mass dissemination of information about the actions over multi-media platforms, made the public, both internal and abroad, aware of the movement. As more and more people followed the movement's progress, the torch relay turned into a national pride movement and recruited Chinese patriot volunteers. Nevertheless, despite the passion generated in the general public, few had access to the confidential information about when, where, and how to stop the human right activists unless they were physically present on the relay routes (offline).

Using a combination of online and offline platforms ($\beta = 1.55^{***}$) also significantly increased the success of digital activism by 50 percent in contrast with the movements that did their work only on online platforms. This finding was underscored in the experiences of the National Online Campaign Manager's (Interviewee #4). She learned the importance of on-the-ground field operations, because "it's more difficult to do enough online to actually move a target." She continued,

> "The decision maker (target audience) can be anywhere from a key state legislator that has a swing vote on an important bill to a corporate CEO that could create a policy that would make a huge impact. In order to move a decision maker, we have to bring people together to build enough people power to win against special interests with money power. Online organizing is a tactic and must fit within a strategy to move a target to create real change. Online organizing works best when paired with other tactics, in particular tactics carried out through field organizing. Many organizations only use digital activism, but online organizing by itself has far less of an impact when it's divorced from field organizing. One exception! I think online organizing can play a proportionally greater role in campaigns that target corporations. Usually the goal is to threaten a company's positive image enough that the corporation does what you want. This is easier to do online, because the target can be the general public instead of a single decision maker. Greenpeace has run a lot of successful corporate campaigns."

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

By exploring the structures of digital activism, this study identified some of the barriers that digital movements faced. Political systems were major hurdles that activists, who question and seek to address human and political right violations, faced. Specifically, movements that challenged the political or structural hierarchy were less likely to be successful than when they sought to redress civic development issues (Baumeister and Vohs's realistic group conflict theory). Similarly, when activists challenged the representatives of governments, they were more likely to fail than when they challenged individual/informal group or institution/organizations. At the same time, the necessity to strategically use media applications in order to enhance the chance of movements' success was also evident (Smelser's value-added theory). Using public media for collaboration purposes best benefited digital activism. Combining online and offline methods for activism also enhanced the success rate of digital

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activism (Fuchs's new technologies on social reform). These theoretical findings are mapped in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Empirical Model of the Effects of Issues, Target Audience, Duration, and Media Strategies on Digital Activism's Success
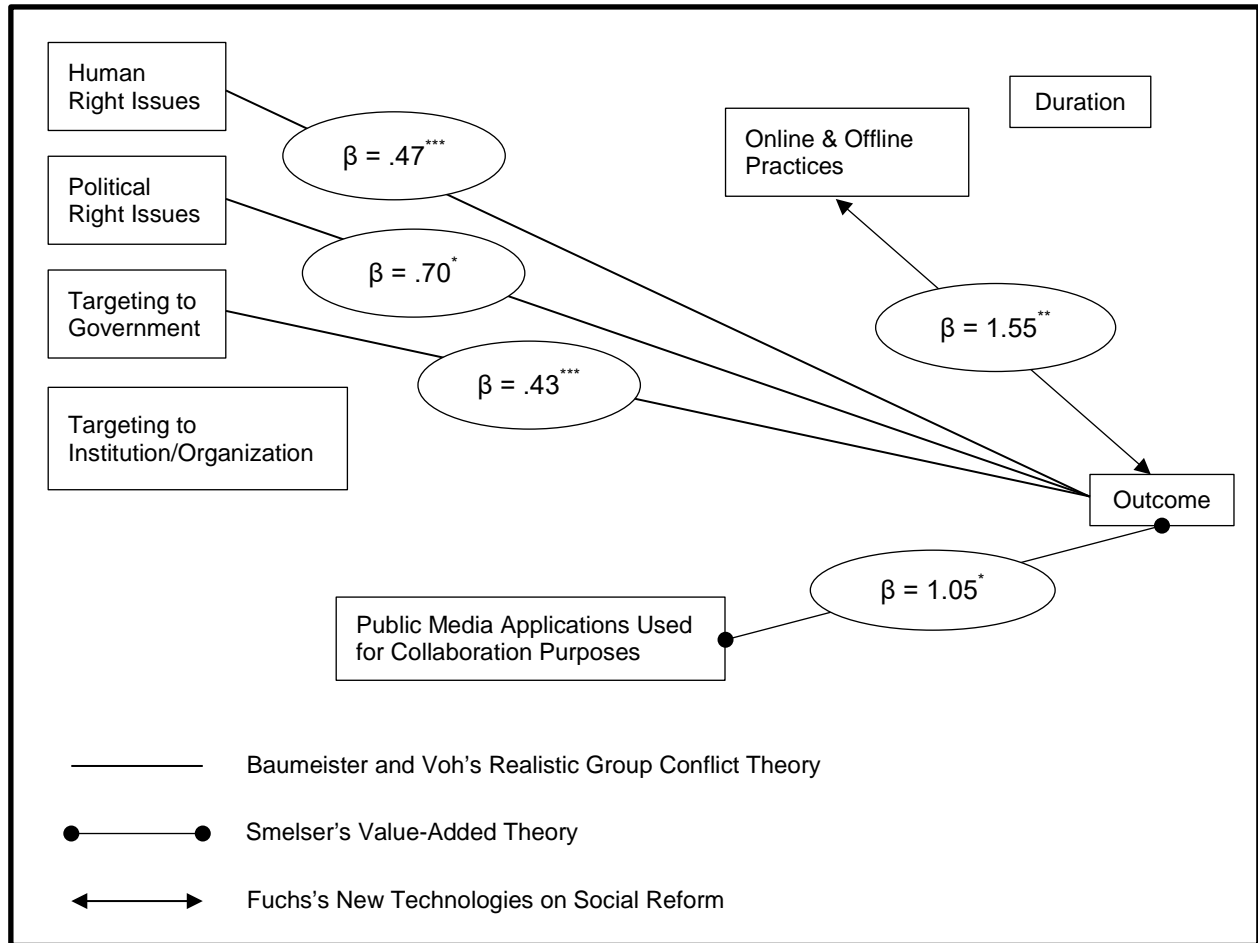
^{1} Refer to Table 3 for details on index coding.

Limitation and Future Directions

This research provided a general overview of contemporary digital activist movements. Using survey data on digital activist movements, supplemented by interviews with the activists and case studies, the broad contours of factors that enhanced or hindered the success of digital movements were outlined. As societies become more digitalized, offline activism will inevitably be intertwined with online methods.

However, capturing the full complexity of activist movements were beyond the scope of this research. For example, in the case studies reviewed for this analysis, it quickly became clear that movements cannot be singularly categorized by issues, target audience, duration, or media strategies, because people's needs are intertwined. For example, the HKUM activism is about both human rights and political rights. Or a movement whose original target was a local

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institution can take on a political perspective when the government steps in. In other words, cleanly distinguishing movement boundaries will be harder and harder. In addition, historicity, very specific historic events, is another confounding factor. For example, the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong was started on the National Day (the date of founding) of China to gain more political and public attention. Ironically, because of the historical nature of the start date, the movement not only attracted masses but also stepped on Chinese government's nerve, resulting in the intense suppression on the activism. If the movement had not taken place during the special historical period, would the outcome have been different?

Another issue raised by the Sociology Professor (Interviewee #1) and the College Activist (Interviewee #2) was the need to distinguish between subjective and systemic success. Success in the Digital Survey was defined from the subjective perspective of the activists. However, systemic success pursues the success on structural change or social reform. For example, the College Activist thought her digital campaign was successful personally (subjective success) although it had little influence in changing the institutional structures --- it did not achieve systemic success. Future research will have to define success more broadly both in their subjective and structural dimensions in order to capture these intersecting dimensions of change.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I
Consent Form and Interview Protocol

Consent Form

Dear Interviewee: I am a Sociology Senior working on my Research Capstone Paper under the direction of Professor Marilyn Fernandez in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. I am conducting my research on *Digital Activism Research: Study of Cause of Activism, Media Usage, and Success*. You were selected for this interview, because of your knowledge of and experience working in the area of new media digital technologies.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve responding to questions about different parameters that affect the outcome of digital activism and will last about 20 minutes.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose to not participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time. The results of the research study may be presented at SCU's Annual Anthropology/Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference and published (in a Sociology department publication). Pseudonyms will be used in lieu of your name and the name of your organization in the written paper. You will also not be asked (nor recorded) questions about your specific characteristics, such as age, race, sex, religion.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call/email me at (408)643-9973 or bshi@scu.edu or Dr. Fernandez at (408)554-4432 or mfernandez@scu.edu.

Sincerely,

Randy Shi

By signing below, you are giving consent to participate in the above study.

Signature: **Date:**

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, through Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at (408) 554-5591.

Interview Schedule for Supplemental Qualitative Interviews, Fall 2015-Winter 2016

Interview Date and Time: _____

Respondent ID#: __ (1, 2, 3….)

1. What is the type of agency/organization/association/institution where you have been studying digital activist movements?
2. What is your position in this organization?
3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?
4. Based on what you know of digital activism, how common are digital activist movements? Have they

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increased over time and why?

5. In your opinion, what are some reasons for the growth in digital movements? Could you expand a bit more?
6. Have digital activist movements been more successful than traditional social movements? If so, why?
7. Questions regarding independent concepts as potential causes:
    a. How about the causes of digital activism? Are some causes more successful than others?
    b. How about the variety of media used in digital activism? Are more tools used better than few?
    c. How about duration of movements? Are movements of shorter duration more successful than longer duration or the reverse? If so, why?
8. Is there anything else about this issue/topic that you want to share with me?

Thank you very much for your time. If you wish to see a copy of my final paper, I would be glad to share it with you at the end of the winter quarter. If you have any further questions or comments for me, I can be contacted at bshi@scu.edu. Or if you wish to speak to my faculty advisor, Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, she can be reached at mfernandez@scu.edu.

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Appendix II. Table 2

Bivariate Correlation Matrix[1]
2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey

	Outcome of Digital Activism	Human Right Issues	Political Issues	Civic Development Issues	Individual/Informal Group Target Audience	Institution/Organization Target Audience	Government Target Audience	Collaboration Purpose with Public Media Used	Collaboration Purpose with Individualized Media Used	Technology Purpose with Individualized Media Used	Resource Mobilization Purpose with Public Media Used	Resource Mobilization Purpose with Individualized Media Used	Online Status	Approximate Duration
Outcome of Digital Activism	1													
Human Right Issues	-.11***	1												
Political Issues	-.05	-.2***	1											
Civic Development Issues	.1**	-.41***	-.36***	1										
Individual/Informal Group Target Audience	.12***	.07*	-.1***	-.07*	1									
Institution/Organization Target Audience	.02	-.04	-.12***	.1***	-.26***	1								
Government Target Audience	-.17***	.07*	.2***	0	-.55***	-.27***	1							
Collaboration Purpose with Public Media Used	.08*	-.02	.05	-.05	.05	-.03	-.05	1						
Collaboration Purpose with Individualized Media Used	.09**	-.06	.05	-.04	.08**	.02	-.1***	.68***	1					
Technology Purpose with Individualized Media Used	0	-.07*	.18***	-.02	-.08**	-.01	.09**	.1***	.19***	1				
Resource Mobilization Purpose with Public Media Used	.02	.06*	.02	-.05	-.05	.01	.04	.47***	.27***	.02	1			
Resource Mobilization Purpose with Individualized Media Used	.03	0	-.01	-.03	-.07*	.06*	.01	.35**	.57***	.15***	.63***	1		
Online Status	.1**	.01	.06	-.01	-.06*	.01	.03	.17***	.18***	.04	.34***	.29***	1	
Approximate Duration	-.02	.02	-.07*	.02	.1***	-.04	-.09**	.13***	.12***	-.01	.09**	.08**	-.04	1

[1.] Refer to Table 3 for details on indices

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"Relationship Connectivity" Counts:
Lifetime Relationships, Family Structure, and
Risk-Taking in Adulthood

By

Eryn Olson[1]

ABSTRACT. The impacts of interpersonal relationships (in childhood and in early adulthood) on risk-taking behavior of young adults were the focus of this research. Data from the 2012 New Family Structures Survey (using a subset of 2,917 young adults aged 18-39), disaggregated by whether the respondents grew up in conventional or unconventional households, were augmented with eight interviews with health and counseling professionals. Healthy early family relationships and current romantic relationships offered the best protections against adult risk-taking behavior, irrespective of family household structure. On the other hand, a healthy parent-child relationship in adulthood and bullying victimization in childhood were both linked to increased risk-taking in later years, but only if raised in unconventional families. These findings contributed to the empirical literature on the consequences of healthy relationships, with natal families, peers, and partners, for positive life decisions and partly illuminated Agnew's Strain and Aker's Social Control Theories. Exploring a fuller range of unconventional family structures, a broader variety of risk-taking behaviors, and whether said behaviors turn into addictions will better highlight the long-term consequences of relationship connectivity for adult risk-taking.

INTRODUCTION

The typical American family, in both size and form, has radically changed over the past several decades. Fifty five years ago, say in 1960, 73% of children lived in homes with two heterosexual parents who were in their first marriage. Twenty years later, this family portrait described only 61% of kids. Another thirty years later, less than half of kids--46%--are raised within a "nuclear traditional family" (Pew Research Center 2014). As many as 2.0 to 3.7 million children in America may have a parent that identifies as LGBT (Gates 2015). All the while, the number of these new family forms continues to grow.

This family paradigm shift in in the United States, and even globally, has brought renewed focus on marriage and the state's legal role in this social act. Concerns about children raised in new family structures, both in the short-term and long-term, are voiced in public policy debates, in organizations, in communities, and even in families. Those who argue that non-traditional family relations, including cohabitation, divorce, and homosexuality, can be detrimental for children, adults, and society make a case for strengthening the traditional marriage and family bonds. On the opposite side are those who argue that our conceptions of family needs to expand to better represent today's social realities, and that family structure does not adversely affect well-being, either in childhood or in adulthood. Irrespective of which side of the ideal family one is on, both camps agree that it is "relationship connectivity" that counts (per the Director of Community Resources for a family and children services agency, Interviewee #7).

Concerns, among scholars and policy makers alike, about changing family structures have been heightened in the context of rising crime and other risk-taking behaviors (wrongful or antisocial actions). The fear is that left unaddressed, anti-social, risk-taking behaviors can develop into addiction and dependency. For example, according to the NCADD and NIAAA[2] (2013), one in every 12 American adults abuse alcohol, and several million more engage in dangerous binge drinking that can easily lead to alcoholism and associated health problems. From 2001 to 2013, the percentage of U.S. adults using marijuana doubled to 9.5 percent. Fortunately, use of other illicit drugs is still extremely rare, at less than 1 percent for cocaine, hallucinogens, heroin, and inhalants. Nonetheless, any drug use is problematic, not only for the users but their families and broader communities as well. Besides, risk-taking behaviors extend beyond substance use. Pornography and gambling are two other domains of deviant behavior that can have costly effects. The National Council on Problem Gambling estimated that in 2008, gambling problems created a $6.7 billion social cost, pushing families and communites into lost employment, bankruptcy, criminal justice encounters, and divorce. These personal and social costs have underscored the need to explore further the social contexts, interpersonal family and other primary relationships, of children, and even adults, that may be catalysts for risky behaviors.

It is against this backdrop that the search for potential facilitators of adult risky behaviors was set for this paper. More specifically, the focus was on the connections between lifetime interpersonal relationships and early adult risk-taking behaviors. Relationships with parents, both as children and as adults, childhood bullying experiences, and current romantic relationships were considered. In order to account for the structural shifts in the family, the earliest micro-system (Bronfenbrenner 1977) in which children are embedded, comparisons were drawn between those raised within conventional and non-conventional family structures. Conventional families were those headed by married biological mother/father parents. Unconventional family settings were headed by single parents, cohabiting parents, separated or divorced parents, non-parental relatives, adoptive parents, or LGBT parents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Taking risks involves making choices with uncertain outcomes—either positive or negative—and balancing the associated harms or dangers or rewards. Challenges in adolescents' micro (family) and meso (school peers) environments are known to promote risk-taking. The choices and decisions parents make during their child's upbringing can impact, both positively and

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[2] NCADD (National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence) and NIAAA (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism).

negatively, that child's choices in later life. Children's spheres of interactions rapidly expand when they enter educational institutions, where they begin to form relationships with people of their own age. These peer relationships can turn problematic if they start to hang around with the wrong crowd. Then, in adulthood, the role of romantic partners or spouses begins to take precedence and curtails risk-taking.

Risk-Taking in Different Stages of the Life Course

There is an abundance of research on juvenile delinquency and on adult crime. However, the implications of deviance over the life-span remains a quiet conversation in academia. A majority of scholars have either stopped at the adolescent stage or examined adult risk-taking delinked from adolescence. Also, whether, and the conditions of interpersonal primary relationships under which, adolecent risk-taking might carry into adulthood, is relatively under-explored.

Research is consistent in that delinquency peaks in the teenage years, although the peaks vary across crime types (Sampson & Laub 2003). Adolescents are known to engage in reckless, risky and thrill-seeking activities more often than their younger or older peers, often due to a combination of behavioral reasons, biological changes, and environmental circumstances. Adolescence is characterized by novelty-seeking, impulsive risk-taking, and a stronger motivation for peer acceptance than found among adults or younger children (Spear, 2000; Blakemore 2008; Crone and Dahl, 2012). Of all age groups, 15-24 year olds have the highest rates of STDs (DiClemente, Salazar, & Crosby 2007) and criminal behaviors (Ulmer and Steffensmeier 2014). Furthermore, Piquero (2008) noted two patterns of criminal activity in most trajectory-based research around the world: individuals whose delinquency peaks in adolescence and those who are chronic offenders.

Family and Adolescent Risk-Taking

People differ in their willingness to take risks. From a biological standpoint, some of these differences are innate, and genetics researchers and biochemists have identified several genes associated with impulsivity, sensation-seeking, and risk-taking. But DNA and intrapersonal factors provide a narrow understanding of how people approach and deal with risk. A fuller picture of risk-taking in adulthood requires focus on the social forces, environment, and interpersonal relationships that also shape behaviors.

The family is the first of many environmental systems that influences a person's development (Bronfenbrenner 1977). The quality of those familial relationships has strong implications for a variety of outcomes in later adolescence and even adulthood. Healthy, supportive, and close family contexts promote positive individual development while negative familial bonds are risky. Debates about the importance of family structure have coincided with the growing awareness that families are not all alike. Though research continues to disentangle the relative consequences of structure of natal families versus quality of family relationships, it appears that the context carries more influence than the form.

Family Relationships: Risks and Buffers in Adolescence

Unhealthy familial relationships in the early life course stages have played out in unhealthy, troubled behaviors of adolescents and adults. Using reports from the Office of the Surgeon

General (2001), Shader (2003) identified a host of family risk factors in both early (children aged 6-11) and late (ages 12-14) onset delinquency. Poor parent-child relationship, harsh or lax discipline, anti-social parents, broken homes, and abusive parents raised delinquency risks. The most obvious danger was physical abuse and neglect. Spatz Widom, Marmostein, and White (2006), in their analyses of court-cases of childhood abuse victims and controls (n=892), found that individuals who were abused or neglected as children were 1.5 times more likely to report using illicit drugs (during the year prior to the study), used more illicit drugs, and had more substance-use-related problems in middle adulthood. Troubled familial relations, even if much more benign than abuse or neglect, can still pose threats. Inadequate parenting was related to more poly-drug problems, more property crimes, and less social conformity in a community sample of 199 mothers (Newcomb and Loeb 1999).

Conversely, healthy familial bonds can provide buffers and deterrents to deviance. Monitoring and support was an important key. Johnson, Giordano, Manning and Longmore (2011) found that, young adults (n=1,007), who in childhood, were monitored by their parents and received ongoing parental support, engaged in fewer offending behaviors, net of peer influence and adolescent delinquency. Chen and Kaplan (1997) had a similar finding: even after the individual (n=2,931) matured out of the adolescent stage, the net positive effects of parent-child relationships continued. In fact, the negative effects, on children, of a mother's poor parenting were muted if there were other adults who were supportive and with whom the adolescents could develop bonds.

In addition to deterring deviance, healthy family relationships can be assets that spur young adults toward success. In Oman, Vesely, Aspy and Tolma's (2015) study of 18-22 year olds in Oklahoma City, family-level assets were tied to more successful transitions to early adulthood. Young men who had positive communications and supportive relationships with their parents, as well as those who were monitored by their mothers and fathers were more likely to report better general health, financial health, social support, and life satisfaction. For women, the same family assets were protectants against alcohol use, first sexual intercourse, and pregnancy before age 20. The gendered differences in family dynamics, namely the cultural expectations of parent-daughter relationships, were offered as possible explanations.

Sibling dynamics has also been known to exert an important influence on youth problem behaviors. East & Khoo (2005) found hostility or conflicts among siblings (in a sample of 220 non-white families) to be linked with substance use. Troubling sibling relationships may provoke more than substance use; they may even undermine parental involvement, according to Fosco, Stormshak, Dishion, and Winter (2012). When these scholars analyzed general family relationships of 179 middle schoolers, regardless of the child's gender, limited father-youth connectedness and sibling conflict were two particular components that predicted youth problem behavior over time.

The Childhood Family Relationships versus Structure Debates

The extant evidence on family structures for the health and wellbeing of children is mixed. At one end of the structure-relationship spectrum is the camp that has argued for the primacy of family structure. However, there is growing consensus in prominent sociological circles that relationships trump family structure.

<u>The Family Structure Camp.</u> Researchers have found children raised in non-traditional married families to not fare as well as children from traditional married families (Brown, 2004). Chen and

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Kaplan (1997) noted that family structure did impact risk behaviors among young adults. Traditional family children tend to be at lower risks for a range of problems and decisions in adolescence and adulthood, including fewer socio-emotional and health problems, as well as better educational advancement.

In explaining the family structural differences, research on children raised in single versus two-parent homes, has pointed to differences in important economic and social resources. Dual-parent families tended to offer better social capital, parental communication, and parental supervision (Coleman 1988), which in turn solidify future opportunities and outcomes. A child raised by a single parent, on the other hand, often did not have the benefit of sharing two parents' time and dual economic resources (Brown 2004). Quality health insurance, for example, may be an asset that children of alternative family arrangements lack. Consequently, children raised by two parents generally reported better well-being than those raised by single parents.

Beyond financial and insurance constraints, limited resources available to the child in single-parent households have been connected to children's social and sexual behavior as well. Girls (n=2,853) raised by single-mothers and who had never lived with a father most quickly entered motherhood (Hofferth and Goldscheider 2010). However, this was not the life course trajectory for a boy's (n=2,949) transition into fatherhood.

Furthermore, it seems that the gender of the parent holds weight. Single fathers were better off economically than single mothers (Meyer and Garasky 1993). Adolescents living in father-custody families were at higher risks for drug use compared to youth in other family styles (Hoffman and Johnson 1998). Children from single fathers also had more school problems and more often engaged in risky health-related behaviors (Harris, Cavanagh, and Elder 2002).

While research on single and dual parent families is fairly extensive, less is known about children in LGBT-Parent Homes. The few existing studies have suggested that children raised in LGBT families generally have lower levels of well-being and limited success than their peers raised by heterosexual parents. For example, Goldberg, Bos, and Gartrell (2011) found that adolescents (n=78) raised by same-sex parents were more likely than a national sample raised by heterosexual parents to engage in occasional substance use. More specifically, children of same-sex parents were more likely to use (occasional but not heavy use) alcohol and marijuana than their matched peers.

The Family Relationships Camp. At the other end of the family structure-relationship spectrum are the scholars who not only discount the differential outcomes by family structure, but also went further to explain disadvantages associated with family structure through the lens of instability in family relationships. As Gates (2015) noted, children raised by same-sex couples were more likely to have to deal with their parents breaking up than peers with opposite-sex parents. Now, however, as gay marriage has been legalized, new studies have edited these earlier findings. Rosenfeld (2014) reported that same-sex relationship instability in the past was due in part to the low marriage rate among same-sex couples. Based on the How Couples Meet and Stay Together surveys (n=3,009), the annual break-up rate for couples—gay or straight—in either a marriage or marriage-like union was less than 3 percent. This same study's data proved the importance of marriage as a commitment, as married couples regardless of sexual orientation were more likely to stay together than unmarried ones at all levels of relationship quality and duration (Rosenfeld 2014).

To make a case for harmonious households, Baxter, Weston and Lixia (2011) noted: hostile parental relationships proved more harmful to a child's well-being than his or her family structure. That is, 6-7 year old children (n=4,341 using the *Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*) from intact families, but whose parents had conflicts, had poorer emotional well-being than parents who had fewer conflicts. Blunting the family structure argument further is evidence that long-term life outcomes of children raised by same-sex parents are quite similar to those raised by single or divorced parents. In Fomby and Bosick's (2013) study of 8,841 adolescents up to age 24, frequent changes in childhood family structure resulted in a quicker transition to adulthood. This meant earlier entry into the work force, lower college completion rates, and earlier advancement into parenthood. These life course disadvantages may be more severe for males than females. Krohn, Hall, and Lizotte (2009) found males, not females, who experienced more family transitions in childhood to be more likely to use drugs. Similarly, when Canadian families had lived in the household for at least five years, there was no significant difference in well-being among children raised in same-sex or different-sex households (Allen 2013).

In short, there is growing consensus in family research that family disruption and transitions earlier in children's lives play a greater role in a child's well-being than parents' sexual or gender orientation. The American Sociological Association[3], in their meta-analysis of seven different scholarly studies, argued that a child's well-being was not impacted by parental sexual orientation across a wide spectrum of measures, including academic performance, cognitive development, social development, psychological health, early sexual activity, and substance abuse (as cited in Gates, 2015). Other studies have found the same.

In the mode of Glen Elder's life-course theoretical framework (Elder 1985), the influences of childhood natal families has been found to be different across the life course in a few studies. Strong parental monitoring was more predictive of substance avoidance in early adolescence (n=998), but quality family relationship emerged as more important during the transition to high school and later adolescence (Van Ryzin, Fosco, and Dishion 2012). Then, in early adulthood, neither family aspect proved directly significant. Nonetheless, the family environment still had an indirect effect on substance use by modulating and mediating peer influence. Early parental monitoring of adolescent friendships and activities (n=504, aged 12-16) often limited the child's engagement with deviant peers in later adolescence and perhaps, even in adulthood (Laird, Criss, Pettit, Dodge, & Bates, 2008).

Peers and Adolescents

A child's sphere of interactions rapidly expands when he or she enters educational institutions. Children begin to form relationships with people of their own age. Depending on the peer culture, these relationships can pose problems, particularly if they start to hang around with the wrong crowd. Or peers can be assets, provided they are respectful, are high-achieving, and discourage delinquent activities. To quote Jim Rohn, a renowned businessman, "You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with."

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[3] The ASA made this case for family diversity in its amicus brief supporting the plaintiffs against California's Proposition 8 and the federal DOMA.

The Power of Academic Engagement

An overall sense of engagement in academics, both at school and with their peers, can protect youth against the social forces that encourage delinquent behavior. In Ozer's (2005: 170) review of findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, "adolescents who report feeling more connected to school show lower levels of emotional distress, risk behavior, and aggression." Oman, et al. (2015) also cited school connectedness as an asset for adolescents, particularly older youth.

Associations with Deviant Peers

On the other hand, social ties and bonds with antisocial peers can be risk factors for both early and late onset childhood delinquency (Shader 2003). Biglan & Cody (2003: 127) concurred, based on their cumulative research: "a key pathway through which aggressive elementary school children become adolescents with multiple problems is their association with deviant peers." And Bond, Butler, Thomas, Carlin, Glover, Bowes, and Patton (2007) found that in Australia, young people (n=2,678) with poor relationships with peers and teachers were more likely to use drugs, engage in social disruptive behaviors, and have poorer relationships with other adults.

Bullying: The Victim and Bully

An unfortunate aspect of growing up is childhood bullying. Bullying is generally characterized as a specific, intentional form of aggression that is relatively persistent and contains a power imblance between perpetrator and victim (Olweus, 1993). Children often carry the emotional and mental trauma of bullying encounters throughout their life, in the forms of anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal. Other long-term adverse consequences in social relationships and economic disadvantages can also ensue from prior bullying expereinces. Recognizing that all bullying experiences are not the same, researchers have separated the types of bullying experiences by whether the child is a "victim" or the "bully", or a combination, the "bully-victim." However, there is agreement that bullying, no matter whether it is the victim or the bully, has adverse consequences in late adolescence and even in young adulthood.

Focusing on the aftermath of bullying during adolescence, studies have documented the emotional consequences of victimization and bullying for adolescents. Mothers and children in the UK reported that adolescents (n=6,208) who were frequently victimized at age 13 were two or three times more likely than non-victims to develop an anxiety disorder at 18 years old (Stapinski, Bowes, Wolke, Pearson, Mahedy, Button, Lewis, and Araya 2014). Farrington, Loeber, Stallings, and Ttofi's (2011) adolescent American male victims (n=503, 6-19 year olds from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) were also were 40 percent more likely to be depressed even after controlling for other key risk factors. Teen bullies too experienced similar negative emotional outcomes. In Farrington et al.'s (2011) prospective longitudinal study, being a bully raised the risk of delinquency by about 45 percent. Luukkonen, Riala, Hakko, and Rasanen's (2010) Finish adolescent bullies were at higher risks for depression and anxiety disorders, even after controlling for childhood behavioral and emotional issues.

Unfortunately, the negative aftermath of bullying, whether the teen was a bully or victim, carries well into young adulthood. Finnish male adolescent bullies (508, 12-17 year olds) had severe substance use in adulthood, including hard drugs and marijuana (Luukkonen, et al., 2010).

Bender and Lösel (2011), who differentiated between physical and verbal versus indirect bullying by perpetrators, among 25-year-old males (n=63) active bullying at age 15 strongly predicted later delinquency, violence, and anti-social behavior, net of individual and family risk factors. On the other hand, victimization did not predict these adult anti-social outcomes or drug use, impulsivity, or aggressiveness.

Childhood victims and bully-victims (n=1,273 Americans) in Wolke, Copeland, Angold, and Costello's study (2013), were also at increased risk for poor health, less wealth, and weak social relationships in young adulthood (19-26 year old). However, bullying did not translate into risky or illegal behaviors (like felonies, illicit drug use, or one-night stands), net of childhood and psychiatric factors.

In addition to adverse mental health consequences of bullying, researchers have also discussed social and economic disadvantages later in the life course. Norwegian 14-15 year old (n=1,266) victims and bullies did not fare as well in their social relationships later in young (aged 26-27) adulthood (Sigurdson, Wallander, and Sund 2014). Specifically, victims of bullying reported poorer quality relationships with their spouse or partner. And bully-victims —individuals who were both targets of bullying and active bulliers—had increased risk of tobacco use, illegal drug use, and lower levels of job functioning. A New Zealand study by Stuart and Jose (2014) expanded further the life course timeline by four decades and assessed "adult" outcomes of childhood bullying experiences when 13 years. When contrasted with non-bullies, 39 year olds (n= 305) who had been childhood bullies were more likely to report long-term illnesses and smoking, whereas victims of bullying reported greater depression and lower levels of adulthood social support.

In the final analyses, the best current research, a meta-analysis of longitudinal studies published between 1960 and 2015 by Klomek, Sourander, and Elonheimo (2015), concluded that serious negative effects of bullying, irrespective of whether the adolescent was the bully and/or the victim, extended into adult life, even up to four decades after the exposure, net of pre-existing disorders. Among all of the parties involved in bullying episodes, the bully-victims, on average, reported the worst long-term health outcomes.

Relationships in Adulthood

As adolescents mature into adulthood, it is natural for them to expand their social circles and networks. Many form new relationships—both platonic and romantic. Many also continue to maintain ties with their parents, although the nature and quality of their relationships, in adulthood, with their parents do change.

The Adult Child and Parent

The parent-child relationship dynamic often undergoes changes as the child transitions and matures to adulthood. Both parties need to successfully navigate these life changes in order to foster a healthy relationship. The relationship pendulum can swing both ways: some parent-child relationships grow healthier and stronger once the child has matures, while others may become weak, distant, and strained. Either way, parents do matter beyond adolescence. Arnett (2007) argued that parents stand alone in the on-going socializing of adult children, representing a permanency and consistency not available in non-familial bonds like intimate partners. Just as during childhood, parental involvement in their adult children's lives is a buffer against the many

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adult challenges. Grown children who received sustained parental support were more satisfied with their lives overall than those who got less support (Fingerman, Cheng, Wesselmann, Zarit, Furstenberg, and Birditt 2012).

Young adults' relationships with their parents also protected them from deviance, crime, and other risk taking behaviors. Parental monitoring was associated with lower drug and alcohol use among young adult children (Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Madsen & Barry 2008). And Johnson, Giordano, Manning and Longmore (2011) found that 17-24 year olds (n= 1,007) were less likely to engage in criminal activities when their parents continued to engage with and support them in their adulthood. This was true even for former delinquents. As part of an "emotional mellowing process," former delinquents may have improved relationships with their parents and decreased risky-taking to mark their transition to adulthood (Giordano, Schroeder, and Cernkovich 2007).

Marriage, a Protectant in Adulthood

Another major transition in the life course of individuals is the introduction, and subsequent presence or absence, of romantic partners in their lives. Romance becomes another socializing mechanism. Romantic relationships differ from friendship networks and become more relevant as the relationship gets serious. Marriage, therefore, has been associated with a wide range of pro-social behaviors that promotes overall stability. For example, in their analysis of crime and deviance over the life course, Sampson and Laub (1990) found that strong marital and familial attachment in adulthood (using research by Glueck 1950, 1968) inhibited adult criminal and deviant behavior, among both delinquents (n=438) and non-delinquent groups (n=442).

Summary and Looking Forward

On balance, the extensive research reviewed above indicated that unhealthy, unstable relationships, both inside and outside the home, can be detrimental to an individual's well-being. In terms of family household dynamics, quality of relationships seem to trump structure. And childhood bullying had negative consequences on all parties involved, though there's a definite need to better examine whether and how childhood bullying experiences may continue to be evidenced over the life course. As the child transitions into adulthood, romantic relationships, particularly a healthy marriage, seem to offer benefits that deter risk-taking behavior.

The research presented in this paper will add to the growing body of empirical literature on challenges and successes during the life course by investigating how early life interactions and environments impact risk-taking in adulthood. It is generally accepted in the scholarly literature that positive parental relations and peer networks protect against youth delinquency. But there is more to be known about how these childhood experiences affect adult deviant choices. In addition, the added impacts of social relationships during adulthood, both with parents and romantic partners, on adult risk-taking need to be assessed. Although this research is not truly longitudinal, the mix of experiences in the past (childhood) and present (in adulthood) lent a life course perspective on the impacts of micro and meso social environments on adult risk-taking. Specifically, how did both micro and meso environments, decades prior and present, impact fully mature, independent adults in their decisions and behaviors about risk-taking.

Furthermore, childhood family household structure[4] was considered to explore whether living in intact or nonintact families affected one's propensity to take risks. Respondents were divided into whether they grew up in conventional or unconventional families to investigate the long-term effects of different family structures. Specifically, the focus rested on whether those raised in so-called "intact" family structures were empirically lower risk-takers than those from more unconventional homes. If no significant differences in risk-taking are found between the two groups, then this may provide evidence for dismantling the stigma around homes with same-sex parents, cohabiting parents, a stepparent, grandparents, or adoptive parents. On the other hand, if structure makes a difference, then future research should explore the relationship between stigmatization and risk-taking behavior, or availability of community resources among differing household structures. As the make-up of the American family shifts even more, this research offered a timely, contemporary sketch of the lives of those raised in diverse family structure background experiences.

RESEARCH QUESTION

A quasi- life course perspective (Glen Elder 1985) was used to frame the analyses of social relationship and adult risk-taking behaviors[5]. The following set of questions was posed: What consequences did childhood and adult micro-system relationships have for adult deviance? Is family support in childhood more influential in future risk-taking than negative peer interactions? Are romantic relationships or adult familial relationships the better protectant against adulthood deviance? Lastly, to incorporate the structural side of the family micro-system dynamics, the impacts of social relationships were disaggregated by whether the adults were raised in a conventional or unconventional family household.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

The family, be it the one in which adults were raised or created for themselves, is the fundamental social institution in which relationships are formed and maintained. Families, as the primary socializing agents, are instrumental in shaping and molding one's self-concept. A strong "core self-concept" (Manford Kuhn 1964; Powers 2010: 198-201) developed in childhood is expected to remain stable into adulthood. But, as children grow into teenagers and adulthood, other social influences, like peers and romantic partners, can render the self-concept more malleable (Herbert Blumer 1969; Powers 2010: 200-01).

Risk-taking behaviors in adulthood was theorized to be responses to strain (as per Agnew's General Strain theory 1992) generated by weak supportive bonds (Hirschi, 1969) and social control (per Akers 1991) in familial and other social relationships. Adults, whose core self-concept was weakened by strained childhood family environments and relationships, might respond to strains encountered in adulthood with risky behaviors. On the other hand, supportive early parent relationships can operate as social control or social

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[4] Besides the traditional two-parent households, families can be formed and made up in a host of different ways. Children today can be raised by single parents, divorced or separated parents, or cohabiting parents. Sometimes other relatives like aunts and uncles or grandparents step in. Parents may also identify as LGBT; so children may have two fathers or two mothers. Unfortunately, the scope of this paper did not allow for specific analysis of each household type; hence, all of these non-traditional variations in family structure were lumped together.

[5] Risk taking and deviance are used interchangeably.

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support mechanisms against risky behaviors in adulthood, particularly if the core self-concept is strong. And weak parenting in non-traditional families was theorized to exacerbate the probability of adult risk taking. Growing up in a non-traditional family structure (say a single family home) adds to the stress faced by children because of increased instability and stigma combined with limited family resources and emotional support.

Following these theoretical lines of reasoning, it can be predicted that, all things being equal, weak family relationships early in a person's life, and even in adulthood, will render them more susceptible to adult risky behaviors (per General Strain Theory). On the other hand, adults whose relationships with their parents, both in childhood and in adulthood, provided sufficient social control, support, and bonding will be more likely to be protected from risky behaviors (per Akers). Two-parent, conventional families of childrearing, characterized by healthy parent-child bonds, were expected to reinforce the familial control effect over adult risk-taking. Conversely, by the same logic, risk-taking reactions to weak parenting could be stronger in non-traditional families of child-rearing.

During childhood and teenage years, peer relationships, both in their positive and negative dimensions, become salient, sometimes supplanting their parents. While peer friendships can be positive influences for teenagers, childhood bullying experiences and being labelled as a deviant can become major sources of strain. For a child, being a victim of bullying can be a long-lasting social stigma (Becker's labeling theory 1963). For example, peer rejection cuts off the individual from conventional peer groups and without these support networks available, the child could continue in a downward spiral toward increasingly deviant acts to cope with the strain. Social isolates often bond together and create their own deviant subculture, engaging in evermore risky behavior (as per Sutherland's differential association theory 1947).

Moving along the life course, adulthood sees the introduction of new responsibilities and roles. One of these roles is that of being a partner or spouse and that bond can protect an individual from risk-taking behaviors. Whether dating or married, individuals with a significant other typically have added social support from their romantic relationships and thus, are discouraged from engaging in risk-taking behavior. Just as with parents, it was predicted that romantic relationships will have a net discouraging effect on adult risk-taking.

A final question explored was which of the relationships over the life course would offer the strongest source of support against, or be a strain leading to, risk-taking behavior. Sampson and Laub posited that, within the institutional relationships, it is the social investment, also referred to as social capital, "that dictates the salience of informal social control at the individual level" (1990: 611-612). If early family relationships have helped their children develop a strong core self- concept and accumulate social capital, family relationships in childhood will be the most relevant, whether as a source of strain leading to risk-taking responses or protection from risk. On the other hand, if the self-concept is weak and malleable, then either peer bullying (with their negative implications) or romantic relationships (and the social capital and associated control) can be expected to be more relevant than parent-child relationships for risk-taking in adulthood.

Following the General Strain and Social Support theories, a set of hypotheses were posed about family/peer relationships and adult risk-taking behavior:
1. Adults who had weaker family relationships—both in childhood and adulthood—will engage in more risk behaviors in adulthood, after controlling for bullying experiences, romantic relationship, age, gender, and education (Strain and Support theories).

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2. Weaker romantic relationships will lead adults to engage in more risk behaviors, after controlling for childhood and adulthood parent-child relationship, bullying experiences, age, gender, and education (Strain and Support theories).
3. Moving beyond the family, childhood bullying experiences were predicted to lead to more risk behaviors in adulthood, net of childhood and adulthood parent-child relationships, romantic relationship, age, gender, and education (Strain, Labeling and Differential Association theories).
4. Supportive early family relationships will offer the best net protection against adult risk-taking than peer relationships or adult relationships, be they parental or romantic (Sampson and Laub's cumulative social capital concept).
5. The negative effects of weak relationships (be they family, romantic, or peer) on adult risk-taking will be stronger in unconventional households than traditional households (Strain and Support Theories).

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCE

A mixed methods research approach was used to test the research hypotheses. The quantative secondary survey data was from the 2012 New Family Structures Survey (Regnerus 2012)[6]. Qualitative interviews with eight professionals in the fields of health, family therapy, and addiction counseling were conducted to assist in interpreting the quantitative assessments.

Secondary Survey Data

The 2012 NFSS (Regnerus 2012) investigated the impacts of young adults raised in a variety of different alternative family arrangements on social, emotional, and relational outcomes and well-being; a control group of those who did not grow up in non-conventional families was also included. A sample of 15,058 (weighted) American young adults aged 18 to 39 (born 1971 thru 1994) were surveyed by Knowledge Networks, on behalf of Univeristy of Texas Austin and researcher Mark Regnerus (2012), using an online survey platform. For this paper, 2,917 respondents who had complete information on all study variables were selected. The sample was then subdivided into 1,168 "conventional" families and 1,749 "non-conventional" to provide a comparative view of those who lived with two biological, heterosexual parents until age 18 and those who had other various living situations[7].

About two-thirds of the sample was female (68%); there were slightly more females in the unconventional (69.0%) than the conventional group (65.6%). The average respondent was 28 years old, on a range of 18-39 years and had completed some level of college education, but not a degree. Respondents who were raised in unconventional families, on average, were younger and less educated than conventional families (see Appendix A. Table).

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[6] The original collector of the data, or ICPSR, or the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for use of the data or for the interpretations or inferences based on such uses.
[7] Based on question S2 from the NFSS (2012): Adults who were raised in conventional families answered YES to "Did you live together with BOTH your biological mother AND biological father the entire time from when you were born until age 18 (or until you left home to be on your own)?" All other family settings were categorized as non-conventional families.

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Qualitative Methodology

For specialized insights into the quantitative findings, eight qualitative intervews were conducted with professionals (half from the Bay Area) from the fields of counseling, health, and addiction recovery. They were: two female marriage and family therapists in private practice (Interviewees #1, #5); a female social worker in a youth residential assistance facility (Interviewee #2); a female registered nurse who works with substance-using adults in a community mental health agency (Interviewee #3); a female gambling counselor from the mid-west (Interviewee #4); a female prevention specialist and coalition coordinator for a local community-based nonprofit on wellness (Interviewee #6); a female director of community resources for a local family and children services agency (Interview #7); and a male director of counseling services at a local faith-based, non-profit recovery agency (Interview #8). They were asked a series of questions via telephone inquiring about their opinion on how adult risk-taking behavior is impacted by early family relationships and household structure, childhood bullying, and current relationships with parents and romantic partners. Refer to Appendix B for consent form and interview protocol.

DATA ANALYSES

Three levels of data analyses – descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate – were presented in the following pages. Together they were used to empirically answer the research question. Comments from professional interviewees helped illustrate the quantitative findings.

Operationalization and Descriptive Analyses

The first step in quantitative research was to describe the study sample using the relevant concepts: adult risk-taking behavior, childhood family and peer relationships, and adulthood parent-child and romantic relationships. Peer relationships were analyzed via bullying experiences. With adulthood family relationships, only two parents were taken into account, though the survey allowed for four. Controls of age, gender, and education were selected to fill out the profile sample's characteristics and set the stage for multivariate analyses.

Risk-Taking Behavior

The dependent concept, Adult Risk-Taking Behavior and its indicators, shown in Table 1.A. below, specifically measured a range of deviant behaviors in the year (2011-2012) priorto the survey. Specific behaviors covered were excessive drinking, drug and tobacco use, gambling, and pornography.

On balance, the average respondent did not partake in risky behaviors. However, those from unconventional families ($\bar{x}$ = 10.3) were more likely to engage in some deviant behavior than those from conventional $\bar{x}$ = 8.9[***]). Almost the entire majority in both family structures never used illegal drugs. The most common and frequent deviant behavior was smoking cigarettes. But interestingly, one fifth (20.1%) of unconventionally-raised adults smoked every day while only one-tenth (9.9%) of conventionally-raised respondents did. Also, those from unconventional families were more than twice as likely to smoke marijuana every day (6% unconventional vs. 2.6% conventional).

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Table 1.A. Descriptive Statistics for Risk-Taking Behavior
New Family Structures Study 2012

Dimensions	Indicators	Responses (Values)	Conventional Family(n=1124)	Unconventional Family (n=1686)
Substance Use	Q82. During the past year, how often did you: D. *Drink with the intent to get drunk?*	Never (1)	63.3%	58.0%*
		Once a month or less (2)	21.5	23.0
		2-3 days a month (3)	6.9	9.4
		1-2 days a week (4)	6.1	6.3
		3-5 days a week (5)	1.5	2.4
		Every day or almost (6)	0.7	1.0
	E. *Use marijuana?*	Never (1)	85.8%	76.3%***
		Once a month or less (2)	5.9	8.2
		2-3 days a month (3)	2.8	3.9
		1-2 days a week (4)	2.0	3.0
		3-5 days a week (5)	1.0	2.6
		Every day or almost (6)	2.6	6.0
	F. *Use other illegal drugs?*	Never (1)	96.0%	93.1%***
		Once a month or less (2)	1.8	2.7
		2-3 days a month (3)	1.0	1.8
		1-2 days a week (4)	0.9	0.9
		3-5 days a week (5)	0.2	0.9
		Every day or almost (6)	0.1	0.7
	G. *Smoke cigarettes*	Never (1)	78.9%	64.6%***
		Once a month or less (2)	5.2	5.7
		2-3 days a month (3)	2.7	3.1
		1-2 days a week (4)	1.6	3.2
		3-5 days a week (5)	1.7	2.8
		Every day or almost (6)	9.9	20.5
Gambling	H. *Gamble for money*	Never (1)	77.0%	76.7%
		Once a month or less (2)	18.1	16.8
		2-3 days a month (3)	2.8	2.7
		1-2 days a week (4)	1.3	1.9
		3-5 days a week (5)	0.6	1.1
		Every day or almost (6)	0.2	0.7
Sexual-Related Acts	B. *View pornographic material*	Never (1)	56.8%	53.0%
		Once a month or less (2)	21.0	21.1
		2-3 days a month (3)	8.0	10.2
		1-2 days a week (4)	7.3	7.7
		3-5 days a week (5)	4.0	5.1
		Every day or almost (6)	2.8	2.9
	Index of Risk-Taking Behavior	x̄ (s)	8.9 (3.8)	10.3 (4.8)***
		Range	6-30	6-36

*** p <= .001; ** p<= .01; * p <= .05
[1] Index of Risk-Taking Behavior= Q82B + Q82D + Q28E + Q82F + Q82G + Q82H; correlations among the variables ranged from 0.10*** to 0.40*** for conventional families and 0.14*** to 0.53*** for unconventional families.

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Further, regardless of household structure, respondents, almost equally, did not involve themselves with gambling or pornography. Two-thirds did not watch porn (conventional 56.8%; unconventional 53%) while more than three-fourths did not gamble (conventional 77%; unconventional 77%).

Childhood Family Relationships

The first independent concept of Childhood Family Relationships, displayed in Table 1.B., required respondents to reflect back on their childhood relationship with their parents and family.

Table 1.B. Descriptive Statistics for Childhood Family Relationship Climate
New Family Structures Study 2012

Concept	Indicators	Responses (Values)	Conventional Family (n=1168)	Unconventional Family (n=1749)
Climate	Q28B. We had a loving atmosphere in our family.	Strongly disagree (1)	2.0%	7.5%***
		Disagree (2)	6.0	14.9
		Unsure (3)	11.8	16.0
		Agree (4)	45.8	41.7
		Strongly agree (5)	34.4	19.9
	Q28A. My family relationships were safe, secure, & source of comfort.	Strongly disagree (1)	2.0%	8.3%***
		Disagree (2)	5.5	15.0
		Unsure (3)	8.9	14.9
		Agree (4)	43.7	41.3
		Strongly agree (5)	39.9	20.5
	Q28C. All things considered, my childhood years were happy.	Strongly disagree (1)	1.9%	8.3%***
		Disagree (2)	6.1	15.6
		Unsure (3)	9.0	14.4
		Agree (4)	44.3	43.1
		Strongly agree (5)	38.7	18.6
	Q28G (recoded). My family relationships were confusing, inconsistent, and unpredictable.	Strongly disagree (5)	2.6%	9.9%***
		Disagree (4)	12.1	22.0
		Unsure (3)	10.5	17.4
		Agree (2)	27.2	25.9
		Strongly agree (1)	47.7	24.6
	Index of Family Relationships[1]	$\bar{x}$ (s)	16.4 (3.4)	13.8 (4.3)***
		Range	4-20	4-20

***p <= .001; **p<= .01; *p <= .05
[1] Index of Family Relationships= Q28A + Q28B +Q28C + Q28G; correlations among the variables ranged from 0.55*** to 0.85*** for conventional families and 0.59*** to 0.84*** for unconventional families.

The individual's perception of family climate was the main dimension used to measure the health and quality of the relationship. It was presumed that the strongest, healthiest relationships were those with the most happiness, safety, love, and consistency.

The average respondent gave high ratings to the qualities of his/her familial relationships. However, relationships in unconventionally-raised households seemed weaker (unconventional $\bar{x}$ = 13.8) than in conventional settings ($\bar{x}$ = 16.4***). One-quarter of those raised in

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unconventional families reported not having a loving family atmosphere (22%), compared to the one-tenth of conventionally-raised families (8%). On the other hand, a majority (84%) of conventional household respondents saw their families as safe and secure (60%); only a little over half (60%) of unconventionally-raised respondents felt this way. Yet, almost three-quarters of conventionally-raised respondents (74.9%) saw their childhood relationships as confusing; only half (50.5) of unconventionally-raised respondents had this perception.

Childhood Bullying Experiences

Childhood bullying experiences, the second independent concept in this research, are presented in Table 1.C. Peer interactions captured one's connections outside of his/her household of immediate family environment. Bullying victimization represented negative peer interactions.

Table 1.C. Descriptive Statistics for Childhood Bullying Experience
New Family Structures Study 2012

Concepts	Indicators	Responses (Values)	Conventional Family (n=1160)	Unconventional Family (n=1744)
Childhood Bullying Experience	Q33_3. How were you bullied? *because I was different*	Never bullied (-1) Not in this way (0) Yes (1)	61.8% 17.0 21.2	58.7%[**] 15.0 26.3
	Q33_4. *hit, slapped, shoved*	Never bullied (-1) Not in this way (0) Yes (1)	61.8% 26.6 11.7	58.7%[***] 23.7 17.6
	Q33_5. *spread rumors or lies about you*	Never bullied (-1) Not in this way (0) Yes (1)	61.8% 21.6 16.7	58.7%[***] 18.0 23.3
	Q32. Did the bullying happen only once, occasionally, or for a long period of time?	Never bullied (-1) None describe experience (0) Happened only once (1) Occasionally but unrelated (2) Lasted a long time (3)	61.9% 2.7 2.9 18.7 13.7	58.7% 2.4 3.4 19.5 15.9
	Index of Bullying Experiences[1]	$\bar{x}$ (s) Range	-1.2 (3.7) -4-6	-0.8 (4.0)[***] -4-6

[***] p <= .001; [**] p<= .01; [*] p <= .05
[1] Index of Bullying Experiences= Q33_3 + Q33_4 + Q33_5 + Q32; correlations among the variables ranged from 0.85[***] to 0.90[***] for conventional families and 0.87[***] to 0.91[***] for unconventional families.

As seen in Table 1.C, individuals raised in conventional families were slightly more likely to be victimized ($\bar{x}$ = -1.2 on a scale of -4-6) than those from unconventional families ($\bar{x}$ = -0.8[***]). Amongst the three indicators, individuals were most likely to be bullied for being different. Regardless of household structure, about one quarter of respondents were bullied for being different (conventional 21%; unconventional 26%). Both groups were less likely to experience

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physical harm, but those from unconventional families more often suffered this way (17%) than conventional-raised respondents (11%).

Parent-Adult Child Relationship

While the previous concepts measured respondents' past relationships, relationships in adulthood were investigated as well. The first such relationship was the adult respondents' relationship with their parents[8]. This concept described how strong the adult children considered their adult relationship with their parent. The dimensions included styles of communication, expression of love, and support.

Table 1.D. Descriptive Statistics for Adult Parent-Child Relationship[1]
New Family Structures Study 2012

Indicators	Responses (Values)	Conventional Family (n=1109)	Unconventional Family (n=1457)
Q27_A. How often do you talk openly with [Parent 1] about things that are important to you?	Never (1)	1.6%	5.9%
	Rarely (2)	6.1	9.9
	Sometimes (3)	23.6	24.0
	Most of the time (4)	35.6	28.1
	Always (5)	33.1	32.0
Q27B. How often does [Parent 1] really listen to you when you want to talk?	Never (1)	2.1%	6.5%
	Rarely (2)	5.2	9.2
	Sometimes (3)	13.5	16.2
	Most of the time (4)	28.9	24.2
	Always (5)	50.4	43.8
Q27C. How often does [Parent 1] explicitly express affection or love for you?	Never (1)	1.9%	7.0%
	Rarely (2)	6.7	9.2
	Sometimes (3)	14.7	17.9
	Most of the time (4)	24.8	20.5
	Always (5)	51.9	45.3
Q27D. Would [Parent 1] help you if you had a problem?	Never (1)	0.7%	4.8%
	Rarely (2)	1.9	4.8
	Sometimes (3)	7.6	10.8
	Most of the time (4)	14.6	17.9
	Always (5)	75.2	61.7
Index of Parent-Adult Child Relationship	$\bar{x}$ (s)	17.0 (3.1)	15.8 (4.3)***
	Range	4-20	4-20

[1] Index of Adulthood Parent-Child Relationship = Q27A_1 + Q27B_1+ Q27C_1+ Q27D_1; correlations among the variables ranged from 0.68*** to 0.75*** for conventional families and 0.76*** to 0.84*** for unconventional families.

As seen in Table 1.D., both groups reported strong bonds with their parents, but those raised in conventional families had slightly higher quality ties (conventional $\bar{x}$ = 17; unconventional $\bar{x}$ = 15.8***, on scales of 4-20). Regardless of household structure growing up, about one-third of

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[8] Relationships with only one parent were used due to sampling problems when accounting for the second parent. Respondents whose parent was deceased were treated as missing cases.

respondents (conventional 33%; unconventional 32%) openly talked to their parent. Half of those raised in conventional homes (50%) believed their parent always listens to them and expresses love (52%). Unconventionally-raised adults perceived these dimensions of their current relationships only slightly less often; less than half (44%) said their parent always listens and is always affectionate (43%).

Romantic Relationships in Adulthood

The last type of interpersonal relationship considered was the respondent's relationship with his/her partner (Table 1.F). Both groups reported high quality romances (conventional x̄ = 21; unconventional x̄ = 20.4[***], on scales of 5-25). But, conventionally raised respondents viewed their relationships to be healthier (43%) and felt their marriage was a partnership (45%) than the unconventional group (39% and 41% respectively).

Table 1.F. Descriptive Statistics for Adult Romantic Relationships
New Family Structures Study 2012

Indicators	Responses (Values)	Conventional Family (n=860)	Unconventional Family (n=1334)
Q107A (Recoded[1]). We have a good relationship.	Strongly agree (5)	49.6%	45.3%
	Agree (4)	35.5	36.0
	Unsure (3)	9.8	12.2
	Disagree (2)	3.3	4.0
	Strongly disagree (1)	1.8	2.6
Q107B (Recoded[1]). My relationship with my partner is very healthy.	Strongly agree (5)	42.7%	38.7%[***]
	Agree (4)	37.4	33.2
	Unsure (3)	13.1	16.4
	Disagree (2)	4.9	8.8
	Strongly disagree (1)	2.0	2.9
Q107C (Recoded[1]). Our relationship is strong.	Strongly agree (5)	46.8%	43.8%
	Agree (4)	34.0	32.9
	Unsure (3)	12.2	13.6
	Disagree (2)	5.0	7.1
	Strongly disagree (1)	2.0	2.6
Q107D (Recoded[1]). My relationship with my partner makes me happy.	Strongly agree (5)	49.8%	45.9%
	Agree (4)	34.5	34.0
	Unsure (3)	11.1	13.0
	Disagree (2)	2.7	4.2
	Strongly disagree (1)	1.9	2.8
Q107E (Recoded[1]). I really feel part of a team with my partner.	Strongly agree (5)	45.3%	40.8%[*]
	Agree (4)	33.6	33.1
	Unsure (3)	11.9	14.9
	Disagree (2)	6.4	7.3
	Strongly disagree (1)	2.8	3.9
Index of Adult Romantic Relationship[2]	x̄ (s)	21.0 (4.5)	20.4 (4.8)[***]
	Range	5-25	5-25

[***] p <= .001; [**] p<= .01; [*] p <= .05
[1] The responses were reversed so that the higher score represented stronger relationships.
[2] Index of Adulthood Romantic Relationship= Q107A + Q107B + Q107C + Q107D + Q107E; correlations among the variables ranged from 0.81[***] to 0.89[***] for conventional families and 0.80[***] to 0.88[***] for unconventional families.

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Summary

On balance, respondents raised in unconventional households seemed to have engaged in slightly more risk taking than those who were raised in conventional households. As children, unconventionally-raised adults also reported weaker quality relationships with their parents and experienced more bullying. They also reported weaker relationships with their parents and partners in adulthood. It is, however, important to note that the differences were small.

Bivariate Analyses

The bivariate analysis provided a preliminary test of empirical associations of interpersonal relationships (with parents as children and in adulthood, with romantic partners) and childhood bullying (explanatory concepts) with adulthood risky behavior (the dependent concept). The preliminary correlations (Tables 2a-2b in Appendix C) indicated several interesting patterns in the potential influences of risk and protective factors on adulthood risk-taking behavior. There were also some differences among conventional and unconventional family structures.

Better quality relationships in the childhood home were linked to lower risk-taking deviance in adulthood. However, this protective connection was twice as strong for those who grew up in conventional households (r= -0.20[***]) than in unconventional households (r= -0.11[***]). Quality relationships with parents in adulthood were a similar protective resource; those who maintained good relationships with their parents in adulthood were less likely to engage in risky behaviors. Interestingly, again, this correlation was two times stronger for those raised in conventional families (r= -0.11[***]) than unconventional families (r= -0.05[*]). Childhood victimization, on the other hand, increased an adult's propensity to take risks, at about the same rate regardless of household structure (conventional r= 0.08[**]; unconventional r= 0.12[***]). A third deterrent to risk-taking was a quality romantic relationship regardless of childhood family structure (conventional r= -0.17[***]; unconventional r= -0.15[***]). The stability or the enduring relevance of these lifetime relationships will be tested in the multivariate analyses presented in the next section.

Multivariate Analyses

Finally, linear regression (presented in Table 3) was used to assess the impact of past and present inter-personal relationships on risk-taking behaviors in adulthood, net of gender, age, and education. To assess variations by childhood family structure, the analyses were split by conventional and unconventional families.

Two general patterns about relational protectants against adulthood risk-taking behavior was evident in the evidence. First, irrespective of the early family structure, those who had better quality family relationships early in their lives (Conventional Family Beta = -0.16[***] and Unconventional Beta = -0.09[**]) were less likely to take risks in adulthood. Notably, the impact of childhood relationships was twice as strong if they were raised in conventional, than in unconventional, families. In adulthood, healthy quality romantic relationships offered additional protection from risk-taking behavior, again regardless of childhood family structure (Conventional Family Beta = -0.12[***] and Unconventional Beta = -0.09[**]). These findings confirmed the importance of supportive primary relationships, both early and later in life.

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Table 3
Regression Analyses of the Relative Net Effects of Life-time Interpersonal Relationships
on Risk-Taking Behaviors in Adulthood. 2012 New Family Structures Survey[1]

	Beta (β) Conventional Family	Beta (β) Unconventional Family
Interpersonal Relationships:		
Family Relationship in Childhood	-0.16***	-0.09**
Childhood Bullying Experiences	0.04	0.09**
Parent-Child Relationship in Adulthood	0.03	0.08**
Romantic Relationship in Adulthood	-0.12***	-0.09**
Socio-demographics:		
Gender: Female	-0.27***	-0.22***
Age	-0.15***	-0.11***
Education	-0.13***	-0.16***
Constant (a)	19.19	18.03
Adjusted R^2	0.18***	0.12***
DF 1 & 2	7 & 789	7 & 1066

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$;
[1] Index of Risk-Taking Behavior= Q82B + Q82D + Q82E + Q82F + Q82G + Q82H;
Index of Family Relationships= Q28G + Q28A + Q28B + Q28C;
Index of Bullying Experiences= Q33_3 + Q33_4 + Q33_5 + Q32;
Index of Adulthood Parent-Child Relationship = Q27A_1 + Q27B_1+ Q27C_1+ Q27D_1;
Index of Adulthood Romantic Relationship = Q107E + Q107D + Q107C + Q107B + Q107A;
Gender: 1=Female, 0=Male;
Age: Range = 18-39;
Education: 1=Less than high school, 2=High school, 3=Some college, 4=College.

Two additional patterns illuminated how early family structure may exacerbate the risks in adulthood. For example, for those who were raised in unconventional families, bullying victimization increased the likelihood of adulthood risk-taking (Unconventional Beta = 0.09**). . Interestingly, the lasting risks of childhood bullying was offset by the protection that families offered (Unconventional Beta = -0.09**). Similarly, a supportive parent-child relationship in adulthood, ironically was associated with a propensity toward risk-taking, but again, only for those who were raised in unconventional families (Unconventional Beta = 0.08**). On the contrary, conventionally-raised adults were immune to the negative effects of bullying experiences (no significant impact), perhaps because of early parental support.

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

Empirical Reflections

This study offered important insights into the long-term impacts of childhood experiences, adult relationships on adult risk-taking. A modified life-course model aimed to capture the relevance of early childhood environments while at the same time recognizing that adult life relationships may matter too. First, regardless of whether someone was raised in a conventional or unconventional family, supportive, childhood family and adulthood romantic, relationships protected against risk-taking behavior. That is, those whose romantic relationships were healthy, strong, happy, and team-oriented were less likely to engage in risky behaviors. A Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who was interviewed for this research strongly agreed: "The quality of the relationship completely affects whether they are going to increase or decrease their high-risk behavior. I'd say that is the number one intervention" (Interviewee #5).

Likewise, those who considered their early family relationships to be loving, safe, secure, happy, and consistent were less likely to be drawn to risky behaviors in adulthood. To quote a Director of Counseling Services of a faith-based recovery agency (Interviewee #8), a trusting childhood family unit "goes a long way in stabilizing adult functioning and relationships." He added: "It has more to do with the quality of parenting than the conventional or unconventional" structure. On the contrary, negative, weak, or poor quality relationships—be it with parents or romantic partners—would be a source of strain for both men and women. As per the Director of Community Resources for a family and children services agency (Interviewee #7), "Relationship connectivity is probably 90% part of them being able to be effectively treated;" most of the court-mandated drug addicts she sees "have blown up all their relationships".

Childhood family structure was also relevant when it comes to protecting children from the long-term risks of childhood bullying and reaping supportive resources from parents. Ironically, a healthy parent-child relationship in adulthood was linked to more risk behaviors when reared in unconventional childhood homes. Further, for those who grew up in unconventional style households, bullying victimization during childhood was a significant risk for risk-taking in later years. Several interviewees confirmed that a large percentage of their clients, irrespective of whether they were dependent on alcohol, recreational drug use, pornography, or heavy smoking, were bullied in childhood (Interviewees #4, #5, #6). Neither of adult relationships with parents nor child bullying had an effect on conventionally-raised individuals.

In keeping with the life trajectory model, respondent's gender, age, and education had the most significant impacts on risky behavior, regardless of family structure. That is, younger, less educated, and male respondents were more inclined toward adulthood risk-taking than their older, more educated, and female counterparts. The more mature respondents were, whether in chronological age or in accumulated education, the less likely they were to engage in deviant or risky behaviors.

Theoretical Implications

On a theoretical level, these findings both supported and countered the theoretical predictions outlined in the research design (Figure 1). That primary relationships, both in childhood and in adulthood, protected adults from risk-taking corroborated proposed theories. First, romantic relationships prevented individuals' risks; stronger marital relations rendered adults less likely to engage in risky behavior. A Licensed Clinical Social Worker interviewed for this research noted,

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"It's a lot easier to get into those kinds of risky troublesome spots if it doesn't really matter to anyone else versus if you're tied to another person" (Interviewee #2). As predicted by social control theory (Akers, 1991), having a supportive marriage is a strong deterrent to deviance in the survey data and in the interviews (Interviewees #2, #4, #8). Highlighting more than just the existence of a relationship is a major contribution of this research. "If there isn't a quality, healthy, satisfying relationship, then there is going to be more risk-taking behavior," according to a Director of Counseling Services (Interviewee #8). A problem gambling counselor offered further support of social control in terms of outside obligations. Young people tend to drink and gamble more because they aren't parents and don't have as many responsibilities (Interviewee #4).

Figure 1

Empirical Model of the Impacts of Life Long Relationships on Adulthood Risk-Taking 2012 New Family Structures Survey[1,2,3]
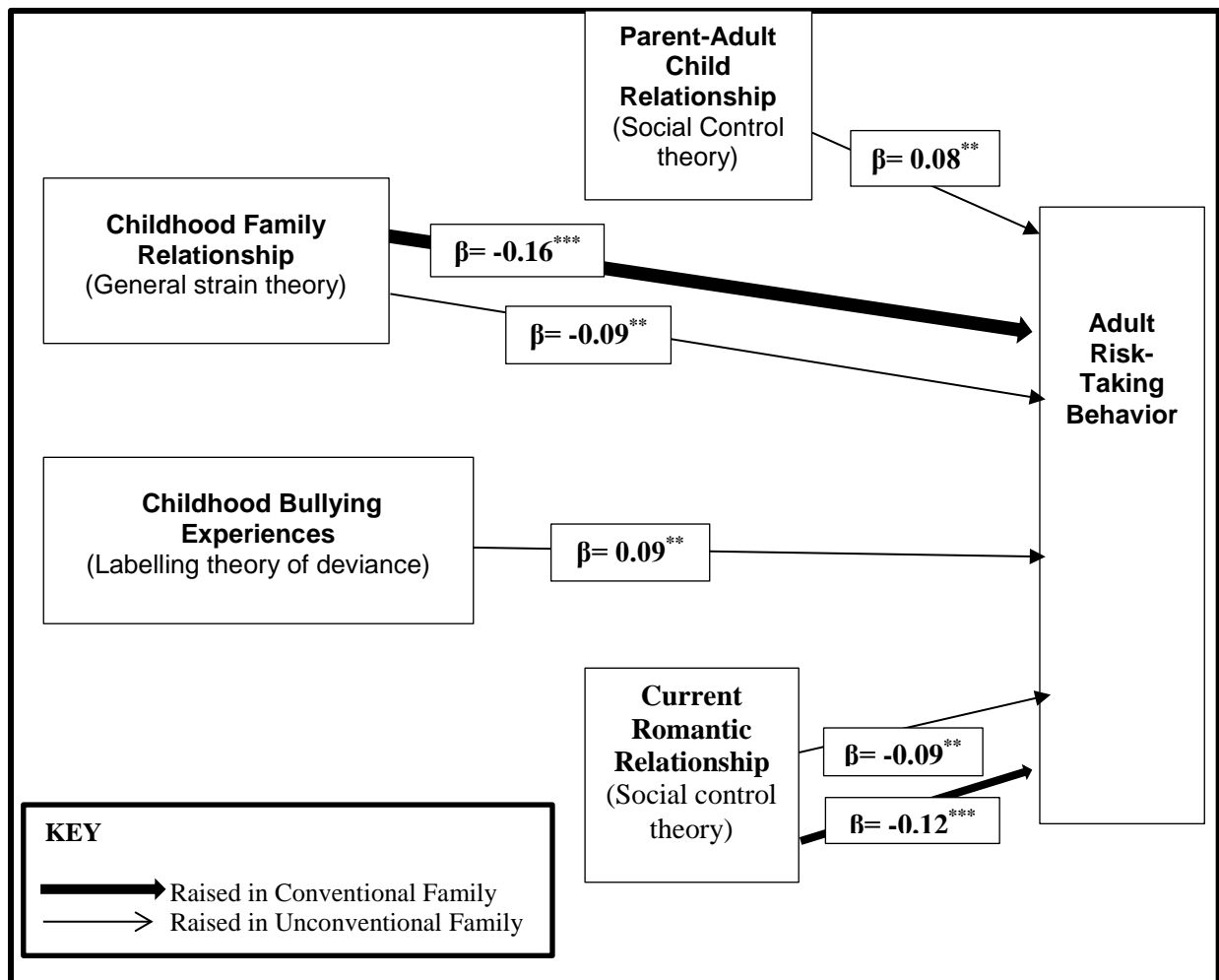
[1]   Controls not mapped for the sake of clarity;
[2]   The thicker line for the conventionally-raised respondents was chosen because these associations overall were stronger;
[3]   Refer to Table 3 for index coding.

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Second, as predicted by Agnew's general strain theory, healthy early family relationship was a deterrent to adult risk-taking. On the other hand, adults sometimes respond to the strain and discomfort experienced in negative family dynamics by engaging in risky behaviors. According to a Problem Gambling Counselor (Interviewee #4), many don't feel worthy of the love in their family, even if other family members were loving; when these people are in times of distress, they go to risky things to handle that distress. Moreover, some adults have poor coping skills and are less personally equipped to handle those stressors, even if the stresses were experienced in childhood.

Other findings offered more boundary limiting conditions for the long-term risks posed by childhood bullying and even parent-child relationship in adulthood. The risk and even some protective dynamics were operational only if the adults grew up in unconventional families. That victims of childhood bullying and that adults with positive parent-child relationships tend to be at elevated risks for poorer adult outcomes in adulthood is partially validated — this connection applies only if adults were raised in unconventional households. This finding confirmed the fifth hypotheses to some degree, in that negative peer interactions continued to traumatic for unconventionally-raised children. It is these mixed long-term relevance of these findings for those raised in differing household structures that specified "boundary limiting conditions" (Powers 2010:76) and required a more nuanced portrayal of strain theory. In the words of the Marriage and Family Therapist, it's "a mixed bag." Others added that high-risk behaviors can be present in children from both conventional and unconventional families (Interviewees #5, #2, #8). The boundary limiting conditions between differing family structures also highlighted the malleability of self-concept in some cases but the stability in others.

The professional interviewees offered some explanations for the differential portraits found between conventionally and unconventionally raised adults. For example, children may be upset or withdrawn due to the instability of a non-traditional structure, making them more vulnerable targets for peer bullies. According to a Registered Nurse, "When you look at adults now, [they] were growing up in a time when the nuclear family was more the norm, then if you were from an unconventional family, it would put you on the outside of society sooner" (Interviewee #3). Social stigma about family dynamics, particularly in past decades, may be further fodder for developmental and psychosocial adjustment difficulties. Children from non-conventional families may be more likely to remember and pay attention to bullying since it is a reminder of growing up in a minority family. Perhaps, childhood bullying may actually have occurred inside the home as a consequence of dysfunction among parents and siblings in the family (Interviewee #6). Other interviewees added: We "can't pull anything apart with" bullying because it is still considered a relatively new, trending concept that in previous generations was hardly ever discussed, addressed, or tracked it (Interviewees #4, #3).

Another boundary limiting condition was found in the unexpected positive association between adult respondents' relationships with their parents and risk behaviors in unconventional families; that is, respondents who had healthier relationships with their parents in their adulthood also reported taking more risks, but only if they were raised in unconventional families. A potential explanation offered by the professional interviewees went thusly: the unlikely positive connection might be a time-ordering issue. Individuals struggling with risk-taking delinquency may have "landed face down" and, either after or in the midst of their poor choices, returned to their parents for support (Interviewee #3). The Social Worker (Interviewee #4) offered a similar insight about the family unit as a landing spot: "They know there's a place to go that will still take them back and help them out of the trouble." Resources might have some influence too. Interviewee #4 proposed that young people are still often supported financially, to some degree, by their parents who can come bail them out. Parents play several roles, though, and adult

children may rely on their parents in different domains of life. For example, according to the Marriage and Family Therapist (Interviewee #5), "Nobody goes to their parents for help on high-risk behavior. They go to their parents for emotional needs but not for high-risk behaviors." Furthermore, the risk-taking behavior and the parent-child relationship may be mutually dependent. That is, the individual's actions may depend on their relationship quality and vice versa. The specific type of risk-behavior may also be of importance. For example, gamblers are still usually connected to their family of origin while "a lot of times with other addictions, a lot of the families are kind of done" (Interviewee #4)[9].

Limitations & Future Directions

Like all studies, this study too was not free of limitations. Most obviously, only less than a quarter of the variability in adult substance use was explained by interpersonal relationships, be they in childhood or as adults, and childhood bullying victimization (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.18^{***}$ conventional, 0.12^{***} unconventional). This leaves unexplained 82 and 88 percent of variability, respectively, in the two household structure models.

However, several exciting future research possibilities were implicit in the very shortcomings of this study. For one, risk-taking behavior, is, as Interviewee #5 stated, "such a big umbrella." This study defined the behavior in a rather narrow way. Risky sexual behaviors, in particular, were not accounted for. Future researchers should also broaden the range of substance use, beyond the binge-drinking, marijuana, and "other illegal drugs" considered in this paper. Including use of pharmaceuticals like OxyContin, which has become a pathway drug to harder substances (Interviewee #1) is worth considering. The frequency, severity, and/or transition to addiction is another important dimension of risk behaviors. The Gambling Counselor explained: "even though they see [the behavior] as risk-taking at the beginning, once it becomes an addiction and they're compulsed …they're not thinking of it as a risk anymore" (Interviewee #4).

Another suggestion was more methodological. The 2012 New Family Structures Survey questions ascertained only risk taking decisions made in the year prior to the survey. A fuller life course model would be longitudinal. In the words of the Social Worker (Interviewee #4), "It's easy to get skewed perceptions" with recall data. Adult respondents may have altered—either consciously or subconsciously—their childhood perceptions. More accurate measurements would utilize data collected at different time frames, in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.

Thirdly, only two household structures, conventional and unconventional, were differentiated in this study. In the nurse's (Interviewee #3) eight year career she could count on two hands the number of patients that have come from a nuclear family. As this commentary and data about contemporary trends in family structures and dynamics have shown, fewer and fewer families can be defined as traditionally nuclear. Consequently, additional research that explores children's long-term well-being in gay, lesbian, separated, cohabiting, divorced, adoptive, and foster families is warranted. Interviewees also suggested an additional focus on children in

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[9] Another piece of supporting evidence might lay in the fact that, unlike in the conventionally raised group where supportive parents in childhood offered the strongest protection (Beta=-.16***), effects of interpersonal relationships (with parents and bullies) on risk taking in unconventionally raised adults were weak (Beta effects in the range of .08** to .09**), at best. Besides, in the unconventional families, those who were bullied did not have supportive parents either growing up (r=-.25***) or in their adulthood (r=-.14***). But, once the risk response to strains associated with weak childhood family connections and bullying were neutralized (controlled), parents might be the last resource when troubles get out of hand.

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foster care, specifically, since they are substantially more prone to at-risk behaviors (Interviewees #6, #7).

Fourth, expanding the demographics of this research will be additionally productive in connecting childhood relationships with adulthood outcomes. A sample of less high-functioning adults could offer a clearer picture of the adults who struggle the most with adult risk-taking (Interviewee #3). Though it was beyond this paper's focus, "dual diagnosis" or "co-occuring disorder" individuals—that is, people who have been diagnosed with a mental illness along with substance abuse (Interview #1, #3, #4, #7) is also warranted. Besides, this study only targeted 18-39 year olds. Future research could explore behaviors over a broader age range. For example, the Director of Counseling Services has a 56-year-old client who, in childhood, suffered from school bullying and his mother's emotional abuse, and now considers his life "illegitimate" and "with nothing to show for" it (Interviewee #8). This adds another layer to relationship quality—trauma or abuse—that could be teased out for additional illustration of the strain theory. As the Problem Gambling Counselor (Interviewee #4) reported, "Addiction comes from a history of shame, and shame often comes from a history of abuse as a child". A fuller longitudinal life-course model could capture these complex life patterns.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Table
Descriptive Statistics for Socio-Demographics
New Family Structures Study 2012

Dimensions	Indicators	Responses (Values)	Conventional Family (n=1,168)	Unconventional Family (n=1,749)
Gender: Female	PPGENDER	Female (1)	65.6%	69.0%[***]
		Male (0)	34.4	31.0
Age	PPAGE	Mean (SD)	28.9 (6.4)	27.7 (6.3)[***]
		Range	18-39	18-39
Education (highest degree, categorical)	PPEDUCAT	Less than high school (1)	4.7%	9.8%[***]
		High School (2)	16.0	25.4
		Some college (3)	35.3	42.0
		Bachelor's degree or higher (4)	44.0	22.8

[***] $p <= .001$.

Appendix B

Consent Form and Interview Schedule

Consent Form

Dear _____ :

I am a Sociology Senior working on my Research Capstone Paper under the direction of Dr. Marilyn Fernandez in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. I am conducting my research on the impacts of some critical life experiences on adult alcohol and substance use.

You were selected for this interview, because of your knowledge of and experience working in the areas of _____ .

I am requesting your participation, which will involve responding to questions about the risky behaviors of adults who grew up in traditional and non-traditional families. Specifically, I wish to explore with you the impacts of parent-child relationships and bullying experiences during childhood on adulthood (under 40 years old) deviance. In addition, I would like to talk about the possible impacts of current relationships—both familial and romantic, in adulthood for deviant behaviors.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose to not participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time. The results of the research study may be presented at SCU's Annual Anthropology/Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference and published (in a Sociology department publication). Pseudonyms will be used in lieu of your name and the name of your organization in the written paper. You will also not be asked (nor recorded) questions about your specific characteristics, such as age, race, sex, religion.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call/email me at _____ or Dr. Fernandez at _____ .

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Sincerely,

Eryn Olson

By signing below you are giving consent to participate in the above study. Since the interview will be done via phone, please either email me back a message denoting your consent or scan a copy of this form, signed, to me. Thank you.

_____   _____   _____
Signature   Printed Name   Date

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, through Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at (408) 554-5591.

Interview Schedule

Interview Date and Time: _____

Respondent ID#:

1. What is the TYPE Agency/Organization/Association/Institution (**NO NAME**, please) where you learned about (and/or worked) with this issue:
   _____

2. What is your position in this organization? _____

3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?
   _____

4. Based on what you know of adult risk-taking behavior, how common is this issue? Specifically, gambling? Excessive drinking? Drug and/or tobacco use? Pornography consumption?

5. In your professional judgement, what are some reasons that lead to risk-taking among adults?
   a. How about early family relationships, specifically with their parents when they were growing up?
   b. How about childhood bullying experiences?
   c. How about current family relationships, especially with parents?
   d. How about current romantic relationship?
   e. How, if at all, does growing up in traditional and non-traditional families affect risk-taking behavior in adulthood?

6. Is there anything else about this issue/topic I should know more about?

Thank you very much for your time. If you wish to see a copy of my final paper, I would be glad to share it with you at the end of the winter quarter. If you have any further questions or comments for me, I can be contacted at_____. Or if you wish to speak to my faculty advisor, Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, she can be reached at _____.

Appendix C
Table 2a. Correlation (r) Matrix
Adulthood Risk-Taking, Childhood Parent-Child Relationship, Childhood Bullying, Adult Parent-Child Relationship, and Adulthood Romantic Relationship[1]
New Family Structures Study, 2012
[Unconventional below the 1 diagonal (n=1107-1749); Conventional above (n=833-1168)]

	Risk-Taking	Family Relationships in Childhood	Childhood Bullying Experiences	Parent-Adult Child Relationship	Adult Romantic Relationship
Risk-Taking	1.0	-0.20***	0.08**	-0.11***	-0.17***
Family Relationships in Childhood	-0.11***	1.0	-0.19***	0.53***	0.22***
Childhood Bullying Experiences	0.12***	-0.25***	1.0	-0.11***	-0.12***
Parent-Child Relationship in Adulthood	-0.05*	0.57***	-0.14***	1.0	0.14***
Romantic Relationship in Adulthood	-0.15***	0.16***	-0.09***	0.08**	1.0

Table 2b. Correlation (r) Matrix
Adulthood Risk-Taking and Demographic Controls
New Family Structures Study, 2012
[Unconventional below the 1 diagonal (n=1686); Conventional above (n=1124)]

	Risk-Taking	Gender: Female	Age	Education
Risk-Taking	1.0	-0.27***	-0.14***	-0.19***
Gender: Female	-0.18***	1.0	0.02	0.03**
Age	-0.14***	-0.04***	1.0	0.31***
Education	-0.21***	-0.05***	0.29***	1.0

*** $p <= .001$; ** $p <= .01$; * $p <= .05$
[1] Index of Risk-Taking Behavior= Q82B + Q82D + Q82E + Q82F + Q82G + Q82H;
Index of Family Relationships= Q28G + Q28A + Q28B + Q28C;
Index of Bullying Experiences= Q33_3 + Q33_4 + Q33_5 + Q32;
Index of Adulthood Parent-Child Relationship = Q27A_1 + Q27B_1+ Q27C_1+ Q27D_1;
Index of Adulthood Romantic Relationship = Q107E + Q107D + Q107C + Q107B + Q107A;
Gender: 1=Female, 0=Male;
Age: Range = 18-39;
Education: 1=Less than high school, 2=High school, 3=Some college, 4=College

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Interviewee #2, Licensed Clinical Social Worker. November 13, 2015. March 5, 2016.

Interviewee #3, Registered Nurse. November 13, 2015. March 5, 2016.

Interviewee #4, Problem Gambling Counselor. February 10, 2016.

Interviewee #5, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. February 23, 2016.

Interviewee #6, Prevention Specialist and Coalition Coordinator. March 4, 2016.

Interviewee #7, Director of Community Resources. March 4, 2016.

Interviewee #8, Director of Counseling Services and Licensed Social Worker. March 7, 2016.

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Adolescent Transitions from Licit to Illicit Drug Use: Impacts of Protective and Risk Factors

By

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ABSTRACT. This study examined how transitions from licit to illicit drug use by adolescents were influenced by risk and preventative factors in their lives. Survey data, from approximately 2000 twelfth grade students surveyed in the 2013 Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth study, supplemented with feedback from eight professionals knowledgeable about youth drug use, were used. A sequential regression analysis found that licit drug usage significantly increased the possibility that a youth will transition to illicit drugs. That peer drug culture increased the risk of both types drug usage was predicted using Sutherland's Differential Association theory (1939). However, family support and academic engagement, as per Social Supportive Control theory (Hirschi 1969) directly decreased the likelihood of licit drug use and only indirectly illicit drug usage. Results from this mixed methods research contributed to the existing body of research on the gateway perspectives in adolescent drug use scholarship and has practical implications for developing youth drug deterrence programs.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescent substance usage, because of both the impressionable age of the users and the negative long consequences of drugs, has drawn the attention of scholars, educators, policy experts, and the media. Of course, not all youth are drug users. Neither is youth drug use a new phenomenon. Adolescents have been experimenting with and using drugs for generations. While the drugs of choice may have changed over time, youth still use both illicit and licit drugs. However, there are both the obvious users and those who use drugs undetected. Using a variety of definitions of drug use and different scales for measuring prevalence, frequency or just usage, scholars have studied the risk and protective factors involved in not only adolescent drug use but different types of drug use as well.

In a search for potential pathways to illicit drug use among adolescents, this study used a mixed methods approach to explore the roles that critical institutions have played in the presence (or absence as the case might be) of drugs, both licit drugs, as gateway drugs, and illicit drugs, in the lives of adolescents. The primary purpose of socializing institutions, like the family and schools, is to protect youth from drug use and other related risky behaviors. Others, such as peer cultures, place youth at risk for drug use. Parental social capital, family support, and

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student academic engagement were some of the protective sources considered in this analysis. But, peer drug culture and accessibility of drugs were expected to raise the drug risk level for adolescents. High School seniors, the focus of this research, are on the verge of adulthood; identifying the risks of and predictors of drug use can be utilized to develop high school drug programs to help them transition smoothly into adulthood. At risk students can be targeted with appropriate programming to deter them from drug usage by strengthening protective sources and minimizing risk factors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars in the extant literature have identified a set of critical factors in adolescent use of drugs, particularly illicit drugs. They include adolescent responsibility or agency in drug use, family protection against drug use, and the community context of illicit drug use.

Gateway Drugs to Illicit Drug Use

The story of illicit drug use by adolescents is not restricted to only one drug nor is it just dependence on that one drug. Neither is illicit drug use the starting point of one's drug use history. Licit drugs often precede or become the gateway, the entry, into the world of illicit drugs. For example, in a study of 2,019 American 10th graders, Maldonado-Molina and Lanza (2010) defined a gateway drug as a drug that preceded the second drug and, most importantly, increased the probability that an adolescent would use that second drug. Ward, Stogner, Gibson and Akers also found that the frequency of gateway substance (cigarettes or alcohol) use increased the likelihood that a youth will move towards a harder substance like marijuana in a sample of 1,116 11th and 12th graders in mid-western U.S. The timing between when the original drug was introduced and the harder drug was first tried was crucial to identify in order to fully understand the relationship (Maldonado-Molina & Lanza 2010).

There is a large body of work on why adolescents use drugs, either licit or illicit drugs. But, not much is known about the life circumstances surrounding adolescent transitions from the licit to illicit drug world. Besides, what is known about the gateway theory has come from studying adults. Often studies, like the one done by Morojele and Brook (2001), focused on transitions in adulthood that were triggered by experiences like drug experimentation as an adolescent. After studying 686 individuals in upstate New York for twenty years, they found that youth deviance (including drug use) increased the likelihood of transitioning to illicit drug use in adulthood. Adults who were frequent abusers of illicit drugs were heavy licit drug users in their adolescence. Likewise in a longitude study of 1,256 New Zealanders, marijuana users in their youth had increased levels of use, abuse, and diversity of use of illicit drugs (Fergusson, Boden & Horwood 2006). However the strength of the relationship between youth and adult drug use declined over time; youth drug use had a larger impact on use in early adulthood than when they got older. While these works confirmed the gateway theory, they overlooked youth who transition to illicit drug use before they even reach adulthood.

Who are Adolescent Illicit Drug Users?

Researchers who sought to identify demographic and other profiles of youth illicit drug users have settled on both decisions made by the adolescents as well as environmental triggers. Speaking to adolescent's agency or decisions, Wright, Bobashev and Folsom's analyses of the

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1999 NHSDA (National Household Survey on Drug Abuse) data showed that seventy-nine percent of why a youth used illicit drugs was a function of the individual youth independent of any outside factors (2007). Older, than younger, adolescents were more likely to use drugs (Myers 2013). Male youth were also more likely to use drugs than their female counterparts (Connell, Gilreath, Aklin & Brex 2010; Krohn, Hall & Lizotte 2009; Hammond, Ahmed, Yang, Brukhalter & Leatherdale 2011; Newcomb, Birkett, Corliss & Mustanski 2014). Further, being a sexual minority was an additional risk for drug use; being on the fringe, these students were hypothesized to have turned to drugs to escape the isolation (Newcomb et al. 2014).

These demographic characteristics have been theorized to be proxies for social dynamics that can impact the agency or responsibility that youth have to withstand or succumb to the appeal of drugs. For example, male adolescents, when contrasted with females, had less exposure to protective factors in the community (Kim, Oesterle, Hawkins & Shapiro 2015); the differential protection received by female youth enabled them to withstand the allure of drugs. Connell and his colleagues found that negative beliefs about drug use (a more direct indicator of agency) protected adolescents against use. On the other hand, positive drug views exposed them to drug risks; these students were open to using various types of drugs.

Family: Protection or Risk for Youth against Illicit Drug Use?

Families, as critical early socializing agents, are posited to be important players in the lives of adolescents. Families are the first social networks that youth know. Familial relationships that exist, or do not exist, are an important part of all adolescent's environment. It is, therefore, not surprising that a parent's disapproval of drug use or close supervision of their child decreased the likelihood that their child used drugs (Myers 2013; Connell et al. 2010). The rules and limits parents set for their child diminished their exposure to illicit drug use by sheltering them from certain risky locations, be they geographic or social (Connell et al. 2010) In other words, the supportive relationships nurtured between the parent and their children played a vital part in the protection against drug use. When youth felt that they were accepted by their parents, they were less likely to initiate, leave alone continue, drug use; this was the case especially so when they had positive relationship with a father figure (Myers 2013).

While strong, positive familial relations protect adolescents against risks, other family dynamics might put an adolescent at risk of using drugs. Some examples: A family member who used illegal drugs not only exposed the youth to drugs but also placed the youth at risk for using illicit drugs (Myers 2013[2]; Nuño-Gutiérrez, Rodriguez-Cerda & Álvarez-Nemegyei 2006[3]). An adolescent looks to family members for examples of acceptable behavior and if they see drug usage, it might change how the adolescent views drug usage. Regular alcohol usage by a parent increased the acceptance of drug use by children in a study of 451 high risk (namely, children of alcoholics) adolescents (Hussong, Huang, Serrano, Curran & Chassin 2012).

Fortunately, stable relationships fostered between family members and their children were more salient than alcoholic or drug use by family members (Krohn et al. 2009). Youth were more at risk for drug use and other problem behaviors if there was not a stable relationship between parent and child, regardless of how many guardians there were in the household. Another aspect of family stability was residential mobility. Lee found that Latino families (2,621 Latino youth aged 12-17) who moved frequently had less family stability and higher levels of youth illicit

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[2] The authors utilized Family Connections data from 1,043 African American students in the rural south.
[3] Sample was comprised of 60 drug using teenagers.

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drug use when using studying (2007). Their children were not only unable to create positive student peer relationships they also struggled with parental relationships.

As for the protections or risks offered by a family's socioeconomic resources, the evidence has been mixed. When studying Canadian youth (9,288 7th to 12th graders surveyed in the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey) Hamilton, von der Mass, Boak and Mann found that adolescents whose parents had less than a college degree had higher probabilities of drug use (2013). But, education and family income were by no means certain to protect children from drugs. For example, for 781 student surveyed at state universities in Ankara, Turkey, parents with higher levels of education increased the odds of their children using drugs. Not only did the privileged children have more access to economic resources, but parenting by educated parents was more permissive and they were often not home to monitor their children (Ayvasik and Sümer 2010). Similarly, 20,745 U.S. students in grades 7-12 from high income families were also found to have higher rates of illicit drug use (Humensky 2010). On balance, it is not necessarily how well resourced a family is (or not) that is critical in protecting their children from drugs. Rather, it is the socialization, supervision, and positive role modeling that are the buffers against drug use by children.

Schools and Academics as another Site for the Adolescent Drug Story

In addition to the youth's family, schools and their academic lives are another critical context in which the story of adolescent drug use (or not) has played out. When academics outweighed deviant peers in the children's lives, youth ability to perform well in school protected them against drug use. Connell et al. found that a commitment to school and good grades received by the students decreased the likelihood of an adolescent using both illicit and licit drugs (2010). But, in Wilson and Widom's (2008) longitudinal study of around 1,500 children, school problems precipitated the onset of regular continued drug use among adolescents; these students saw drugs as an escape from academic troubles.

The Community Context of Drug Use

The community of adolescents includes their peers, neighborhoods, and the broader community. As each adolescent spends more time at school and less time at home with their families, peers become a larger influence on behavior. Neighborhoods and the surrounding areas in which students live offer additional risks for and protection from drugs.

Peer Cultures. As children grow up, the first and most active part of their community is their peers. They spend a large portion of their youth with their peers, be it at school or in their neighborhoods. Consequently, peer pressure can play a major role in protecting or creating risk for adolescent actions. For example, two hundred and ninety-one adolescents in South Africa noted peer pressure for using drugs; peers were part of their socialization networks and they worried about being isolated if they did not participate in group activities (Hendericks, Savahl & Florence 2015), even if it included drug use. Some attempted to gain their peers approval and attention by engaging in drug use in order to solidify their group membership.

Neighborhoods and Broader Communities. Extending outside the family, schools, and peers is the broader neighborhood and other communities in which youth live. The unique features, cultural, economic, and political, of communities percolate down to adolescents. For example, there have been different rates of adolescent alcohol and drug noted across the major areas of

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Canada; these patterns followed the regional patterns of adult drug use (Hammond et al. 2011). The study cited potential regional differences, as in different access laws for each substance in the various regions and the differences in youth education. Closer to home, living in an urban and disadvantaged community can lead to an increased risk of drug use as was found by Swahn & Bossarte (2009) when they compared data from students in urban areas to a national survey data. Living in an urban and disadvantaged community increased the prevalence of involvement or exposure to risky behavior.

Against such overwhelming evidence of drug risks in the youth's communities, can, and if so how, can communities protect their children against the risks of drug use? With these goals in mind, 24 communities across 7 states participated in a program called "Comunities That Care" (CTC). They received training in how to implement drug prevention programs. As a first step, the CTC program provided communities with a structure in order to address community specific needs. They were trained to assess levels of risk and protective factors in the community before using this knowledge to teach skills that allowed students to resist peer drug cultures. These small towns' strategies were highly effective with middle school students but the preventative factor was lost among high school students (Kim et al. 2015). Part of the explanation was that the programming was not continued for students as they moved into high school, showing that the skills were not maintained without the programs.

Youth Agency

There is also growing recognition in the scholarly and applied communities that it is not only the system (be it the family, schools, and peers) that important to consider, youth agency (or responsibility) in how they respond to the risks for or protection from drug use are equally vital. When youth perceived drugs as easily accessible in the community, they were more likely to use drugs (Connell et al. 2010). In other words, when over 10,000 high school seniors were studied nationally, drugs were perceived by adolescents to be more accessible, disapproval levels were down and in turn increased the likelihood that they used drugs (Duncan, Palamar and Williams 2014).

Summary of Extant Research and Future Directions

Adolescent lives are made up of a variety of experiences that range from those within their control (youth agency) to those in broader community settings in which they live. Some experiences protect adolescents against licit and illicit drugs while others elevate the risks. For example, male youth and sexual minorities were at elevated drug risks. And youth who perceived drugs to be accessible were more likely to be users. Moving outside the purview of youth agency, having a supportive family protected against drug use while a dysfunctional family increased the likelihood that youth used drugs. In the school setting, adolescents who were academically engaged were also less likely to use drugs. However, academic peers posed drug risks for the adolescents. Beyond school, living in an urban and disadvantaged community increased drug use.

In short, while much is known about adolescent drug use, gateway drug use among adolescents is a relatively unexplored topic. No doubt, prior use of cigarettes or alcohol (youth agency) increased the likelihood that youth transitioned to marijuana use. But, not much is known about other licit drugs, like prescription drugs, as starter drugs. Prescription drugs, often as easily accessible as the bathroom cabinet, can become the first drug of choice by youth. It is crucial to

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identify multiple pathways to adolescent drug use to find ways to prevent starter drug abuse before youth transition into harder drugs. This research, with its singular focus on adolescents, can offer valuable information for youth drug prevention programs.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the sources of risks for, and prevention of, illicit drug use among youth? Specifically, the following risks were considered: licit drug use, accessibility of drugs, peer drug culture and pro-drug use youth opinions. Academic engagement, family support and parental social capital were the preventative sources chosen. To test the gateway paradigm among adolescents, illicit drug use was first tested against licit drug use, net of risks and preventative sources. These analyses not only offered a test of the gateway model but also made compared reasons for illicit versus licit drug use. Economic resources (to account for variations in drug purchase options) and gender were controlled.

THEORIES AND RELATED HYPOTHESES

Theoretically speaking, why are youth drawn to drugs and other delinquent activities? Could it be that the daily stressors or strains become so overwhelming that they turn to deviant behaviors as a way of coping with the strains? For example, an adolescent who has disengaged or failed in school or whose family environment is dysfunctional or abusive might turn to drugs in order to escape the strained reality. Drugs might also be a way to rebel against the perceived social constraints exercised by parents and schools. From the perspective of Strain Theory (Agnew 1992), drugs offer adolescents ways of coping with the strains they face.

However not all adolescents who experience strain turn to licit or for that matter illicit drugs. Primary social institutions, like empathic families and supportive academic environments, can help youth resist the lure of drugs. As studies have found, families are often the first protective defense for children. Early in a child's life, parents, as they effectively socialize their children, instill socially appropriate values and behaviors. Parents, through a variety of supportive and corrective social control mechanisms, help children develop a strong sense of self. The Iowa School of self-concept theorized that as the children blossom into adolescence and even adulthood, their strong core self-concept would remain a positive guide in choices and decisions to stay away from drugs and other destructive behaviors (Kuhn and McPartland 1954).

No doubt, like all things, dysfunctional families can add to the normal strains in a child's life. Without proper parental guidance and controls, these children might develop weaker self-concepts, and be easily steered towards delinquent actions like drug use, to cope with or as reactions to family strain. Additionally, parents who themselves are part of dysfunctional or even abusive cultures expose their children to abusive behaviors, drugs, and other socially destructive actions.

As children grow older and spend more time outside the home and at school, peers become their main socializing agents. Peer interactions might solidify the child's core self-concept or alternatively might shake and even fundamentally reshape it. It stands to reason that the youth core self will remain the most influential force in their lives, if the youth and their significant peers have similar positive pro-social values. In contrast, interactions with deviant peers, like drug users, expose youth to values and behaviors contrary to the pro-social norms learned in the home. As per the Differential Association theory (Cressey 1954), socialization within deviant

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peer communities offers youth alternative, deviant, options that counter or differ from the social norms inculcated by the family.

However, even if their peers live destructive lifestyles of drugs and school disengagement, those with parents who continue to remain engaged in their children's lives, through social control and supportive presence, can protect their children. Supportive school environments that promote and encourage academic engagement can similarly strengthen the child's protective boundaries. On the other hand, if parents are disengaged from their children's lives or if the school environment is not as supportive, the child might succumb to influential anti-social peers' values rendering their self-concept more fluid (Chicago School of Self Concept; Mead 1913). In short, parents, schools, and peers are theorized to be primary influences in the social or deviant choices that children make.

The set of hypotheses and empirical analyses about youth drug proposed below were guided by a broad theoretical framework that linked youth self-concept to the social control/support, strains, and peer differential associations in adolescent lives. More specifically, youth drug use was conceptualized as a response to the strains and peer influences that rendered adolescent self-concept more fluid. On the other hand, a strong core self-concept, a byproduct of support and social controls exercised by family and academic systems, was expected to protect against adolescent drug use, both with starter and later drugs. However, if the protective mechanisms fail the adolescents, licit drugs were predicted to be adolescent gateways to illicit drugs.

Hypothesis One: Licit Drugs the Gateway to Illicit Drugs
The more licit drugs adolescents used, the more likely they would be to use illicit drugs, after controlling for risk (accessibility of drugs) and protective (academic engagement and family support and social capital) influences, net of economic resources and sex (Gateway paradigm). In other words, use of licit drugs raised adolescent chances of transitioning to illicit drugs. And, once adolescents used licit drugs, their family and academic supports would become less relevant and risks of drugs enhanced.

Hypothesis Two: Risk Factors
The risks adolescents faced (accessibility of drugs, peer drug culture, pro soft and hard drug opinions) increased the likelihood of using licit and illicit drugs, net of the protective factors, age, economic resources and region (Cressey's Differential Association Theory).

Hypothesis Three: Protective Factors
On the other hand, the more social protection youth had in their lives (academic engagement, family support, parental social capital), the less likely they would be to use licit and illicit drugs, net of risk factors, age, economic resources, and region (Aker's Social Control Theory).

METHODOLOGY

This research relied on a sequential mixed methods approach for the data analysis. First the hypotheses were tested using the 2013 Monitoring the Future survey data. Then interviews with eight professionals in the drug counseling field were used to expand on the survey findings.

Secondary Survey Data

The 2013 Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey) study was conducted by Lloyd D. Johnston, Jerald G. Bachman, Patrick M. O'Malley, and John

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E. Schulenberg[4]. This survey focused on about 2100 12th graders, their lives and specifically their drug use. In the original study, each student was randomly assigned to take one of six forms; each form contained a core set of questions regarding drug use and demographics as well as a variety of questions about values, lifestyle and behavior. I chose to use data from Form One as it included all of the variables relevant to this research[5].

Among the high school seniors in this analysis (Appendix A), 51.4 percent were female and the remainder were male (48.6%). As indicated in the literature review male and female adolescents have different life trajectories. A plurality of 12th graders in the study did not receive money from a job (45.2%) or other sources (47.0%). However, many more (a majority) obtained money from either work or allowances or both. Work income was reported by ten percent to be over 175 dollars a week; another 14.9 percent received between 76 and 125 dollars. Those who received allowances made less than those who worked: about sixteen percent (15.6%) received between 11 and 20 dollars a week and 9.7 percent between 21-35 dollars. I chose to look at economic resources (whether wages or allowances) earned by youth because of their potential impact on their ability to purchase drugs. These factors were controlled for in the multivariate analyses.

Primary Qualitative Data

To lend an applied perspective to the survey findings, eight drug counselors who work primarily with youth were interviewed for their insights. The first interviewee is a retired counselor (Retired Counselor) who worked with children through a private healthcare company for over twenty years. He continues to volunteer his time as a counselor at a local non-profit for troubled youth. The second interviewee is a practicing psychologist (General Practicing Psychologist) who specializes in drug counseling with both youth and adults. Interviewee #3 is also a practicing psychologist, but is specialized in counseling youth (Youth Practicing Psychologist). Interviewee #4 is the director of a residential counseling program for youth between the ages of 15-20 (Director of a Residential Counseling Program). Both Interviewees #5 and #6 were the residential substance abuse counselor at different institutions for troubled youth, with Interviewee #5 working in a public institution and Interviewee #6 a private institution. Each interview lasted about twenty minutes: One interview was done in person (Interviewee #1); the rest were conducted over the phone (Interviewees #2 to #8). The consent form and interview protocol can be found in Appendix B.

DATA ANALYSES: SURVEY AND QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

Three levels of analysis, univariate, bivariate and multivariate were used to explore the answers to the research question. In keeping with the sequential mixed methods design, comments from the eight interviews were used to elaborate on the survey findings.

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[4] The MTF study was funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Service, National Institute of Health and National Institute on Drug Abuse.
[5] The original collector of the date, or ICPSR, or the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for the use of the data or for the interpretations or inferences based on such uses.

Operationalization and Descriptive (or Univariate) Analyses

Illicit Drug Use

Illicit drug use, the primary research focus, was created by combining each student's use of a variety of criminalized drugs in the 30 days prior to the survey (Table 1.A). The specific drugs considered were LSD, other hallucinogens, amphetamines, crack cocaine, other forms of cocaine and heroin. All of these drugs are illegal nationwide.

TABLE 1.A. Illicit Drug Use (n=2013-2093)
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013

Concept	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Illicit Drug Use during last 30 days from interview	V1286. On how many occasions (if any) have you used LSD?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x 2-6 = 3-5x To 40+	98.8% 0.7 0.5
	V1318. Occasions (if any) have you taken hallucinogens other than LSD?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x 2 = 3-5x	98.5% 1.3 0.1
	V1331. Occasions (if any) have you taken amphetamines on your own- that is, without a doctor telling you to take them?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x 2-6 = 3-5x To 40+ occasions	97.4% 1.4 1.2
	V1758. Occasions (if any) have you taken "crack: (cocaine in chunk or rock form)?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x 2 = 3-5x 3 = 6-9x	99.6% 0.2 0.0 0.1
	V1761. Occasions (if any) used cocaine in any form?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x 2 = 3-5x	99.3% 0.5 0.1
	V1523. Occasions (if any) have you taken heroin?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x	99.8% 0.2
	Index of Illicit Drug Use[1]	$\overline{x}$/(s) Range	0.09 (.58) 0 – 36

[1]Index of Illicit Drug Use = V1286(LSD) + V1318(Hallucinogens) + V1331(Amphetamines) +V1758 (Crack) + V1761 (Cocaine) + V1523; Correlations among the variables ranged from 0.08*** to 0.80**; ***p <= .001.

As shown in Table 1.A, the majority of 12th graders reported that they did not, in the prior 30 days, use any of the illicit drugs listed (0.09 on a range of 0 to 36 on the index). For example, 97.4 percent of all students had never used amphetamines; only 1.4 percent had used it once or twice and even fewer (0.1 percent) used amphetamines 20-39 times or more than 40 times. This pattern of low illicit drug use was duplicated with hallucinogens; 98.8 percent of students were never-users, and the rest (.02 percent) used once or twice.

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Sources of Risk for Adolescents

Scholars of drug use have identified several factors that place youth at increased risk of drug use. Some of the risk factors lay in the realm of youth agency (licit drug use and pro-drug opinions), and others were in their environment (accessibility of drugs and peer drug use).

Youth Agency: Licit Drug Use. Licit drugs, the first risk concept, measured life-time use of non-criminalized drugs used by high school seniors in contravention of the original prescription or did not have a prescription and obtained them illegally (Table 1.B).

TABLE 1.B. Licit Drug Use (n=2030-2130)
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013

Concept	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Licit Drug Use in life-time of youth: On how many occasions (if any) have you:	V1252. Used marijuana?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x 2 = 3-5x 3 = 6-9x 4 = 10-19x 5 = 20-39x 6 = 40+ occasions	53.8% 9.8 6.8 4.2 4.5 4.1 16.9
	V1710. Taken such non-prescription diet pills?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x 2-6 = 3-5x To 40+ occasions	92.1% 3.2 4.5
	V1713. Taken non- prescription stay-awake pills in your lifetime?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x 2 – 6 = 3-5x To 40+ occasions	94.9% 2.1 3.0
	V1716. Other than diet pills and stay-awake pills you already told us about, taken other non-prescriptions stimulants or pep pills?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x 2-6 = 3-5x To 40+ occasions	97.2% 1.3 1.5
	V1383. Taken sedatives on your own-that is, without a doctor telling you to take them in your lifetime?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x 2 = 3-5x 3 - 6 = 6-9x TO 40+ occasions	94.7% 2.2 1.1 2.0
	V1430. Taken tranquilizers on your own – that is, without a doctor telling you to take them?	0 = 0 occasions 1 = 1-2x 2-6 = 3-5x TO 40+ occasions	93.7% 2.6 3.7
	Index of Licit Drug Use[1]	$\bar{x}$/(s) Range	2.33 (3.65) 0-36

[1]Index of Licit Drug Use = V1252 (Marijuana) + V1710 (Diet Pills) + V1713 (Stay-Wake Pills) + V1716 (Stimulant/Pep Pills) + V1383 (Sedatives) + V1430 (Tranquilizers); Correlations among the variables ranged from .17*** to .53***; ***p <= .001.

Like with illicit drugs, the majority of 12th grade students had never used most of the licit drugs (Table 1.B). The only exception was marijuana; heavily used by 16.9% of the students. With the

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rest of the drugs, most students had never used them. However there was a small group, under 3 percent, that had used some licit drugs such as non-prescription diet pills, non-prescription stay awake pills, and sedatives one or twice. Overall, reports of licit drug usage by adolescents were also low (2.33 on a range of 0-36). A small percentage of students either used marijuana a few times or other licit drugs like sedatives or non-prescription stay awake pills once or twice.

<u>Youth Agency: Pro- Drug Usage opinion</u> (Tables 1.C.a. and b.). A second risk factor was the adolescents' opinions about soft drugs and on marijuana specifically. The twelfth graders were strongly against regular marijuana use but did not disapprove of experimental or occasional usage; this is reflected in the mean of 6.35 (on an index range of 3-9). Similarly, the average 12th graders disapproved of all hard drug usage. However, they did not strongly disapprove of all types of usage as evidenced by the index mean of 8.19 (range 6-18).

TABLE 1.C.a. Youth Agency: Pro-Drug Use Opinions (n=1792-1799)
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013

Concept	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Pro Soft Drug Opinions	Do YOU disapprove of people (who are 18 or older) doing each of the following:		
	V1992 - Trying marijuana once or twice?	1 = Strongly Disapprove 2 = Disapprove 3 = Don't Disapprove	22.5% 23.8 53.7
	V1793- smoking marijuana occasionally	1 = Strongly Disapprove 2 = Disapprove 3 = Don't Disapprove	30.1% 25.8 44.1
	V1794 - smoking marijuana regularly	1 = Strongly Disapprove 2 = Disapprove 3 = Don't Disapprove	41.2% 28.2 30.6
	Index on Opinion on Soft Drugs[1]	$\bar{x}$/(s) Range	6.35 (2.35) 3-9

[1] Index of Opinion of Soft Drugs = V1792 + V1793 +1794; r of V192 and V193 = .85***; r of V1792 and V1794 = .70***; r of V1793 and V1794 = .83***

TABLE 1.C.b. Youth Agency: Pro-Drug Use Opinions (n=1792-1799)
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013

Concept	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Pro-Hard Drug Opinions	Do YOU disapprove of people (who are 18 or older) doing each of the following:		
	V1795- trying cocaine in powder form once or twice	1 = Strongly Disapprove 2 = Disapprove 3 = Don't Disapprove	64.7% 23.3 12.1
	V1796 - taking cocaine powder occasionally	1 = Strongly Disapprove 2 = Disapprove 3 = Don't Disapprove	71.3% 19.4 9.3
	V1797 - taking cocaine powder regularly	1 = Strongly Disapprove 2 = Disapprove 3 = Don't Disapprove	76.6% 15.0 8.4
	V1798 - trying "crack" cocaine once or twice	1 = Strongly Disapprove 2 = Disapprove 3 = Don't Disapprove	70.3% 19.9 9.9
	V1799 - taking "crack" cocaine occasionally	1 = Strongly Disapprove 2 = Disapprove 3 = Don't Disapprove	75.1% 16.5 8.4
	V1800 - taking "crack" cocaine regularly	1 = Strongly Disapprove 2 = Disapprove 3 = Don't Disapprove	77.2% 14.6 8.2
	Index on Opinion on Hard Drugs[1]	$\bar{x}$/(s) Range	8.19(3.63) 6-18

[1] Index of Opinion of Hard Drugs = V1795 + V1796 + V1797 + V1798 + V1799 + V1800; Correlations among the variables ranged from .76** to .95***; ***p <= .001

Social Environmental Risks: Accessibility of Drugs. A risk factor in the social environment of the youth was accessibility of drugs. Accessibility of drugs measured by how difficult the students believed it would be to get drugs, such as crack cocaine, cocaine powder and marijuana[6].

Most students thought that illicit drugs (crack and cocaine) were at least fairly difficult to get a hold of (Table 1.D). However, that was not the case with marijuana; over sixty percent of students reported that it would be very easy to get marijuana if they wanted to. In the end, the ease of obtaining marijuana was balanced out by the difficulty of obtaining illicit drugs (Index Mean of 9.9 on a range of 3-15).

[6]These questions were asked at the time of the survey placing it within the same time as the dependent concept.

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TABLE 1.D. Social Environment: Accessibility of Drugs
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013

Concept	Dimensions	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Accessibility of Drugs		How difficult do you think it would be for you to get each of the following types of drugs if you wanted some?		**(n=2144 - 2150)**
	Illicit Drugs:	V1781. "Crack" Cocaine	1 = Probably Impossible 2 = Very Difficult 3 = Fairly Difficult 4 = Fairly Easy 5 = Very Easy	17.5% 23.0 32.6 17.3 9.6
		V1782. Cocaine Powder	1 = Probably Impossible 2 = Very Difficult 3 = Fairly Difficult 4 = Fairly Easy 5 = Very Easy	18.6 22.8 29.0 18.2 11.4
	Licit Drugs:	V1780. Marijuana	1 = Probably Impossible 2 = Very Difficult 3 = Fairly Difficult 4 = Fairly Easy 5 = Very Easy	5.2% 4.1 5.8 24.4 60.5
		Index of Accessibility of Drugs[1]	$\overline{x}$/(s) Range	9.9(3.06) 3-15

[1] Index of Accessibility of Drugs = V1781 + V1782 + V1780; Correlations among the variables ranged from .47*** to .87***; ***$p <= .001$.

Social Environmental Risks: Peer Drug Use. Peer drug use, another environmental risk factor measured use of drugs by their peers (Table 1.E). Marijuana was the most commonly used drug; 82.2 percent of 12th graders report that at least a few of their friends used marijuana. On the other hand, hard drug use was less prevalent among the peers. A good minority reported that a least a few of their friends took crack cocaine (15.4 percent) and cocaine powder (18.3). In short, while most 12th graders and their friends did not use most illicit drugs, marijuana was an exception (Peer Drug Culture Index mean of 5.13, range of 3-15).

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TABLE 1.E. Social Environment: Peer Drug Usage
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013

Concept	Dimensions	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics (n=2032-2058)
Peer Drug Usage	Licit Drugs	V1786. How many of your friends would you estimate smoke marijuana or has hashish?	1 = None 2 = A Few 3 = Some 4 = Most 5 = All	17.8% 25.7 28.0 24.6 3.9
	Illicit Drugs	V1787. How many of your friends would you estimate take "crack cocaine"?	1 = None 2 = A Few 3 = Some 4 = Most 5 = All	84.6% 12.3 2.5 0.2 0.3
		V1788. How many of your friends would you estimate take cocaine powder?	1 = None 2 = A Few 3 = Some 4 = Most 5 = All	81.7% 14.9 2.6 0.4 0.3
		Index of Peer Drug Usage[1]	$\overline{x}$/(s) Range	5.13(1.72) 3-15

[1] Index of Peer Drug Usage = V1786 + V1787 + V1788; Correlations among the variables ranged from .33[***] to .76[***]; [***] $p <= .001$.

Protective Factors

The second type of influences takes into account the resources available to youth that can potentially protect them from drugs. Like the risks, protective sources can be found within the control of the youth (academic engagement) and in their families (family support, and parental social capital).

Academic Engagement. Academic Engagement represented the individual student's academic capacity and their self-evaluation of their academic skills. Students were asked to rate themselves on intelligence and ability as well as reporting their average grades. The number of school days skipped and individual classes skipped were included in order to academic delinquency. Lastly, the students were asked about the type of high school they attended. A strong commitment to academics was considered a protective factor.

As seen in Table 1.F, 12th graders evaluated themselves as academically engaged. The majority attended an Academic or College prep high school (58.1%). About three quarters had never skipped whole school days and never skipped a class they were not supposed to.

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TABLE 1.F. Academic Engagement
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013

Concept	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics (n=1178 - 1989)
Academic Engagement	V1172. Which of the following best describes your present high school program?	1 = Vocational, technical or commercial 2 = General 3 = Academic or College Prep	4.6% 37.4 58.1
	V1178. During the last Four weeks, how often have you gone to school but skipped a class when you weren't supposed to?	1 = 21 + days 2 = 11-20 days 3 = 6-10 days 4 = 3-5 days 5 = 1-2 days 6 = None	0.9% 0.9 2.0 5.0 15.9 75.5
	V1176. During the last four weeks, how many whole days of school you missed because you skipped or "cut"	1 = 11+ Days 2 = 6-10 days 3 = 4-5 days 4 = 3 days 5 = 2 days 6 = 1 days 7 = None	1.1% 1.0 3.1 4.1 6.3 11.8 72.7
	V1173. Compared to others your age throughout the country, how do you rate yourself on school ability?	1 = Far below average 2 = Below Average 3 = Slightly Below Average 4 = Average 5 = Slightly Above Average 6 = Above Average 7 = Far Above Average	1.5% 2.2 4.5 31.1 24.7 29.0 7.0
	V1174. How intelligent do you think you are compared to others your age?	1 = Far below average 2 = Below Average 3 = Slightly Below Average 4 = Average 5 = Slightly Above Average 6 = Above Average 7 = Far Above Average	1.5% 1.5 5.6 27.7 23.8 31.1 8.7
	V1179. Which of the following describes your average grade so far in high school?	1 = D (69 or below) 2 = C- (70-72) 3 = C (73-76) 4 = C+ (77-79) 5 = B- (80-82) 6 = B (83-86) 7 = B+ (87-89) 8 = A- (90-92) 9 = A (93-100)	0.9% 2.8 4.0 8.1 11.1 16.8 18.5 21.0 17.0
	Index of Academic Self[1]	$\overline{x}$/(s) Range	72.6(22.2) 16-108

[1] Index of Illicit Drug Use = V1172 (HS) * (V1178 (Skip Class) + V1176 (Skip School) + V1173(School Ability) + V1174 (Intelligence) + V1179 (Grades)); Correlations among the variables ranged from .047* to .752**; ***p <= .001; *p<= .05

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Besides, very few students believed that they were slightly below average or lower in their school ability (8.2%). Instead, most stated they were either average (31.1%), slightly above average (24.7%) or above average (29%). Students' view of their own intelligence followed a similar pattern with the most students rating themselves as average (27.7%), slightly above average (23.8%) or above average (31.1%). In contrast, the students self-reported average grades were fairly spread out; a fifth of students (21.0%) stated that their average was an A-. The mean of the academic engagement index was a 73.6 on a range of 16-108. The 12th graders, on average, did not skip classes and believed that they had above average intelligence.

Family Support. The second protective factor goes beyond the 12th grader and took into account their relationships with their parents (Table 1.G). The students were asked if they had either a male and/or female parent or guardian living at home. The students then rated their satisfaction with the way they get along with their parents.

TABLE 1.G. Family Support
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013

Concept	Dimensions	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics (n=2057-2191)
Family Support	Family Structure	V1155. Which people live in the same household with you? Father (or male guardian)	0 = No 1 = Yes	25.6% 74.4
		V1156. Which of the following people live in the same household with you? Mother (or female guardian)	0 = No 1 = Yes	10.7% 89.3
	Family Relations	V1647. How satisfied are you with the way you get along with your parents	1 = Completely Disagree 2 = - 3 = - 4 = Neutral 5 = - 6 = - 7 = Completely Satisfied	3.4% 3.7 6.7 15.3 13.8 24.6 32.5
		Index of Family Support[1]	$\overline{x}$/(s) Range	8.98(4.33) 0-14.00

[1] Index of Family Support = (V1155 + V1156) * V1647; Correlations among the variables ranged from .135[**] to .212[**]; [**]p <= .01.

About three-quarters of students had a male guardian or parent living at home (74.4%); but more (89.3%) indicated that they lived with female guardian. Only 13.8% students were not satisfied with the way that they get along with their parents. There were an equal proportion of students (15.3%) who were neutral. The rest were satisfied to some degree with their relationship with their parent(s). Lastly, almost a third (32.5%) of students was completely

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satisfied with their relationship with their parents. The mean of the parent support index was a 7.99 on a scale of 2-12; the average student was neutral about the support they received from their guardians.

Parental Social Capital. This protective factor measured the social capital that parents, through their education, offered their adolescents. Educated parents expose their children to various social networks that benefit the adolescent both indirectly and directly. For example, parental social capital can get a student into a highly ranked college, a sought after job or be looked upon favorably by a school administration.

In the MTF sample of adolescents (Table 1.H), fathers of 12th graders were either high school graduate (28.9%) or college graduate (23.3%). Mothers, in contrast, were more likely to be college graduates (30.1%) or high school graduates (25.2%). The average 12th grader's mother and father had attended at least some college (Index mean of 7.99, range of 2-12).

TABLE 1.H. Parental Social Capital
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013

Concepts	Dimensions	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics (n=1879-1944)
Parental Social Capital	Father	V1163. What is the highest level of schooling you father completed?	1 = Grade School 2 = Some High School 3 = High School Graduate 4 = Some College 5 = College Graduate 6 = Graduate School	4.4% 11.1 28.9 19.4 23.3 12.9
	Mother	V1164. What is the highest level of schooling your mother completed?	1 = Grade School 2 = Some High School 3 = High School Graduate 4 = Some College 5 = College Graduate 6 = Graduate School	3.7% 8.4 25.2 21.3 30.1 11.3
		Index of Parental Social Capital[1]	$\bar{x}$/(s) Range	7.99 (2.44) 2-12

[1] Index of Parental Social Capital = V1163 + V1164 (r=.536**); ***p <= .001.

Summary Profile of the MTF 12th Grader

Overall, the vast majority of student respondents did not use illicit drugs and if they used them, it was rare. The students also did not use licit drugs that often, with the exception of marijuana. While they generally disapproved of drugs, their social environment posed some drug risks to them. For example, drugs, particularly marijuana, were relatively easy to obtain if they wanted to purchase them. As for the protections available to adolescents, most students were academically engaged; they were confident in their intelligence and were not skipping classes. And their parents created another level of expected protection from drug use.

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Bivariate Analyses

Bivariate analysis was used to explore the connections between drug use, both illicit and licit drugs, with the risk and preventative factors in adolescents' lives.[7] The preliminary correlational analyses (Table 2 in Appendix C) indicated a variety of interesting patterns in factors that increased the risk of drug use as well as those that reduced usage of drugs. First, adolescents who used licit drugs were more likely to use illicit drugs (r=.39***). Environmental risks, like drug availability, did encourage adolescent drug use, but they posed much greater risks for licit (r=.30***) than illicit (r =.13***) drug use. Similarly, being surrounded by peers and their drug culture also increased the risk of illicit drug use (r=.23***) but more so licit drug use (r=.41***).

Further, adolescents were their own best protectors. The more they disapproved of hard drugs, the less likely they were to use both licit (r=.16***) and illicit (r=.13***) drugs. However, the more a student disapproved of hard drugs the less likely they were to use licit drugs (r=-.47***). Protection offered by parents was important, but not as effective, in reducing drug use. When adolescents had family support (r=-.08**) and access to parental social capital (r=-.07**), they were somewhat less likely to use licit drugs. Academic engagement (r=-.07**), family support (r=-.07**) and parental social capital (r=-.05*) protected adolescents from illicit drugs, albeit to a small extent. The robustness of the relevance of protective and risk factors for licit and illicit drug use will be tested in multivariate analysis.

Linear Regression Analyses and Qualitative Insights

In the final analytical step, the robustness of the effects of risk and protective factors on both licit and illicit drugs was tested using a sequential multivariate analysis (Table 3). In the first step, licit drug use was regressed on the protective and risk indices and other socio-demographic variables (Model 1). Then, in order to test the Gateway Theory, the effects of risks, including licit drugs, and protective factors on illicit drug use were estimated (Model 2). "Thick" descriptions of the regression findings were provided using the experiences of the professional interviewees.

On balance, as seen in Model 2, licit drug use was the strongest predictor of illicit drug use (β = .39***). As predicted in Hypothesis One, once adolescents started using licit drugs, the likelihood that an adolescent would use illicit drugs also increased. This gateway effect held irrespective of how accessible drugs were to the youth, how academically engaged they were, how much family support and parental social capital they had, their sex and economic resources (wages and other).

The professionals interviewed for this research (Interviewees #1 to #8) confirmed, while also offering more nuanced takes on, the gateway theory. The Substance Abuse Counselor (Interviewee #2) and the Youth Counselor (Interviewee #3) concurred that an adolescent who will ultimately use illicit drugs starts with licit drugs first. The Rehab Director (Interviewee #4) also found truth behind the gateway theory; in his experience most people started with a licit drug which makes illicit drugs seem less taboo. However, this professional did not believe that using licit drugs was the cause; rather adolescents who have a desire to use illicit drugs choose to start with licit drugs first. The Retired Counselor (Interviewee #1) also expressed doubts with the illicit to licit drugs gateway. He believed that the idea of gateway drugs is misinterpreted;

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[7] Only substantive and significant correlations (above r=.05) will be discussed in this section.

adolescents do not automatically transition from licit to illicit drugs. Rather the transition is the result of a multitude of other social supports and risk factors considered in this study.

Table 3
Regression Analyses of the Relative Effects on Licit and Illicit Drug Use[1]
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12 Grade Survey), 2013

	Model 1: Licit Drug Use Beta (β)	Model 2: Illicit Drug Use Beta (β)
<u>Sources of Risks</u>: Licit Drug Use	—	.39***
Accessibility of Drugs	0.07*	0.04
Peer Drug Culture	0.21***	0.16***
Pro-Soft Drug Opinions	0.35**	-0.12**
Pro-Hard Drugs Opinions	-0.01	0.09**
<u>Protective Sources</u>: Academic Engagement	-0.09**	0.05
Family Support	-0.13***	0.04
Parental Social Capital	-0.01	-0.05
<u>Socio-Demography</u>: Gender	0.02	-0.03
Economic Resources – Wages	0.09**	-0.06
Economic Resources – Other	0.02	-0.02
Constant (a)	3.36***	5.22***
Adjusted R^2	.324***	.193***
DF 1 & 2	10 & 1019	11 & 979

[1]<u>Illicit Dug Use</u>: 1286 + V1318+ V1331+V1758 + V1761 + V1523; range=6 (none) – 42;
<u>Licit Drug Use</u>: V1252 + V1710 + V1713 + V1716) + V1383 + V1430 6 (none) – 42;
<u>Index of Accessibility of Drugs</u>: V1781 + V1782 + V1780 range=3 (Very Difficult) -15 (Very Easy);
<u>Peer Drug Culture</u>: V1786 + V1787 + V1788; 3 (none) – 15 (All);
<u>Pro Soft Drug Opinion</u>: V1792 + V1793 +1794; 3 (Disapprove) – 9 (Don't disapprove);
<u>Pro Hard Drug Opinion</u>: V1795 + V1796 + V1797 + V1798 + V1799 + V1800; 6 (Disapprove) – 18 (Don't disapprove);
<u>Academic Engagement</u>: V1172 *(V1178+V1176+V1173+V1174+V1179); range= 6(low) – 42 (high);
<u>Index of Family Support</u>: (V1155 + V1156) * V1647; range= 0(none) -14;
<u>Parental Social Capital</u>: V1163 + V1164; range = 2(low)-12(high);
<u>Gender</u>: 0 = female, 1 = male.

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In addition, sources of drug risks, but not the supportive contexts, were important in illicit drug use (Model 2). Being surrounded by peer drug culture raised the probability of illicit drug use (β = .16***); when one's peers used drugs, an adolescent was more likely to use illicit drugs, all things being equal as predicted in Hypothesis Two. The Youth Counselor (Interviewee #3) held that peer drug culture was among the strongest reasons for adolescent drug use; they want to fit in with their peers. She also noted that if peers are using drugs, it becomes easy for an adolescent to experiment, since the drugs are accessible. Interestingly, adolescents were quite nuanced in translating their opinions about drugs into using drugs. Those who approved of hard drugs were more prone to use hard drugs (β=.09**). However, adolescents who approved of soft drug usage were less likely to use harder drugs (β=-.12**). The Youth Substance Abuse Counselor (Interviewee #7) explained this apparent contradiction thusly: He thought that adolescents who approved of soft drug usage, but did not use hard drugs, were drawing a line between types of drugs; they view hard drugs as more severe and dangerous.

Unlike illicit drug use, both risk and protective factors had significant effects on licit drug use (Model 1). Of the risk factors, peer drug culture was the most potent. When adolescents' peers used drugs, that increased the likelihood of licit drug use, net of academic engagement, family support, parental social capital, age, location and economic resources (β = .21***). Accessibility of drugs somewhat increased the risk of licit drug usage (β = .07*) and only indirectly illicit drug use; the Family Counselor's (Interviewee #8) concurred that adolescents are much more likely to experiment if the opportunity presents itself instead of actively seeking out drugs. When adolescents approved of licit drug use they were more likely to do licit drugs (β=.35***).

As for the connection of protective factors with licit drug use, family support protected adolescents from licit drug use (β = -.13***). The Substance Abuse Counselor (Interviewee #2) confirmed the crucial role a family plays in a youth's ability to access and use drugs. She stated that parental behavior sets the stage for how the youth is expected to act. As for academics, engagement only slightly decreased licit drug use (β = -.09**). In the collective experiences of all the professional interviewees (#1- #8), they have seen all types of students, ranging from the top of the class to those who failed out, in their offices. In fact, when the students started using drugs, they were likely to start underperforming at school. But, the more wages an adolescent earned, the more likely they were to use licit drugs (β = .09**).

At first glance, it appeared that protective factors did not curtail illicit drug use like the risk factors enhanced it. However, family support and student academic engagement indirectly decreased the likelihood of illicit drug use. That is, when an adolescent did not use licit drugs because of support from his/her family or was academically engaged, they were indirectly more likely to stay away from illicit drugs also. For example, a youth was less inclined to use licit drugs when they felt they had a strong family support system (β = -.13***). This in turn reduced the possibility of a youth transitioning into illicit drug use as it was less likely for them to use licit drugs (β =.39***) in the first place.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Empirical and Applied Implications

The most important finding in this research was that the risk factors directly increased illicit drug use, while protective factors only indirectly influenced illicit drugs by reducing licit drug use. In other words, until an adolescent used a licit drug for the first time,

protective factors played a crucial role in guiding the adolescent's future path in which drug use was not a consideration. Risk factors were also important prior to any drug use; however once an adolescent gave into the risks and used a licit drug, illicit drugs seemed to follow.

This research added to the scholarly and programmatic conversations about youth drug use by offering a test of the gateway drug model among adolescents. Most of the prior research had focused on adults or studied alcohol and cigarettes as the gateway drugs for adolescents. However with the increase in adolescent prescription drug abuse, it is important to study other gateways to illicit drugs. Because a youth who has used a licit drug is very likely to transition to an illicit drug, it is very important to stop drug use before it starts. As the Institutional Drug Counselor (Interviewee #5) commented, drug use is taboo until adolescents begin to experiment. However, once they have started, many transition to illicit drugs in order to maintain the same high they received the first time. On the other hand, when working with those who have already starting using drugs, it is crucial to manage the risk factors, like stopping licit drug use as well as working to change an adolescent's views on drugs. Drug programming needs to be tailored to the two different groups of adolescents. For example, when working with younger students, it is important to focus on the protective factors. Programs should cultivate negative views of all drugs while incorporating parental support and academics. For older students, or known drug users, programs do not need to focus on the protective factors. Instead they should work to change the population's view on drug usage by being realistic about the consequences and potentially connecting the youth with a convicted illicit drug user.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically speaking, strain, in key aspects of an adolescent's life, proved to have strong direct and indirect effects on drug use (Figure 1). In keeping with Agnew's concept of Strain, adolescents who were faced with strains, like poor parental support, limited academic engagement, and peer drug use, were more likely to use licit drugs possibly in order to escape that strain. Even licit drug use became a strain which led to adolescents transitioning to illicit drug use.

Like strain theory, both Chicago and Iowa schools of core self-concept were statistically endorsed in this research. Parents who were able to successfully instill a strong core self- concept in their children (Kuhn and McPartland's Iowa School of Self Concept) and who continued to stay involved were able to keep their children away from licit drugs. However, if the social norms are not strongly entrenched in the adolescent's self-concept they can succumb to the influence of their deviant drug using peers. For example, the core self-concept adolescents, who may have had a similar positive upbringing but gave into the lures of their peer drug users, were most likely altered and shifted to rationalizing licit, and in turn illicit, drug use (fluid self-concept as in Mead's Chicago School of Self-Concept). Socialization in deviant drug communities present adolescents options that counter the social norms they grew up with (Cressey's Differential Association).

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Figure 2
Theoretical Model of the Relative Effects of Risks and Protective Sources
on Licit and Illicit Drug Use[1]
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013
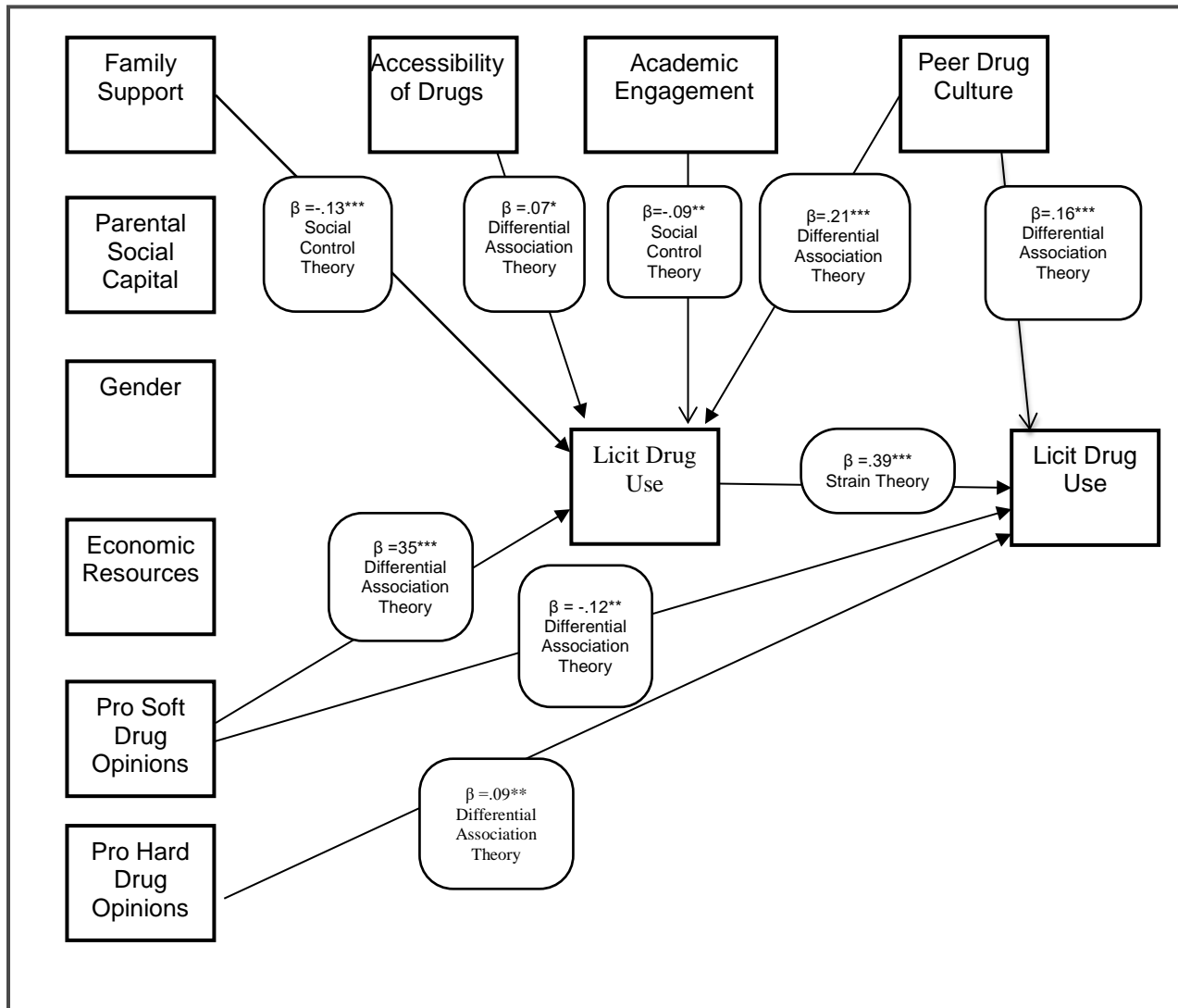
[1] Refer to Table 3 for Index coding.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the important findings that have both practical and theoretical implications, this research captured only 32 percent of variability in youth licit drug use (Adjusted R^2=.32***) and 19 percent of illicit drug use (Adjusted R^2=.19***). The models left unexplained the majority of both licit and illicit drug use by adolescents. One of the study limitations was that the survey data was self-reported by high schoolers. If they are using illicit drugs, there was a possibility that they did not report that due to concerns about the information being passed to authority figures, be they at school or in the family. If they believed a teacher or administrator would see the results, that would have been was a large incentive not to be truthful. Another potential problem was with the

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multiple questionnaire forms that all included different information and which made it necessary to choose only one that had all the available indicators. A longitudinal study with the same questions asked of the same students over their lifetime would increase the accuracy of the time line of the Gateway model.

Future researchers should continue to distinguish between licit and illicit drug use. However, future research could also benefit from examining the gateway drug concept by looking at the direct relationships between specific drugs instead of grouping them by type, say licit drugs. For example, researchers should separate the unique effects each type of prescription drug has on a specific illicit drug. For example, how do prescription sedatives, pep pills or diet pills use affect an adolescent's likelihood of using heroin? The Rehab Director (Interviewee #4) and Family Counselor (Interviewee #8) also suggested trauma (abuse, witness to violence) as a major reason for adolescent drug use. In their experiences, abuse and violence places an uncontrollable amount of strain on an adolescent. While trauma was not taken into account within this paper, it should be an important focus in the future. Do they use drugs for pleasure and/or for self-medication? These are important questions to answer if effective programs are to be developed to curtail licit drugs as well as to disrupt their transition to illicit drugs. These questions also have important theoretical implications.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A

Socio-Demographic Factors
Monitoring the Future:
A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013

Concepts	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Gender	V1150: What is your sex?	0 = female 1 = male	51.4% 48.6 (2030)
Economic Resources – Wages	V1192. During an average week, how much money did you get from a job or other work?	1 = None 2 = $1-5 3 = 6-0 4 = 11-20 5 = 21-35 6 = 36-50 7 = 51-75 8 = 76-125 9 = 126-175 10 = 175+ (n)	45.2% 0.4 2.7 2.5 3.0 4.5 7.0 14.9 9.6 10.2 (1891)
Economic Resources – Other	V1193. During an average week, how much money did you get from other sources (allowances, etc.)?	1 = None 2 = $1-5 3 = 6-0 4 = 11-20 5 = 21-35 6 = 36-50 7 = 51-75 8 = 76-125 9 = 126-175 10 = 175+ (n)	47.0% 4.6 6.9 15.6 9.7 6.8 3.4 2.2 1.0 2.7 (1874)

Appendix B
Consent Form and Interview Protocol

Letter of Consent

Dear _____:
I am a Sociology Senior working on my Research Capstone Paper under the direction of Professor Marilyn Fernandez in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. I am conducting my research on adolescent drug use.

You were selected for this interview, because of your knowledge of and experience working in the area of adolescent drug use.

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I am requesting your participation, which will involve responding to questions about the factors influencing drug use and will last about 20 minutes. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose to not participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time. The results of the research study may be presented at SCU's Annual Anthropology/Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference and published (in a Sociology department publication). Pseudonyms will be used in lieu of your name and the name of your organization in the written paper. You will also not be asked (nor recorded) questions about your specific characteristics, such as age, race, sex, religion.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call/email me at (707) 495-6956 or jharrison@scu.edu or Dr. Fernandez at (408)-554-4432 or mfernandez@scu.edu

Sincerely,

Jenna Harrison

By signing below you are giving consent to participate in the above study. (If the interviewee was contacted by email or phone, request an electronic message denoting consent).

_____   _____   _____
Signature   Printed Name   Date

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, through Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at (408) 554-5591.

Interview Schedule for Supplemental Qualitative Interviews, Fall2015-Winter 2016

Interview Date and Time: _____
Respondent ID#: __ (1, 2, 3….)
1. What is the TYPE Agency/Organization/Association/Institution (**NO NAME**, please) where you learned about (and/or worked) with this issue:
2. What is your position in this organization?
3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?
4. Based on what you know of adolescent drug use, how common is this problem (issue or concern)?
5. In your opinion, what are some reasons that contribute to this problem (issue or concern)? (PROBE with: Could you expand a bit more?).
6. [If the respondent does not bring up your independent concepts as potential causes), PROBE:
    a. How about the gateway drug use? Do you find that youths will move to harder drugs if they use licit ones first:
    b. How about the accessibility of drugs in their area?
    c. How about family factors, like support or social capital?
    d. How about academics and the school setting?
7. Is there anything else about this issue/topic I should know more about?

Thank you very much for your time. If you wish to see a copy of my final paper, I would be glad to share it with you at the end of the winter quarter. If you have any further questions or comments for me, I can be contacted at jharrison@scu.edu. Or if you wish to speak to my faculty advisor, Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, she can be reached at mfernandez@scu.edu.

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Appendix C
Table 2. Correlation Matrix
Illicit Drug Use, Risk Factors, Protective Factors, Age, Location and Economic Resources
(n=2542-2687)
Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey), 2013

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
A. Illicit Drug Use	1.0	.40***	.13***	.23***	.16***	.13***	-.07***	-.07***	-.05*	-0.03	0.02	0.03
B. Licit Drug Use		1.0	.26***	.41***	.47***	.16***	-.20***	-..21***	-.09**	-0.04	.12***	0.03
C. Accessibility of Drug			1.0	.35***	.22***	.10***	-0.04	-.08***	-.07**	0.02	.10***	0.03
D. Peer Drug Culture				1.0	.33***	.13***	-.10***	-.11***	-.08***	-0.03	0.05	.05*
E. Pro Soft Drug Opinion					1.0	.42***	-.18***	-.12**	-.05*	-.11***	.05*	0.03
F. Pro Hard Drug Opinion						1.0	-.19***	-.12***	-.10***	-.10***	-0.04	0.03
G. Academic Engagement							1.0	.18***	.29***	.08**	-.06*	-0.01
H. Family Support								1.0	.19***	-.06*	0.02	0.00
I. Parental Social Capital									1.0	-0.03	-0.01	.07**
J. Gender										1.0	-0.04	-.06**
K. Economic Resources –Wages											1.0	-.11***
L. Econ Resources – Other												1.0

*** p <= .001; ** p<=.01; * p <= .05
[1]Illicit Dug Use: 1286 + V1318+ V1331+V1758 + V1761 + V1523; range=6 (none) – 42;
Licit Drug Use: V1252 + V1710 + V1713 + V1716) + V1383 + V1430 6 (none) – 42;
Index of Accessibility of Drugs: V1781 + V1782 + V1780 range=3 (Very Difficult) -15 (Very Easy);
Peer Drug Culture: V1786 + V1787 + V1788; 3 (none) – 15 (All)
Pro Soft Drug Opinion: V1792 + V1793 +1794; 3 (Disapprove) – 9 (Don't disapprove)
Pro Hard Drug Opinion: V1795 + V1796 + V1797 + V1798 + V1799 + V1800; 6 (Disapprove) – 18 (Don't disapprove)
Academic Engagement: V1172 *(V1178+ V1176 + V1173+ V1174 + V1179); range= 6(low) – 42 (high);
Index of Family Support: (V1155 + V1156) * V1647; range= 0(none) -14;
Parental Social Capital: V1163 + V1164; range = 2(low)-12(high);
Gender: 0 = female, 1 = male

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Interviewee #1 (Retired Counselor). November 18, 2015. Retired Youth Counselor.

Interviewee #2 (Substance Abuse Counselor). November 17, 2015. Drug Counselor.

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Interviewee #3 (Youth Counselor). March 2, 2016. Youth Counselor.

Interviewee #4 (Rehab Director). March 2, 2016. Youth Rehab Director.

Interviewee #5 (Institutional Drug Counselor). March 11, 2016. Youth Substance Abuse Counselor at Detention Center.

Interviewee #6 (Private Drug Counselor). March 12, 2016. Private Youth Substance Abuse Counselor.

Interviewee #7 (Youth Substance Abuse Counselor). March 16, 2016. Low Income Youth Substance Abuse Counselor.

Interviewee #8 (Family Counselor). March 16, 2016. Family and Youth Counselor.

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The Search for the American Dream:
Interpersonal, Cultural, and Structural Constraints on Immigrants

By

Milenna Smith[1]

ABSTRACT. The American Dream is a goal sought out by many people from around the globe. But immigrants must overcome many barriers that may inhibit that dream. This study attempted to understand, how structural (community distress and institutional prejudice), interpersonal, and bilingual constraints negatively impacted immigrant socioeconomic achievements and wealth accumulation. The study used a mixed methods approach; findings from a secondary quantitative survey data (Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles) were elaborated on with qualitative interviews with six professionals who work with immigrants. Findings supported Feagin's systemic racism, viewed as a fundamental cause, which set up structural, interpersonal, and cultural constraints that hindered immigrant progress towards the American Dream. Suggestions for future research included oral history interviews, both with immigrants who have successfully achieved the American Dream as well as with those at varying stages of progress towards the dream.

INTRODUCTION

The American Dream beckons immigrants from all over the world, offering them the possibilities for economic opportunity and advancement. But although the United States is known to many as the home of immigrants, political discussions over the past couple of years have advocated for the limitation of future immigrants from specific countries, like Mexico and Syria (Bazelon 2015). Political advocacy against specific immigrants from certain countries borders the line of racial discrimination and interweaves another layer of prejudice into the fabric of American society. In turn, the stigma, of being, for example, a Mexican immigrant, is experienced in all sorts of institutions, such as work, social, and consumer environments, as well as in interpersonal interactions. The current and future immigrants who choose to call the United

States their home may be exposed to a glaring reality of a life that may not live up to their expectations.

While many immigrants come to the U.S. to dedicate their lives to the careers that will help them achieve the American Dream, most are unaware of the institutionalized racism that awaits them and will affect the types of jobs they are able to earn. For example, minorities most likely occupy positions, like a cook, a janitor, or even busboy, where they are not seen and are invisible to consumers. In these jobs, limitations like not knowing English or the mainstream American cultural norms are not problematic. Ultimately, whether or not their jobs reflect the economic opportunity they believed was once possible to acquire in the U.S. will redefine their perception of the American Dream.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following review of the extant literature that explored the experiences immigrant minorities face during the journey towards the American Dream touched on the many themes. In a society where privilege is defined by the dominant community, reaching the American dream for immigrant minorities can be very burdensome. Associated with the quest for the American dream are other meaningful dimensions of life, like earning an education, securing employment in a competitive job market, living in desired neighborhoods, and avoiding the potential health problems that come with racial stigmatization.

The Shifting Nature of the American Dream

James Truslow Adams was one of the first to coin the term "American" dream, in his historical publication titled, *The Epic of America* (Hauhart 2015:66). He used the phrase to describe his esteem towards a land where, with a little hard work and diligence, immigrants would be able to fulfill their very own "American" dream. Yet, as time has gone by, the nature of this famous phrase has evolved to fit a more realistic outlook on the dream. Over the years our nation's "hopeful" slogan has become tempered by the forces of "class, stratification, status, intergenerational mobility, individualism, community commitment, ideology, race, and work and family life balance issues", all of which have become pivotal to the American Dream (Hauhart 2015:67). Today the American dream is more narrowly defined as the opportunity for individual economic success. Even educational and professional networks are geared towards an individual doing well in a capitalist, consumer driven economy. It is widely accepted that education and networking will lead American dreamers to respectable careers, and ultimately towards the financial success and mobility to which they aspire.

Minorities and Education

While hard work and diligence are still major components of the new economically motivated American Dream, the days of achieving financial success without a college education is long gone. This very truth is why higher education is one of the most sought after tools in an effort towards becoming prosperous in the United States. However, for many racial minorities, because of intersecting social constraints, attending college is a very cumbersome process to begin, and even to complete. Some critical challenges that scholars identified were bilingualism, multicultural identities, working class backgrounds, and racial stigmatization.

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In a survey, of one- hundred and fourteen college students, it was confirmed that most racial minorities were first generation college students, with one half hailing from working and low class backgrounds (Banks-Santilli 2014). Studies by Montoya and Magarati underscored the benefits and constraints that family social/SES backgrounds bring to student achievement (Montoya 2010:121,123 & Magarati 2010:197). For example, although fluently bilingual youth were more likely to enroll in college, they were, however, not more likely than non-bilingual youth, to graduate. Magarita also found that the faster youth assimilated to "American ways", say becoming fluent in English, the more likely they were to gain upward mobility through higher education (Magarati 2010:199).

Shedding their multi-cultural, interdependent family identity and carving out a sense of individuated identity that comes with being away at college has been another marker of upward mobility potential (Banks-Santilli 2014), a widely accepted goal for most minority students. However, when minority students embraced the cultivated middle-class individualized values, they faced white racial prejudice, leaving many feeling isolated (Reynolds, Sneva, and Peehler 2010). In response, minority students are compelled to create separate multiple identities, one each for their home and school life and coerced to live "simultaneously in two vastly different worlds while being fully accepted in neither" (Banks-Santilli 2014:4).

Racial prejudice added another layer to the socio-cultural drawbacks that minorities faced in educational institutions. College students who experienced race-based prejudice from fellow students and staff felt insecure and were self-hindered by doubt about their academic abilities (Reynolds, Sneva, and Peehler 2010). Black and Latino undergraduates, in a sample of one-hundred and fifty-one students, who experienced race-based discrimination, internalized this negativity to the point where it affected their success in the classroom.

These scholars offered a variety of solutions, ranging from institutional to familial, to enable minority students be on their way to achieving the American Dream. Reynolds, Sneva, and Peehler (2010) advocated that college campuses must express and embrace positivity towards diversity. Suarez-Orozco, Onaga, & Lardemelle (2010:20 & 24) posited that it is only through building trusting relationships between family members, schools, and local communities that minority students will become cognitively engaged in their academics and cultivate the tools and guidance needed to succeed in college as well as in their later lives.

Jobs and Health Prospects

Unfortunately, even if minority students overcome the barriers working against them and earn college degrees, the obstacles they experienced throughout their educational career, continue to be manifested in their job searches and at places of employment. A lucrative job serves as a marker of a person's financial success and status in society. Many scholars agree that Americans have made their careers the highest of their priorities, in an effort to achieve financial prosperity and economic mobility (Hauhart 2015). However, most minority college graduates have lost faith in the possibility of attaining jobs specific to their college degrees; institutional prejudice that they expect to follow them into their professional communities is a major reason (Reynolds, Sneva, and Peehler 2010). Tiffany Joseph's qualitative study found many respondents experienced discrimination, based on racism and anti- immigrant practices, in sites of employment (Joseph 2011:175). But, Liu and Edwards (2015) found that employment chances of immigrants were contingent upon their English proficiency, in addition to the appropriate skill sets, social networks, and education. Two other studies confirmed Liu and Edwards' findings, concluding that skills, tools, and English proficiency "have become

increasingly important determinants of success in the US labor market" (Duncan and Trejo 2012:549; Joseph 2011:170). Other scholars (Gorinas 2013) have also recommended that in order for (minority) immigrants to experience less discrimination within the job market, they must embrace and assimilate into the culture of the "host country".

Unfortunately, immigrant minorities who are lucky enough to find a place in a respectable profession, continue to face the setbacks they faced in college and in their job search. In a long-term study of 88,432 medical faculty and their job promotion rates, Nunez- Smith, Ciarleglio, Sandoval-Schaefer, Elumn, Castillo-Page, and Bradley (2012) found differences between whites and minorities (i.e. Black and Latino). The average promotion rates of Black and Latino faculty, across 128 academic medical centers, were significantly lower than of white faculty. The reality of being denied equal promotion opportunities in a socially valued profession cheats immigrant minorities of the chance to choose a profession with the most economic gain, inevitably making their trek to their American dream even more difficult.

It has become axiomatic that securing a job in the competitive American labor market, that promises "equal opportunity for all to achieve monetary success" (Hauhart 2015:66), is an immense achievement. But, for low skilled/less educated immigrants landing a desirable job that is at least not physically taxing is rarely ever an option. While immigrant employment rates are far higher than that of natives, immigrants are also most likely "to accept jobs with sub-standard conditions that result in pay penalties", exploitation, and even threats from their employers about potential reports to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Duncan and Trejo 2012; Liu and Edwards 2015:406; Joseph 2011:175). Such strenuous working conditions often times results in unhealthy living and serious health problems, like poor dieting, body weight swings, sleep deprivation, depression, and anxiety (Joseph 2011:175). Studies have also confirmed that minorities received poorer quality medical care than white Americans; they noted that limited access to basic health care and the costs, both medical and psychological, has become part of the migrant lifestyle (Joseph 2011:177; Phelan & Link 2015:321).

Challenges of Structural and Community Integration

Another important marker of the American Dream and assimilation into American culture has been home ownership and other wealth indicators. However, a barrier that many immigrants have faced is the well- preserved social phenomenon of residential segregation. According to Xie and Zhou (2012) residential segregation has persisted because of white residents' resistance to live in an area where their race is considerably outnumbered. Hall's study confirmed that natives tend to flee areas where immigrant populations are newly appearing, out of fear "of declining housing values or concerns about the future (safety) of neighborhoods" (Hall 2012:1891). Mundra & Sharma found a housing gap, not between immigrants and natives, but between races, most likely because racial minorities "tend to live in neighborhoods where the supply of homes are inadequate" (Mundra & Sharma 2014:67). Self- segregation by both white and minority groups and policies from bank lenders have also exacerbated the residential disparities between native and immigrant minorities (Hall 2012:1891).

Residential integration and neighborhood demographics are not only economic markers of the American Dream they also have consequences for the living conditions of residents. For example, Phelan and Link's study affirmed poor neighborhoods are linked to poor health and mortality, because of limited recreational opportunities, nutrition, harmful substances, and crime. They found segregated neighborhoods to be targets of tobacco and alcohol industries, to lack recreational facilities, to have two to three times as many fast-food outlets, and experienced

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poor fire and police protection (Phelan and Link 2015: 322). These environmental deficiencies and associated psychological and physical health risks rendered mortality rate for minorities, and African Americans specifically, five times higher than that of white Americans (Phelan and Link 2015:322).

Racial profiling is yet another structural obstacle that many immigrants face in their search for the American Dream. In a study of 1,976 immigrants Graziano, Schuck, and Martin (2010) confirmed the roles that institutions play in creating and sustaining the racial profiling challenges that many immigrants face. Institutions, such as the police and the media, create assumptions about race that shape the public's opinions and beliefs on social issues such as racial profiling. The media and police lead white residents to believe that possible prejudicial treatment towards minorities by the authorities was simply a "byproduct of neutral crime fighting activities and not of prejudice" (Graziano, Schuck, and Martin 2010:55). Racial profiling has not only become an overlooked social problem, it has been added to the multitude of challenges that immigrants, and particularly first generation undocumented immigrants, face in their search of the American Dream.

The 9/11 crisis has also strained the relationship between American natives and other immigrant groups, with the resulting assumptions that immigrants as hostile and distrustful (Rousseau, Hassan, Moreau, & Thombs 2011:912). Over the years immigrants have "become the scapegoats for the nation's economic difficulties and reduced employment opportunities and with blessing of the conservative politicians, policies like Arizona's SB 1070 (the authorization to stop an individual based on their physical characteristics as an indicator of their illegal status) have become part of the legislative policy (Wallace 2014:284). Ibe, Ochie, & Obiyan (2012:185) focused on the unlawful practice of using race in police, immigration, and airport security procedures. Millions of immigrant minorities are subjected to racial profiling leaving them with "feelings of anger, powerlessness, and stigmatization" (2012:187). In a longitudinal study concerning fifty- five undocumented Latinos, he found that out of fear of being targeted, most first generation immigrants preferred to stay clear of any actions that may jeopardize their stay in the United States (Abrego 2011: 342).

Fortunately, many minorities refuse to buy into the notions constructed by the media and the police, even though most have experienced racial profiling and prejudice in ways that have translated into forms of police negligence and maltreatment (Graziano, Schuck, and Martin 2010). Unlike the first- generation immigrants, the 1.5- and later generation immigrants are less fearful of speaking out against their stigmatized status, in an effort to fight against the "setbacks" that come with a stigmatized identity (Abrego 2011). But, despite the progress made in counteracting the barriers that stigmatized identities bring, there still rarely is ever full acceptance of immigrants. Consequently, the challenges to the American Dream that those with different intersecting identities face, will continue.

Summary

The extensive literature reviewed above has documented the multitude of challenges faced by immigrant minorities in their search of the American Dream. Starting with the stigmatized status of immigrant minorities, their challenges in education, in their encounters with the police, as consumers, and even in their occupational and housing opportunities are among the many challenges that scholars have identified. Internalized discrimination stood in the way of minority students doing their best in college. For those who successfully completed their college education prospective employment opportunities proved slim and for the few with professional

careers upward mobility was close to impossible when white competitors were favored for promotions. In the community, residential segregation and racial profiling by authorities like the police, stimulated fear in immigrants/minorities and thwarted their fuller integration. At every step of the ladder of American Dream, immigrant minorities faced challenges that prevented much progress towards achieving an equal share of the American dream. This research paper will add to the conversation by simultaneously considering, a set of constraining factors that stand in the path towards the American Dream. Specific focus will be on the effects of structural constraints, interpersonal challenges, and cultural resources on the American Dream.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This study explored how structural constraints, interpersonal prejudice, and bilingual proficiency hindered the efforts of immigrant minorities in accomplishing the American dream. The American Dream was defined by socio-economic achievements and wealth accumulation. Two dimensions of structural constraints were examined: institutional discrimination and community distress. Interpersonal prejudice in the social interactions between minority immigrants and whites as well with other minority groups was the second set of challenges considered. The third constraint, bilingualism, aimed to capture whether or not that being bilingual was an asset or a disadvantage for those hoping to achieve the American dream lifestyle.

THEORIES AND HYPOTHESES

Research is very clear that the pathways to the American Dream are strewn with hurdles that are very different for minority U.S. immigrants than for white Americans. The constraints faced by immigrants can best be framed within Feagin's theoretical model of systemic racism (2006). In the systemic racism perspective, racism is the fundamental cause of the disparate pathways in socio-economic and wealth achievements in the U.S. Phelan and Link (2015:315) operationalized systemic racism thusly: flexible resources, like the access to institutional/structural resources, individual resources of social/cultural capital, and the ensuing social psychological and physical ramifications are set up in a way that disadvantages those excluded from the dominant white community. Racism becomes systemic because the dominant white community has access to the resources that help "facilitate the reproduction of inequalities by race" (Phelan and Link 2015: 315). In other words, the knowledge, power, prestige, and social networks that are useful assets to advance in the social ladder get located in institutions of governmental agencies, political leadership, court systems, educational institutions, mass media, real estate, banking, medicine, and entertainment. These resources and the associated ideology of white domination/superiority, vested in institutions, either covertly and/or overtly play a significant role in the perpetuating of racial inequalities.

More specifically, immigrant minorities in the U.S. experience discrimination, have fewer life chances, and ultimately have limited opportunities for achieving success. At a micro level, racially hostile actions by the dominant group directed towards members of subordinate racial groups is what Feagin (1996:503) termed individual racism. On a cultural level, the dominant group views their culture, beliefs, and members as positive while out-groups are compared and perceived to be negative. Feagin termed this ethnocentrism, "the view in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it" and considered it to be a major reason behind discrimination against subordinate groups (1996:15). Ethnocentric cultures do not favor those who do not reflect their own values and culture, and so immigrants who are bilingual are often ostracized for their lack of assimilation. This ongoing

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negativity manifests itself as prejudices and stereotypes that can eventually "influence social, economic, and political interactions among groups" (Feagin 1996:15). In an ethnocentric social environment, even subordinate out-groups feel pressure to conform, and the only way to conform is to practice the same ethnocentrism that continues to persecute your own group against other out-groups. Pair the pressure to conform along with the need for scarce resources that open up opportunities for achievement, fierce competition between out- groups ensues.

Systemic racism pervades everyday life: in public education, in housing opportunities, and even in the workplace. While segregation and discrimination are very hard to detect and prove, empirical evidence continues to be amassed about immigrant minorities being disadvantaged in colorblind work positions, neglected in public schools, and relegated to impoverished neighborhoods. These are manifestations of institutional discrimination or institutional practices that tend to create disparity and negatively affect members of a subordinate group (Feagin 1996:503). There are two forms of institutional discrimination that perpetuate inequality. The first is direct institutional discrimination; these are practices that intentionally create exclusion and are consciously known to have negative effects on the excluded subordinate groups. Examples include Jim Crow laws, the Japanese internment camps, and residential segregation. Modern day residential segregation is often seen in the informal norms shared by white real estate agents, who steer minority homebuyers away from white neighborhoods (Feagin 1996:20). Under these exclusionary conditions, even when immigrant minorities seek progress, the shared informal norms of dominant group keep them out.

The second type of systemic racism is indirect institutional discrimination. Indirect institutional discrimination is the unintended harm and segregation that results from the practices, regulations, and policies initiated by the dominant group. Public education, for example, is an institution that is governed by the policies and regulations created by the dominant group. Often these policies create unequal playing fields between dominant and subordinate groups, hindering the chances of minority achievement in education, and sequentially limiting their opportunities in the job market (Feagin 1996:20). Such cloaked forms of inequality enable the "behind the scenes racism" manifested in the forms of general policies, regulations, and practices that ultimately maintain the stereotypical views of minorities (Phelan and Link 2015:316).

Assuming the circumstances of systemic racism are axiomatic, it could be predicted that the more discrimination at the structural and interpersonal levels minority immigrants have experienced, the harder it would be for them to achieve the American Dream, irrespective of their age, sex, ethnicity, generation, and health status. Additionally in a systemically racist society like the United States, bilingualism would be a hindrance rather than a useful resource in advancing in the American Dream.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

Mixed methods, a combination of both a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews, were used in this research. The quantitative survey data was from a secondary source, while the qualitative data comprised of interviews with immigrant professionals as well as professionals on the specific immigrant related topics. The findings from the survey will be supplemented with the lived and professional experiences of the interviewees.

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Secondary Survey Data

The secondary survey data used in this research was from the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) study, a 2004 telephone interview study conducted by scholars[2] from Southern California Universities. The study focused on the mobility patterns among different generations and races of immigrants. The original sample was comprised of first, 1.5, and second- generation immigrants. There were 38.8% of Latin American origin, 36.5% Asian American origin, and 24.7% of those who identified as African and White American decent. Although the researchers used multistage random sampling, they specifically targeted groups with a wide diversity of socio-cultural orientation, occupational backgrounds, and immigration statuses. Participants (n=4,655) in the study were between the ages of 20 to 39 residents of Los Angeles area.

The respondents I chose to concentrate on were of the 1.5 and second-generation (n=3,440)[3]. The average age of respondents (on a range of 20-40) was 27.9 (standard deviation = 6.0). The ratio for male and female respondents was split in half. As for generational status, a little more than half (57.8%) were second generation immigrants; the rest (47.2%) were 1.5 generation immigrants. As for ethnic distribution of the sample, close to half (49.3%) of the respondents were Asian, 40.9% were Latino, 8.6% were white, and 1.2% were Black. They were in quite good health; less than 10% had poor wealth (Appendix A). These demographics were controlled in the multivariate analyses of the immigrant's efforts in achieving the American dream.

Primary Qualitative Data

In keeping with the sequential mixed methods design, narrative interviews with six professionals who had work and/or lived experiences in the U.S. provided supplemental data. Three interviewees have worked with immigration issues. The first of these was an experienced (23-years) attorney at an immigration law firm (The Attorney); this interviewee was located through connections of several local businesses and customers that have used the law firm's services. The second interviewee was an Office Manager (7 years) who was recommended by the immigration law firm where the Attorney worked. An Attorney's Assistant (3-year experience at immigration/ worker's rights firm) was the third interviewee. The remaining three professional interviewees were immigrants with lived experiences working toward the American Dream. They were: a 20-year immigrant business owner of a Landscaping Company whose employees have always consisted of fellow immigrants; an owner and agent of an Insurance Agency, who insures mostly newcomers to the United States; and a Daycare Provider for 12 years, and interacts with families who have recently been exposed to American society. All interviews were conducted by telephone. Refer to Appendix B, for consent form and interview protocol.

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[2] Rubén G. Rumbaut, Frank D. Bean, Leo R. Chávez, Jennifer Lee, Susan K. Brown, Louis DeSipio, and Min Zhou.
[3] The original collector of the data, or ICPSR, or the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for use of the data or for the interpretations or inferences based on such uses.

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DATA ANALYSES

Operationalization and Descriptive Analyses

Univariate analysis were used to describe the sample using their progress on the Achievment of the American dream (socio-economic achievemnts and wealth accumulation). The constraints that immigrants encountered in their pursuit of the American Dream were also outlined.
The "American Dream"

The "American Dream" (i.e. dependent concept) as measured in this study, pertained to valued assets that encompass all that is the American Dream. The common assets include education, work, and other wealth assets (Table 1.A).

Table 1.A. Achievement of the American Dream
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3177-3440)

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
The American Dream	Education Level:	Q25_a: What is the highest grade of school or year of college that you have completed and gotten credit for?	1= Did not complete high sch. 2= High school graduate 3= Vocational or trade school 4= Some college 5= College graduate 6= Graduate school	4.9% 16.7 3.2 36.4 27.7 11.0
	Occupation:	Q12_1: Current Job-Occupation	1= Non- Skilled/ non-Professional 2= Skilled Workers/ Managers 3= Business Owners 4= Professionals	34.3% 24.1 03.5 38.1
		Index of Socio-economic Achievements	Mean (SD) Range	10.56 (7.6) 1-24
	Wealth:	Q37: Do you rent or own your home?	0= Rent or Other 1= Own	72.2% 27.7
		Q174_a: Do you have a savings and/or checking account?	0= No 1= Yes	11.4% 88.2
		174_b: Do you have mutual funds, stocks or bonds, and/or a 401k- retirement plan?	0= No 1= Yes	53.4% 45.7
		Index of Wealth	Mean (SD) Range	1.6 (9.2) 0- 3
		Index of Achievement of the American Dream[3]	Mean (SD) Range	20.1 (20.6) 0-72

[1] Index of Socio-economic Achievements: Q25_a _ Highest Education * Q12_1: Current Job- Occupation;
[2] Index of Wealth: Q37_Home Arrangement + Q174_a_Bank Accounts + Q174_b_Stocks, Bonds, 401k;
[3] Index of the Achievement of the American Dream= Index of Socio- Economic Achievements * Index of Wealth.

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A plurality (36.4%) in the sample has gained some college education, while a third (27.7%) had completed their Bachelor's degree. Although, only 11% of the sample had completed graduate school, a much larger segment (24.8%) had not even reached a college level education. Not surprisingly, their bi-modal occupational ranking matched educational levels. While a plurality worked in professional jobs (38.1%) a third (34.3%) were non-skilled workers; no doubt, a full quarter was skilled workers (24.1%). On average, the immigrants were half-way through in their socio-economic achievements ($\bar{x}$ index = 10.56 on a range of 1-24)

As for wealth accumulation, the immigrants had achieved at least two out of three assets ($\bar{x}$= 1.6 on the wealth index; ranging from 0- 3). A majority (88.2%) had their own bank and saving accounts; only a minority (11.4%) did not. As for owned investments, half (53.4%) had invested their money in stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and even 401k- retirement, while the other half had not (45.7%). However, only a third owned a home (27.7%); the rest (72.2%) were either renters, or lived at home with their parents, or resided in situations where they did not pay a mortgage. Measured by the overall index of the Achievement of the American dream, the immigrants had more work to do on their progress toward the American Dream ($\bar{x}$ index= 20.1 on 0- 72 range).

Institutional Prejudice

One of the structural barriers immigrants may face when attempting to advance towards their American dream is Institutional Prejudice (i.e. an independent concept). The police, work place, and housing were three institutional domains considered in this analysis. These discriminatory practices lay the groundwork or rather policies that encourage interpersonal prejudice.

Table 1.B. Structural Racism Constraints: Institutional Prejudice
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3434)

Concept	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Institutional Prejudice	Q199_a: Did this involve the police?	1= Not applicable 2= No 3= Yes	67.6% 26.9 5.6
	Q199_b: Did this happen at work or while you were looking for work?	1= Not applicable 2= No 3= Yes	67.5% 20.5 12.0
	Q199_C: Did this happen when you were looking for a house or apartment?	1= Not applicable 2= No 3= Yes	67.6% 29.6 2.9
	Index of Institutional Prejudice[1]	Mean (SD) Range (n)	4.2 (1.7) 3-9 (3434)

[1] Index of Institutionalized Racism= Q199_a_Police+ Q199_b_Work+ Q199_c_Housing.

The most common site of institutional prejudice was the work place; 12% had experienced prejudice in their job search or at their work place (Table 1.B.). Only a small minority had either experienced prejudicial treatment during their interactions with the police (5.6%) or while looking for housing (2.9%). Overall, there were relatively low levels of institutional prejudice experienced by the sample immigrants (Index Mean = 4.2 on a range of 3 to 9).

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Community Distress

The extent of distress in the communities in which immigrants grew up was a second measure of structural constraints in their pursuit towards the American dream. Community distress was indicated by the levels of crime, gangs, and encounters with correctional institutions. The assumption was that an immigrant who had been exposed to high levels of crime, deviance, and risk in their communities was less likely to have had the opportunities to secure the aid and accumulate the tools needed for their advancement towards the achievement of the American dream (Table 1.C).

Table 1.C. Structural Racism Constraints: Community Distress
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3352)

Concept	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Community Distress	Q62_a: How big of a problem was the dealing/using of drugs in your neighborhood of youth?	1= Not a problem 2= Somewhat of a problem 3= Big Problem	69.5% 18.2 12.4
	Q62_b: How big of a problem was gang activity in your neighborhood of youth?	1= Not a problem 2= Somewhat of a problem 3= Big Problem	54.4% 28.0 17.6
	Q62_c: How big of a problem was crime in your neighborhood of youth?	1= Not a problem 2= Somewhat of a problem 3= Big Problem	56.2% 31.4 12.5
	Q201: Have you or has any family member ever been arrested?	0= No 1= Yes	76.6% 23.4
	Q203A: Have you or has any member of your family ever been in reform school, a detention center, jail or prison?	0= No 1= Yes	83.4% 16.6
	Index of Community Distress[1]	Mean (SD) Range (n)	5.0 (2.2) 3-11 (3352)

[1] Index of Community Distress= Q62_a_Drugs+ Q162_b_Gang+ Q62_c_Crime+ Q201_Arrest+ Q203A_Prison.

For most immigrants, drugs were not an issue (69.5%) in their neighborhoods of youth. Only a small group noted that drugs were somewhat of a threat (18.2%) and even smaller group for whom drugs were an apparent problem (12.4%). Gang activity and crime were present but not a major threat. Gang activity was somewhat of a problem (28%) or truly a problem (17.6%) for a plurality; but not a problem for a majority (54.4%). Crime patterns in the neighborhoods of their youth were similar to gang activity. Only a third (31.4%) expressed crime was somewhat of an issue and even fewer (12.5%) affirmed that crime was an issue in their neighborhoods. Contacts with correctional institutions were similarly low. A quarter (23.4%) of the respondents were or had a family member who had been arrested; a fifth (16.6%) actually went to a reform school,

detention center, jail or prison. These relatively lower levels of exposure to community distress were captured in the mean index of community distress score (Mean=5, range of 3 to 11).

Interpersonal Prejudice

Another set of barriers to the American Dream conceptualized in this analysis was prejudice experienced during interpersonal interactions. Understanding if, and by whom, respondents had experienced prejudice can provide clues into how systemic racism was translated to interpersonal relationships. In other words, prejudicial interactions with whites would indicate systemic racism expressed at the hands of the dominant group. Prejudice in the interactions with minorities represented out-groups participating in the systemic racist framework.

Table 1.D. Racism: Interpersonal Prejudice
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3440)

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Interpersonal Prejudice	Overall:	Q198: Within the past year, did you feel as if someone was showing prejudice toward you or was discriminating against you because of your race or ethnicity?	1= No 2= Yes	67.1% 32.6
	White Prejudice:	Q200_1: The last time this happened, what was the race or ethnicity of the person or persons showing prejudice toward you? _White	1= Not applicable 2= No 3= Yes	67.5% 9.9 22.6
Minority Prejudice:	Q200_2-5: Black/ African American		1= Not applicable 2= No 3= Yes	67.5% 28.8 3.7
		Asian/ Pacific Islander	1= Not applicable 2= No 3= Yes	67.5% 30.1 2.4
		Native American	1= Not applicable 2= No 3= Yes	67.5% 32.2 .3
		Latino	1= Not applicable 2= No 3= Yes	67.5% 27.5 5.0
		Index of Minority Prejudice[1]	Mean (SD) Range (n)	5.4 (2.1) 6-17 (3440)

[1] Index of Minority Prejudice= Q200_2_Black + Q200_3_Asian/Pacific Islander + Q200_4_Native American + Q200_5_Latino.

As seen in Table 1.D. about two thirds (67.1%) of the sample, had not experienced interpersonal prejudice, but the other third (32.6%) had. For the third that have experienced prejudice, 22.6% had experienced that prejudice from whites. The rest was in their interactions with other minorities; 5% from Latinos, 3.7% from Blacks, 2.4% from Asians, and only .3% from Native Americans. In short, most immigrants had not experienced interpersonal prejudice. But,

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when they did, it was mainly in their interactions with whites, the representative of systemic racism.

Bilingualism: A Constraint or Resource?

The language of their origin is an important part of the identity of immigrants, particularly those coming to the United States from non- English speaking countries. But, English fluency is a critical asset in their search for the American Dream. Immigrants who are not fluent in English have only limited opportunities to secure the coveted, well-paying jobs in the mainstream labor market. On the other hand, because the United States is a nation of immigrants being bilingual or even multi-lingual can be an asset rather than a constraint.

Table 1.E. Cultural Resources: Bilingualism
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3398)

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Bilingualism	Other Language Proficiency:	Q185: How well do you <u>speak</u> origin language?	1= Not at all Well 2= Not Well 3= Well 4= Very Well	0.6% 14.4 34.8 50.1
		Q186: How well do you <u>understand</u> origin language?	1= Not at all Well 2= Not Well 3= Well 4= Very Well	0.2% 5.2 31.3 63.3
		Q187: How well do you <u>read</u> origin language?	1= Not at all Well 2= Not Well 3= Well 4= Very Well	12.4% 24.9 26.8 35.9
		Q188: How well do you <u>write</u> origin language?	1= Not at all Well 2= Not Well 3= Well 4= Very Well	16.9% 31.5 25.4 26.2
		Index of Other Language Proficiency[1]	Mean (SD) Range (n) Proficient[2]: Non- Proficient:	12.3 (3.1) 4-16 (2687) 88.2% 11.8
	Language Growing Up	Q184Recoded: Which language did you use most while growing up?	1= Other language 2= English 3= English/ Other language about the same	55.1% 31.3 13.6
		Mono- English/ Bilingual[3]	0= Mono- English[4] 1=Bilingual[5]	7.4% 92.6

[1] Index of Other Language Proficiency= Recoded185+Recoded186+Recoded187+Recoded188;
[2] Proficient (in Other Language)= 9 to 16 = Bilingual; Low Proficiency in Other Language= 4 to 8 = Mono- English.
[3] Mono- English/ Bilingual= Recoded184 = 3 and DummyOtherLangProficiency=1/ Bilingual_MonoEnglish=1
[4] Mono-English= Spoke English growing up AND Low Other Language proficiency (Score between 4 to 8 on Other Language Proficiency);
[5] Bilingual= Spoke Other language growing up BUT Low other language proficiency/Spoke Other lang. growing up AND High other lang. proficiency/Spoke English growing up BUT also high proficiency in other lang./Spoke English and Other lang. growing up AND Low other lang. proficiency/Spoke English and Other lang. growing up And High Other lang. proficiency.

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Many respondents reported that they spoke (50.1%) and comprehended (63.3%) their language of origin very well. Another third could speak and comprehend origin language well (speaking= 34.4%; comprehension=31.3%). They were more divided on their reading and comprehension skills in the origin language; a plurality (37.3%) could not read well or well at all. They were similarly divided in writing proficiency. Overall, the respondents were quite proficient in their origin language (Mean = 12.3 on a range of 4-16).

In addition, a little more than half (55.1%) affirmed that they grew up using their languages of origin. Only a third (31.1%) used English, and 13.6% grew up in a bilingual environment. Combining other language proficiency and language used when growing up found an overwhelmingly majority (92.6%) of immigrant respondents to be Bilingual.

Summary

The immigrants in the IIMMLA survey were half- way through their progress towards the American Dream. They had not experienced much prejudice from institutions or interpersonal interactions, yet those who had, received it during their job search or at their work place through most likely interactions with whites. A little less than half of the immigrants had grown up in distressed communities, suggesting that their communities lacked the resources and guidance needed to progress towards the American dream. And with more than a third of immigrants or someone related having been in correctional custody, the "criminal" stigma alone, may provide for more intense barriers socio- economically. An overwhelming majority was bilingual; immigrants had learned and use English as well as their language of origin.

Bivariate Analysis

In the bivariate analyses discussed below the potential relationships between the Achievement of the American Dream and constraints (structural, interpersonal, and cultural) were examined. The correlations can be found in Appendix C.

As might be expected, immigrants with more socio-economic achievements also had accumulated more wealth (r= 0.41***). However, of the two structural constraints indicators, only Community Distress (r=-0.18***), not Institutional Prejudice, hindered the wealth dimension of the American dream. Neither did interpersonal constraints hamper wealth accumulation. Interestingly, Bilingualism was very likely to impede (-0.04**), rather than benefit, immigrants in their path to the American dream. Further, older immigrants were closer to their dream (0.50***) than the younger cohorts, and immigrant minorities were not (-0.15***). A few other patterns in demographic subgroups who were found to be a greater distance away from the wealth dimension of the American Dream, included: second (vs. 1.5) generations (-0.05**), and those in poorer health (r= -0.17***)

As for socio- economic achievements, immigrants who were successful had grown up in community environments that were not as distressed (r= -0.20***). Institutional and interpersonal constraints held no importance for socio- economic achievement. However, bilingualism was likely to hinder (r=-08***) immigrants in their socio- economic goals, rather than be a helpful tool. Other sub-groups who were not as socioeconomically successful as their relevant counterparts were: men (r= 0.04*), minorities (r= -0.04*), second generation immigrants (r= -0.07***), and those in poorer health (r= -0.17). Older, than younger, immigrants were socioeconomically (r= 0.26***) successful. The stability of these relationships was tested using multivariate analyses.

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Multivariate Analyses

The results presented in Table 3 and Figure 1, included a sequential linear regression analysis of the effects of structural (Institutional Prejudice and Community Distress), Interpersonal (Interpersonal Prejudice from both Whites and Minorities), and cultural constraints (Bilingualism) first on immigrant's socio- economic achievement (Model 1) and then on wealth accumulation (Model 2). Taken together, the two models captured the extent to which the immigrants were constrained in their progress, or lack thereof, to the American Dream. Demographics of sex, age, ethnicity, generation, and health, were controlled.

As was expected, socioeconomic achievements were directly connected to wealth accumulation (Beta= 0.24***). In other words, the American Dream included both inter-related dimensions.

But, there were a different set of hurdles in immigrants' paths to the American Dream, depending on whether the dream was defined by socio-economic achievement or wealth accumulation. Community distress, one of the structural constraints, was the only constraint that impeded the progress of immigrants both on the socio-economic (Beta = -0.15***) and wealth accumulations (Beta = -0.10***). That is, immigrants who grew up in neighborhoods that had drugs, gang violence, and crime had a harder time escaping to a better American dream lifestyle. The Daycare provider (Interview #3) opined that housing and the media were the two largest institutions that rally against immigrant minorities. In her experience, the media portrays minorities (immigrants) in a negative way. Ordinary people are just trying to keep their children away from bad communities but they are often unable to find housing in safer neighborhoods. The Daycare provider and Office manager (Interviewees #3 & 2) have also found that immigrants experience prejudice when looking for housing because some landowners prefer to rent to tenants of their (own) ethnicity. This racial bias only intensifies the competition for scarce resources, or in this case, housing. Ultimately such bias negatively impacts the schools their children will attend, the colleges and employment they will consider, and ultimately, their future opportunities for success.

On the other hand, institutional prejudice created direct hurdles for immigrant socioeconomic progress (Beta= -0.10***), but only indirectly for wealth accumulation. When immigrant experienced prejudice at the institutional level they were less likely to be successful socio-economically. Nevertheless, the immediate negative impact that institutions had on immigrant education and jobs also indirectly limited their potential future wealth. The professional interviewees confirmed this statistical finding; in their judgment, even in diverse areas, immigrants are affected by prejudicial experiences in their daily interactions with the common people, as well as political leaders, since it is assumed that immigrants won't meet cultural expectations.
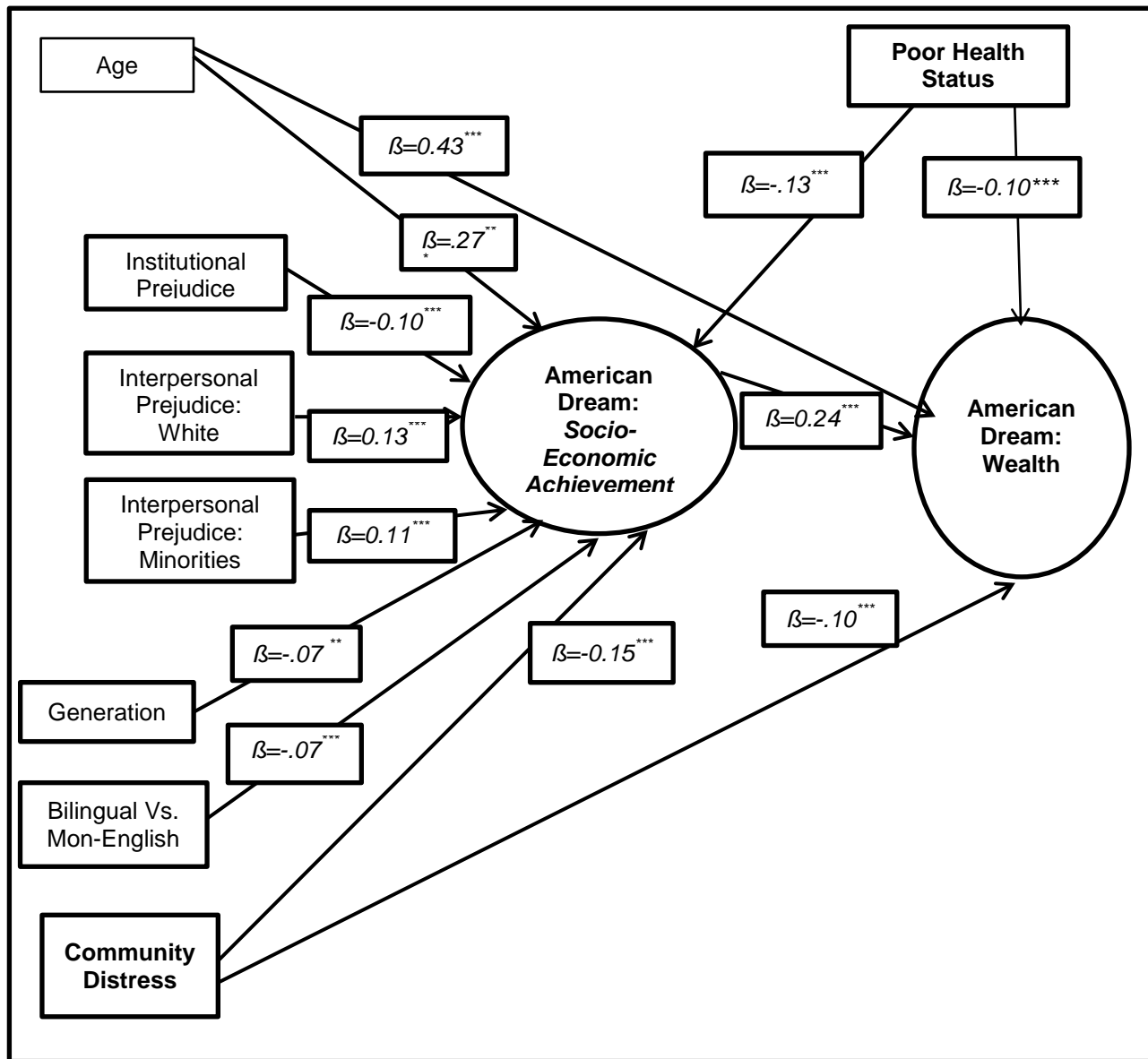
Table 3
Regression Analyses of the Relative Net Effects of Structural and Interpersonal Constraints and Bilingualism on Achievement of the American Dream[1]
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles

	American Dream	
	Socio-economic achievements	**Wealth**
	Beta (β)	**Beta (β)**
Socioeconomic Achievements	--	0.24***
Structural Constraints: Community Distress	-0.15***	-0.10***
Institutional Prejudice	-0.10***	-0.04
Interpersonal Constraints: Interpersonal Prejudice: Whites	0.13***	0.05
Interpersonal Prejudice: Minorities	0.11***	0.02
Cultural Capital: Bilingual (1) Vs. Mono- English (0)	-0.07***	-0.01
Demographic Controls: Female (vs. Male)	0.03	0.01
Age	0.27***	0.43***
Pan-Ethnicity:	0.02	-0.01
Generation	-0.06**	0.02
Poor Health Status	-0.13***	-0.10***
Constant (a)	9.4***	-0.003
Adjusted R^2	0.14***	0.35***
DF 1 & 2	10 & 2406	11 & 2380

*** p <= .001; * p <= .05

[1] Index of wealth: Owns home (Q37)+Have savings or checking account (Q174_a)+Have mutual funds, stocks or bonds, 401k retirement plan (174_b); Range= 0-3;
Index of Socio-economic Achievements: Q25_a.Highest Education (1-6) * Q12_1_Current Job- Occupation (1-4); Range = 1-24;
Index of Community Distress: Q62_a_Drugs+ Q162_b_Gang+ Q62_c_Crime+ Q201_Arrest+ Q203A_Prison: 1=Not a problem to 3=A big problem (Range = 3-11);
Index of Institutional Prejudice: Q199_a_Police+ Q199_b_Work+ Q199_c_Housing; Range=3 (none) – 9 (all three sources);
Interpersonal White Prejudice: 1=Prejudice experienced (Q198=1) and from whites (Q200_1); else =0;
Interpersonal Minority Prejudice: If prejudice was experienced, If_Q200_2_Black+ Q200_3_Asian/Pacific Islander+ Q200_4_Native American+ Q200_5_Latino; Range= 4(none) – 12(all);
Bilingual/ Mono-English= Bilingual (1) versus Mono-English (0);
Age: Mean= 27.9; Range=20- 40;
Female: 0= Male; 1= Female;
Pan- Ethnicity: 0= White, Non Hispanic; 1= Minorities (Latin American, Asian, Black Non- Hispanic).
Generation: 1=1.5 Generation; 2= 2nd Generation;
Poor Health Status: 1= Excellent; 2= Very Good; 3=Good; 4=Poor.

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Figure 1
Empirical Model: Impacts of Structural, Interpersonal, and Cultural Constraints on Achievement of the American Dream[1]

[1] Refer to Table 3 for index coding.

The professionals also elaborated on other institutional settings in which prejudice is expressed. A case in point is the federal immigration law and the court system. The seemingly "neutral" assessment process for work authorization process for immigrants contradicts the long and difficult judicial process of getting work authorization; some judges choose, out of prejudice they felt, to focus on the bad factors and often immigrants are pushed towards marginal jobs that are exploitative and lack opportunity (Office Manager, Interviewee #2). In other words, even in institutions obligated to fairness and justice, immigrants are not given a fair chance or opportunity.

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The interviewees also reflected on the racialized American society, a society where immigrants of the same superior race are admired and have a more seamless transition that results in faster success (The Attorney's Assistant, Interviewee #6). To the Landscaping Owner (Interviewee #4), "the power structure of the nation, where "the majority of corporation CEOs, Senators, and Representatives are white, is essentially controlled by one race. And the few minorities that are in power are rarely able to make a difference in the opportunity offered." Opportunities open to every single person, whether born or immigrating to the U.S., are pre-determined, and "the ones who decide who gets more or less opportunity are the white men at the top" (Attorney's Assistant, Interviewee #6).

Another prejudicial institution, per the Attorney's Assistant (Interviewee #6), was the police. Comprised of white and non-white officers, the law enforcement is definitely an institution known for racial profiling and prejudice, against immigrants and minorities alike. Similar to the police, retail consumer businesses also practice racial profiling against immigrants, probably because of their erroneous assumption that the immigrants lack the money to afford the product and do not deserve respect and kind customer service (Insurance Agent & Office Manager, Interviewee(s) #5 & 2). In short, federal immigration court and officials, the job market, housing, police, and even businesses are all examples of institutions that have negatively affected immigrants in their efforts of achievement of the American Dream.

It was also evident in Table 3 that immigrants faced not only structural but also cultural constraints. Bilingualism was more of a constraint than a resource in the immigrant pathway to the American Dream. Bilingual immigrants lagged behind the mono-English immigrants in their socio-economic achievements (Beta = -0.07***). But, as with institutional prejudice, bilingualism only had an indirect negative impact on wealth. Five of the six professional interviewees agreed that the largest cause of interpersonal prejudice most likely had to do with the lack of knowledge of the English language. Two of the interviewees have witnessed situations where people do not want to tolerate immigrants they cannot communicate with. The immigrant business owners collectively believed that part of their success came from assimilating to the English language. The Landscaping owner (Interviewee #4) recollected: by learning the language of the country he had unconsciously accepted the American culture as well. Yet, bilingualism, fluency in both English and native languages was also thought to be a useful tool for communicating and acquiring future employment opportunities.

On the other hand, interpersonal prejudice in interactions with whites spurred socio-economic progress (white prejudice Beta = .12***), as if inspiring immigrants work harder. The common belief, according to (Insurance Agent, (Interviewee #5), is that "today's immigrants are viewed as enemies, they are Brown people, who speak broken English, and are thought to be untrustworthy", implying that the nation is unwelcoming to immigrant minorities. Whereas white European immigrants arrive unnoticed and each quality is embraced, even their accents." But, rather than being defeated by the prejudicial interactions, immigrants seemed spurred in their search for the American Dream.

Similarly, prejudicial interactions with other minorities were also a motivating force (0.11***) for immigrant socio- economic achievement. Non-white minority immigrants are despised even by other minority immigrants for having different cultural values, making integration hard, and achieving the American Dream even harder (Landscaping Owner, Interviewee #4). Commenting on the absence of direct effects of institutional, interpersonal, or cultural constraints on wealth, the Landscaping Owner noted thusly: even though prejudice from other minority immigrants

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may propel some motivation towards immediate success, achieving wealth as part of the American Dream has nothing to do with experiences of social prejudice.

The strongest and most obvious positive predictor of socio-economic (0.27[***]) and wealth (0.43[***]) achievement of the American Dream was the respondent's age. The older immigrants were more successful than the younger ones. The interviewees confirmed the age effect because of the driven work ethic of older generations for a better life in the United States. But interviewees also believed that given time, youth will also be equally successful, if they do not "fall prey to" bad habits (Lawyer, Interviewee #1) as was perhaps the case with the second generation immigrants (-.06[**]). In the final analyses, the interviewees (Lawyer's Assistant, Insurance Agent, Office Manager, and Daycare Provider) were hopeful that young immigrants, who have the benefit of growing up immersed in the dominant language and culture will be successful. Finally, poor health had negative effects on both the socio- economic (-0.13[***]) and wealth (-0.10[***]) accumulation; immigrants who were not healthy could neither accumulate the income nor the wealth needed to attain the American dream.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Empirical Implications

To summarize, immigrants who were successful in education and in the labor force had also accumulated more wealth. That is, one road to accumulating wealth, a dimension of the American Dream, has been to be successful socio- economically.

But, the path to socioeconomic success is strewn with hurdles posed by community distress and institutional prejudice. Immigrants who had grown up in distressed communities, with crime and violence, were found to be the least accomplished in both socio- economic achievement and overall wealth. Immigrants exposed to such negative conditions were less likely to escape them; being surrounded by so many discouraging conditions can only foster the same harmful outcomes. Prejudicial institutions also represented an additional hurdle for immigrants. The police, work place, and housing market were sites of prejudice that stood in the way of immigrant success.

On the contrary, prejudicial interpersonal interactions, spurred, rather than hindered, progress made by immigrants. To the Attorney's Assistant (Interviewee #6), while the combination of culture shock and experiences of prejudice leave many intimidated, the intimidation never seems to deter their motivation to put themselves out there for work. The Lawyer (Interviewee #1) added: the belief that immigrants do not integrate and achieve the American Dream is a racist myth, meant to hinder their process, but instead it only motivates them. Despite the social factors working against immigrant minorities, every single interviewee agreed that the dedication and hard work ethic that immigrants possess, is what gives them resilience, and allows them to achieve the American dream.

All the professional interviewees were hopeful about the future. If, instead of discriminating, people and institutions learned to embrace and support immigrants, the United States would benefit and achieve mutual success. Most importantly, they felt that "there is always going to be prejudice and barriers working against immigrants, but as long as that person wants to achieve, that negativity will only motivate one to success" (Insurance Agent, Interviewee #5). In other words, success comes from within, if it is chosen to be embraced.

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On balance, institutions that are prejudicial towards immigrants, tended to create small, but overcome-able, barriers for those seeking success. If immigrants truly wish to achieve the American Dream, institutions working against them will be a couple of small bumps in the road towards wealth. There is already evidence that prejudice expressed by both white and minority immigrants seemed to only motivate immigrants in their immediate socio- economic achievements. But that positive influence was less consequential when it came to wealth accumulation. Perhaps, the drive that immigrants gain when they experience interpersonal prejudice might only by good for short- term success. In order to achieve long term American wealth, immigrants must rely on their internal drive and ambition.

Theoretical Implications

In the final analyses, this research clarified how structural, interpersonal, and cultural constraints hindered immigrant progress toward their American Dream. On the one hand, as predicted by Systemic racism, community distress and institutional prejudice blocked immigrant progress. On the other hand, experiences of interpersonal discrimination at the hands of whites or even other minorities, seemed to motivate them in their pursuit of the American Dream. Perhaps, the Systemic Racism framework failed to envision a society where immigrants, with odds against them, could actually achieve the sought after American Dream. Immigrants are resilient and the negative experiences become more of an asset, rather than a hurdle, in their pursuit of the American Dream.

The fact that immigrants, despite the prejudice and obstacles they faced, continued to strive and achieve the American Dream is captured by the resilience theory (Wang, Zhang, & Zimmerman 2015). Resilience theory is a "strength- based model, rather than a problem- oriented approach", that attempts to understand why some people are able to successfully adapt and overcome negative life experiences and adversities. Two assets assist immigrants in overcoming the hurdles they encounter. One set of assets signify personal characteristics, such as "competence, coping skills, and self- efficacy" (Wang, Zhang, & Zimmerman 2015:356), which provide at- risk, folk with the mindset need to confront negative conditions. The second set of assets included resources like guidance from mentors and family/community support. Both asset sets help individuals combat adversities through resilient intellect and behavior/interactions, resulting "successful adaptation despite challenging circumstances (Wang, Zhang, & Zimmerman 2015:355). Immigrants in this study who faced prejudice were able to overcome such obstacles with a strong mindset and supportive community and network.

Limitations and Suggestions for the Future

While the study offered valuable insights into the progress immigrants have made towards the American Dream, many unresolved questions still remain. For one, the adjusted R^2 (explained variance) were only 0.14^{***} for the Socio-economic model and 0.35^{***} for the wealth model. One limitation of the study was not being able to fully understand the specifics of the ways in which the constraints stood in the way of immigrants. For example, a fuller portrayal of the contexts and dynamics of prejudicial encounters is warranted. Health restrictions should also be elaborated on by accounting for health and health care history. Oral histories of immigrant experiences, both their successes and struggles, will go a long way to offering a fuller portrayal of immigrants in their search of the American Dream.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3440)

Concepts	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Demographical Data:	Age:	Mean (SD)	27.9 (6.0)
		Range (n)	20-40 (3440)
	Sex:	0= Male	49.5%
		1= Female	50.5
	Generation:	1= 1.5	47.2%
		2= Second	52.8
	Pan-ethnic:	0= White, Non-Hispanic	8.6%
		1= Minorities	91.4
		Latin American	44.8%
		Asian	54.0
		Black, Non Hispanic)	1.3
	Poor Health Status:	4= Fair, Poor	08.7%
		3= Good	24.6
		2= Very Good	31.2
		1= Excellent	35.5

Appendix B

Letter of Consent and Interview Protocol

Letter of Consent

Dear Interviewee:

I am a Sociology Senior working on my Research Capstone Paper under the direction of Professor Marilyn Fernandez in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. I am conducting my research on immigrant attainment of the American Dream.

You were selected for this interview, because of your knowledge of and experience working with immigrants.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve a 20- minute response to questions explaining immigrant community integration and how that influences their journey towards the attainment of the American Dream. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose to not participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time. Pseudonyms will be used in lieu of your name and the name of your organization in the written paper. You will also not be asked (nor recorded) questions about your specific characteristics, such as age, race, sex, and religion.

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If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call/email me at (408) 930- 5725 or Dr. Fernandez at (408)-554-4432 mfernandez@scu.edu

Sincerely,

Milenna Smith

By signing below you are giving consent to participate in the above study. (If the interviewee was contacted by email or phone, request an electronic message denoting consent).

_____   _____   _____
Signature   Printed Name   Date

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, through Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at (408) 554-5591.

Interview Schedule for Supplemental Qualitative Interviews

Interview Date and Time: _____
Respondent ID#: 1

1. What is the TYPE Agency/Organization/Association/Institution (**NO NAME**, please) where you learned about (and/or worked) with community integration of immigrants?

2. What is your position in this organization?

3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?

4. Based on what you know of community integration for immigrants, how difficult and/or easy is it for immigrants to integrate into their communities in the U.S.?

5. In your opinion, what are some reasons that contribute to the success and/or problems with integration?

6. What about specific problematic contributing factors such as:

    a. Interpersonal Prejudice?
    b. Institutional Prejudice?
    c. Do, and if so, how have you observed childhood neighborhoods, bilingualism, or age hinder or benefit integration?
        For example:
        ✓ Does growing up in a negative environment limit opportunities for success?
        ✓ Does being bilingual benefit your chances of success?
        ✓ Are younger immigrants more successful than older immigrants?
        ✓ How about race? Are White European immigrants able to integrate more smoothly than non-white immigrants? Why?
        ✓ How about men? Do they have an easier time integrating than women? Why?
7. Is there anything else about this issue/topic I should know more about?

Thank you very much for your time. If you wish to see a copy of my final paper, I would be glad to share it with you at the end of the winter quarter. If you have any further questions or comments for me, I can be contacted at (msmith4@scu.edu). Or if you wish to speak to my faculty advisor, Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, she can be reached at mfernandez@scu.edu

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Appendix C
Table 2. Correlation (r) Matrix
Achievement of the American Dream, Interpersonal Prejudice: Whites & Minorities, Institutional Prejudice,
Age, Sex, and Generation (n=3392-3440)
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
A. Wealth	1.0											
B. Socio-Economic Status	0.41***	1.0										
C. Community Distress	-0.18***	-0.20***	1.0									
D. Institutional Prejudice	-0.03	0.00	0.20***	1.0								
E. Interpersonal Prejudice: Whites	-0.00	0.02	0.13***	0.77***	1.0							
F. Interpersonal Prejudice: Minorities	-0.01	0.03	0.09***	0.48***	-0.01	1.0						
G. Bilingualism	-0.04*	-0.08***	0.11***	0.04*	0.05*	-0.00	1.0					
H. Female	0.02	0.04*	-0.12***	-0.05**	-0.04*	-0.02	0.02	1.0				
I. Age	0.50***	0.26***	-0.06**	-0.04*	-0.04*	-0.02	-0.01	0.00	1.0			
J. Pan- Ethnic	-0.15***	-0.04*	0.08***	0.09***	0.11***	-0.01	0.05*	-0.03	-0.12***	1.0		
K. Generation	-0.05**	-0.07***	0.03*	0.03*	0.03*	0.01	-0.07***	0.01	-0.15***	-0.12***	1.0	
L. Poor Health	-0.17***	-0.17***	0.13***	0.05**	0.01	0.04*	0.02	-0.01	-0.01	0.08***	-0.04*	1.0

*** $p \le .001$; ** $p \le .01$; * $p \le .05$
[1.] Refer to Table 3 for index coding

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Interviewee #3, March 5th, 2016. Daycare Provider.

Interviewee #4. March 5th, 2016. Landscaping Owner.

Interviewee #5, March 5th, 2016. Insurance Agent.

Interviewee #6. March 11th, 2016. Attorney Assistant.

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Natal Family Disruptions and Lives in Non-Parental Care: Impacts on Children's Emotional Health and Academic Success

By

Juliet Heid[1]

ABSTRACT. This research used a mixed methods design to evaluate the negative impacts of strains in children's natal family environment, on their emotional and academic core self-concept, as well as how healthy non-parental relationships can help repair the damaged self-concept. Analyses of National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care (2013) survey data, supplemented with interviews with five experts in the field, revealed the following: strains generated by disruptions in the child's natal family negatively affected the emotional health of the children in non-parental care and indirectly their academic success; and living in non-parental care homes, particularly having healthy relationships with the caregiver, was positive for both the emotional and academic self-concept of children. Contrary to conventional wisdom, continued involvement of birthparents, after the children were removed from their care, neither benefitted nor harmed the children. These findings were theoretically explained using insights from the Strain (Agnews 1992) and Social Bond perspectives (Hirschi 1969) on the development of core and fluid self-concepts (Blumer 1969; Kuhn 1964), and added to current literature on the needs and well-being of children in non-parental care.

INTRODUCTION

Children are removed from their parents' care for a variety of reasons, including abuse, poverty, illness or death. When such separations occur, children will either be placed in the care of a relative, a family friend, or in foster care. The 2011 census indicated that nearly three million children lived in non-parental care, a cumulative term used to encompass both foster-care and relative care. As of 2012, between 514,000 and 545,000 of these children were in non-relative care, including foster care (Vandivere, Yrausquin, Allen, Malm, & McKlindon 2012).

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Though being removed from disruptive natal homes is in the best interest of children, the transition to different living situations and caregivers can be difficult or even traumatic, regardless of the reason for separation. Such disruptions in the natal family environment will likely carry over into the child's life in non-parental care and may have lasting effects on their well-being. Permanency is critical to a child's healthy development, and removal often introduces instability in their lives. Negative effects of early transitions can manifest in a variety of early developmental milestones, including poor health, behavioral problems, emotional upheavals, and academic difficulties. However, the degree to which caregivers are able to provide children a safe environment and form stable relationships with them may counter some of the negative consequences for early developmental milestones. In order to identify ideal ways to transition children, it is important to examine the effects of disruptions in the natal-family environment and lives in non-parental care environments on the child's well-being, particularly their emotional health and academic performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Well-being of children in non-parental care in its many dimensions has been recognized as an important issue by both social scientists and child development practitioners. It is commonly agreed that, even after a child has been placed in non-parental care, it is in the best interest of the child to maintain contact with the birth family. Researchers have also concurred that to understand fully the effects of birth and natal families on children's well-being, it is crucial to look at the perspectives of the primary stakeholders, the children, caregivers, and social workers, involved in the child care arrangement. Stability and positive quality relationships with the caregivers are critical for the well-being of children in their care, as evidenced by emotional health and academic success for children in non-parental care.

Child Well-being: Emotional Health

Two relationships are critically influential for the emotional health of children in non-parental care: the relationship with the birthparents and the relationship with the caregiver. In this section, the different stakeholder perspectives on the effects of contact with the birth family, as well as the importance of a stable relationship with caregivers, were examined.

Contact with Birth Family

A central tenet in non-parental care is that it is in the child's best interest to remain in contact with their birth family in some shape or form so that the relationships, bonds, and connection to their history are preserved. A strong relationship with the birthmother has proven to benefit the child's behavior. Lenore M. McWey, Alan Acock, and Breanne E. Porter (2010) used a subsample of children between the ages of 7 and 16 from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being to examine the effects of birthmother contact on children externalizing behavioral problems. When exposure to violence was controlled, children who had no contact with their birthmother exhibited the most behavioral problems, while children who had consistent contact had the lowest rates. However, the authors acknowledged that there may be a third variable causing this association; children who have more frequent contact have strong attachment to their birthmothers.

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Yet, since many children were removed from their home because of family instability, including neglect, abuse, or trauma, there is reasonable concern that establishing a relationship with their birth families might further traumatize and upset children (Salas Martinez, Fuentes, Bernedo, & García-Martin 2014). Furthermore, even though there is widespread agreement that maintaining the natal relationships is important, there are mixed opinions on what this contact should look like. With the children's best interest as the primary concern, researchers have simultaneously concentrated on children in non-parental care, their caregivers, and social workers to get their respective perspectives on the effects of birth family contact.

Childs' Perspective. In order to identify what is in the best interests of the children, researchers have underscored the need to construct a "children's perspective" on their non-parental living environments. Ellingsen, Stephens, & Storksen (2012), in their Q methodology study[2] of Norwegian children, concluded that though most children felt well-adjusted and connected with their foster families, they still felt a tie to their birth family. Similarly, the 104 Norwegian children in non-kinship foster care, who were interviewed by Salas Martinez et al. (2014), also generally perceived birth family visits as positive; they reported enjoying the visits and feeling happy when the visit started. Canadian children have also been seen to enjoy their visits with the birthparents, and wanted to continue the visits, if not make them more frequent; these children aged 8 to 12 were in non-parental care and visited their birthparent at least once a month (Morrison, Mishna, Cook, and Aitken 2011). But, many of these Canadian children also reported feeling nervous before the visits began. And, while they generally felt their birthparents were affectionate, the children reported both more warmth, as well as more criticism, from their caregivers. On balance, these researchers concluded that, perhaps, the child-caregiver relationship was of greater significance and more impactful for the child's well-being than contact with the birthparents. Yet, it is posited that it is in the child's best interest to maintain contact with their birth family since they will likely return to their birth homes.

Caregivers' Perspective. In contrast to the children's generally positive recollections of their visits with their birthparents, the perspectives of caregivers were more mixed. Salas Martinez et al. (2014), in addition to offering a children's perspectives, also interviewed their foster mothers (n=86) and foster fathers (n=71); not only were their opinions of birth family contact visits ascertained but so was the impact they felt the visits had on the children. Many foster parents shared positive messages with the children in their care about their birth families and encouraged contact. But, there was also a sense that birth family visits took a negative toll on the children. Their focus group of 24 foster parents reported that birth family visits were often a disappointment and a source of emotional distress for the children. Furthermore, per the focus group caregivers, lingering bonds with birthparents often prevented children from moving forward with their lives. Caregivers went even further in Sinclair, Wilson and Gibb's (2005) study. They categorically reported that birth family visitations were harmful to the children; there was regression, bedwetting, and nightmares.

Social Workers' Perspective. Some of the researchers reviewed above have also included in their study sample social workers who supervised child placements. Supervising social workers can offer valuable professional perspectives on the relationship between children, foster-parents, and birthparents. Social workers are able to objectively observe the situation, and critically evaluate what appears to be best for the child. While Morrison et al.'s (2011) social workers were generally in agreement that it was important for children to stay connected to their family background and roots; they also felt that it could be disruptive to the child, and possibly harmful, if the visits were not well conducted. Similarly, the ten social workers that Salas

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[2] Q methodology studies are used to test a person's viewpoint, or subjectivity

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Martinez et al. (2014) interviewed reported low quality in the birth family visits. The interactions the social workers observed during these visits were, on average, below satisfactory. Yet the social workers continued to have an overall positive perspective on birth family contact visits.

Stability in Caregiver Relationship

Another recurring theme in the scholarly literature has been the crucial role that caregivers play in the well-being of children in non-parental care. Many researchers have recognized the critical need for permanency and limited number of transitions for children's ability to form relationships with their caregivers. Additionally, research has also examined the ways in which the relationship between the caregiver and child can either hinder or enhance children's emotional and mental well-being, as well as their academic and future success.

Transitioning and Permanency. Permanency is often defined in physical or legal terms, and has been recognized by social workers as being of utmost importance for the development of children in non-parental care (Biehal 2014; Greeson, Thompson, Ali and Wenger 2015). However, from the perspective of children in foster care, permanency has much more to do with the emotional stability in their relationships with their caregivers (Greeson et. al. 2015). The more transitions a child has to go through in non-parental care, the greater psychological distress displayed by the child. Children in foster care reported that every time they were moved into a new home, the transition caused increased feeling of loneliness, fear, and depression, and required an additional period for children to feel that their caregivers had earned their trust (Mitchell and Kunczynski 2010). In Ravender, Barn and Jo-Pei Tan's 2012 study of 261 adolescents from the foster care system in England, adolescents experiencing multiple moves and transitions had difficulties, ranging from connecting with their caregivers and committing more crimes.

Quality of Caregiver-Child Relationships. In addition to permanency in the caregiver-child relationships, good quality relationships are another important element. Attachment, in some shape or form, is crucial for the development of a healthy psyche, emotional and mental well-being, and success in future relationships (Hollin and Larkin 2011). This is evidenced in Greeson et. al. 2015 study, where they found that having at least one adult that children were able to rely on and be attached to lowered the risk of distress and deviance when adolescents came of age or left the foster care system. Pears, Kim and Leve (2012) study of 75 girls in foster care found that girls who had a strong relationship with their caregivers were less likely to exhibit signs of aggression towards peers, and more likely to succeed academically. This evidence was endorsed by focus groups of foster children who desired a home in which they felt they belonged, and where there was structure, guidance, and consistency provided by the caregiver (Storer, Barkan, Stenhouse, Eichenlaub, Mallillin, and Haggerty 2014). In another study of 83 children in foster care, positive interactions with caregivers decreased the probability of children externalizing and internalizing behavioral problems (Dubois-Comtois, Bernier, Tarabusly, Cyr, St-Laurent, Lancot, St-Onge, Moss and Béliveau 2015).

Child Well-being: School Performance

Another widely used marker of a child's well-being has been school performance. How well the child does in school can offer insight into the child's adjustment in the home. If children growing up in non-parenting environment are in internal emotional turmoil, they might externalize this trouble as behavioral problems and poor academic performance in school. Furthermore, school

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professionals, who are interested in factors that affect a child's academic achievement, often look towards the family home life for clues.

Academic Challenges

Studies exploring the relationship between a child's living condition and their academic achievement have found living in non-parental care to have largely negative effects on their educational experiences. Tracy Scherr (2007), who in her meta-analysis of the educational experiences of children in foster-care, noted that foster children were more likely to be placed in special education programs, be held back a grade, and to be suspended or expelled from school. For example, children in foster care were roughly five times more likely to be in special education programs than their peers. Furthermore, roughly a third of foster students had been retained at least one time throughout their life; about a quarter had been either suspended or expelled from school at least once in their academic careers, and almost twice as many times as their peers. Pears, Heywood, Kim, and Fisher (2011) also demonstrated that children in foster children exhibited pre-reading deficits that will inhibit them in later academic performance.

Scholars explained these academic difficulties faced by children in non-parental care as byproducts of emotional problems. A 2014 study found prekindergarten children in non-parental care (compared to other children from at-risk backgrounds) to exhibit higher levels of externalized behavioral problems, such as aggression and hyperactivity, in the classroom (Lipscomb, Schmitt, Pratt, Acock, & Pears, 2014). Non-parental care children were also more sensitive to the process quality of their classroom than students who lived with their parents. Billing et al. (2002) found similar problems with children living in relative care; these children had more behavior problems in school, leading to high rates of suspension and expulsion, and skipping school than their peers in traditional family arrangements. Similar findings were indicated by Bernedo, Salas, Fuentes, and García-Martín (2014), in their study of 104 children in foster care in Spain. Both teachers and caregivers reported high levels of impulsivity, resulting in poor school performance of foster care children; these problems of externalizing behaviors were worse for male students than females.

Summary and Looking to the Future

The literature reviewed above highlighted several key factors in determining the well-being of children in non-parental care. The degree to which birth family involvement is beneficial and under what circumstances, as well as the importance of having a figure to attach to and permanency in the lives of children in non-parental care were some factors. The extant literature demonstrated that though children often have a perceived positive view of their birthparents involvement, it was not always the case. Children who have been victims of neglect or abuse were likely to fare worse after visitations than children who were not in this situation. Secondly, having a permanent caregiver who children felt they can trust made a large difference in their emotional health. This can be seen both in their academic success and reports from children.

However, much of the current research has focused on either children in foster care or children in relative care. This either or research can skew our understanding of children in non-parental care. For one, the parenting dynamics in foster care (unrelated caregiver) settings is bound to be different from those settings in which a relative, like a grandparent, is the child's care giver. Another point of divergence might lie in the children's connection with their birthparents,

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depending on whether the caregiver is related or unrelated to the child's parents. Furthermore, unlike with children in relative care, birthparent contacts with children in foster care take place in artificial settings with a social worker present. Such visits do not give an accurate representation of the relationship between the parent and child (Salas Martinez et al. 2014). There also has not been much attention paid to children who feel attached to both their current caregivers, and their birthparents (Ellingsen et al. 2011).

The research in this paper attempted to offer a broad representation of children growing up in non-parental care, both foster and relative care. The child's relationships with both birthparents and caregivers were also considered. The final goal was to understand the consequences of these relationships for the emotional well-being as well as academic achievements of children in non-parental care.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The extant literature reviewed above indicated several elements critical to healthy development of children growing up in non-parental care. Opportunities for children to contact and maintain relationships with birthparents and caregivers are important for the happiness and success of a child in non-parental care. But, the child's life in the natal family and reasons for removal can drastically curtail their ability to interact with and respond to birthparents, and ultimately affect their overall well-being in their post-removal life.

In this vein, the following two sets of questions were proposed in this study about the child's well-being: How did the emotional health of children in non-parental care affect their academic achievements? And what are the consequences of strain in the children's natal family environments and their lives in non-parental care for their emotional and academic well-being? Strain in the natal family environment was indicated by whether or not the birthmother or father voluntarily separated from the child (versus involuntary separation) and how long (duration) the child had lived with the natal family. Multiple dimensions of the child's living experiences in non-parental care were considered; they were the birthmother and father's post-separation involvement with their child, the caregiver-child relationship, birthparent-caregiver relationship, the health, age, and socioeconomic status of the caregiver, as well as whether the caregiver was a foster parent or a relative. Finally, age and sex of the child were also examined to assess how children with different demographics adjusted to life in non-parental care.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

This research about the well-being of children in non-parental care was framed within a general socialization theory, with specific focus on how social bonds and strains in the socialization process impacted the child's self-concept. Socialization is the process through which children learn about social norms and behavior in their homes and external environments. Healthy personal relationships that children develop in the socialization process are what keep them emotionally healthy and from deviating against social norms (Hirschi's Social Bond Theory 1969). Specifically, the trust and attachment cultivated between the child and their socializing agents will play a large role in their commitments to social norms and institutions, and ultimately their core self-concept (Iowa School, Kuhn 1964). Given that parents are usually their child's primary socializing agent, the family is the first context in which a child's core-self-concept is formed. When the parent-child relationship is healthy, the parent is caring and is frequently involved, the child feels safe and protected within the family.

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Unfortunately, such healthy family environments are not always available to children. When parents neglect their roles as nurturing and dependable figures in the lives of their children, they are not well socialized nor do they develop strong attachments to parents (Hirschi 1969). Growing up in such dysfunctional natal family environments may negatively impact the child's core self-concept. The degree of dysfunction in the natal family environment and the duration of exposure to the dysfunctional environment can create additional emotional strains, expressed in feelings of depression, fear, and frustration, for the child (Agnew's Strain Theory 1996).

When natal families are dysfunctional and birthparents are unable to take care of their children, the children are most often placed out of their natal home and in the hands of a different caregiver, who becomes the primary socializing agent. Despite the strains caused by the dysfunctionalities of their natal family lives, some of the damage done to the child's core self-concept can be repaired (Chicago School of Fluid Self-Concept, Blumer 1969). If the child is able to form a healthy relationship with the new caregiver and view the caregiver as a protective and reliable support in their lives, their damaged self-concept could be rehabilitated and emotional health improved (Hirschi 1969).

However, even though the caregivers might be the primary socialization agent for children removed from their birthparents, they are often not the sole parental figures involved. As noted earlier, social workers strongly recommend that children continue to be connected to birth families, resulting in the birthparents remaining a socializer in the child's life. However, if the birthparent's involvement is not positive or healthy, it may add more strain and even be harmful to the child. In other words, because of the history of dysfunctional relationships between the birthparents and the child, more contact with birthparents might lead to more instability for the child. Nonetheless, because the children are predominantly being socialized by their current caregivers, the benefits of a healthy caregiver-child relationship are expected to outweigh the negative effects of the birthparents' involvement.

Three formal hypotheses were drawn from the theoretical arguments outlined above. They were:

Hypothesis 1: On balance, the more strain the child experienced in the natal family environment, the less healthy the core self-concept of the child will be, indicated by poor emotional health and academic success (General Strain Theory and Iowa School of Core Self-Concept).

Hypothesis 2: All things being equal, children in healthy post-separation living environments, as represented by strong caregiver-child relations and healthy involvement of birthparents, will be able to repair the damaged self-concept (Social Bond Theory).

Hypothesis 3: However, continued birth family involvement will negatively affect the child's well-being, net of all other factors (Chicago School of Fluid Self- Concept).

METHODOLOGY

This research utilized a mixed method approach, combining quantitative survey and qualitative interview data, to gain a robust understanding of the research question at hand. Survey data from the 2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care were used for the quantitative

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analysis. In order to expand upon the statistical survey analyses, narrative interviews with five professionals were conducted.

Secondary Survey Data

The research hypotheses were tested using data collected from the National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care (NSCNC). Between April 2013 and August 2013, the CDC (2013) conducted telephone interviews with 1,298 caregivers of children in their care. Survey children were identified through the 2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health. The CDC aimed to collect information on children's living arrangements, well-being, and service accessibility when they were living outside of a parent's care. The survey also provided information on caregiver and parent's well-being[3].

For the purpose of this research, only children between the ages of 6-18 (n=1,101) were used, because questions about academic achievement did not apply to younger children. Children were equally represented by gender and age, with the average age being 11 to 12 years old. They had been living with their current caregivers, mainly relatives and not in foster care, for about six and a half years (Appendix A).

Primary Qualitative Data

To elaborate on the statistical findings from the multivariate survey analysis, interviews were conducted with professionals who could offer firsthand accounts on children's lives in non-parental care (Consent Form and Interview Protocol in Appendix B). The first interviewee, the Social Worker (Interviewee #1), has been working with foster children for the past fifteen years through several different agencies and support groups, and has also been a foster parent herself. The second interviewee, Assistant Executive Director (Interviewee #2) at a wrap-around family support agency, was involved in leading support groups for foster families and finding homes for children in foster care. A Child and Adolescent Mental Health Counselor was the third interviewee (Interviewee #3); she has been counseling children living in non-parental care for roughly 20 years. The fourth interviewee has been an Agency Consult at a software agency which provides software to foster care agencies and social service organizations (Interviewee #4). Finally, the fifth interviewee (Interviewee #5) is a Staff Counselor and Information and Development Coordinator at an agency which offers a crisis line, and houses and counsels runaways. Their expert knowledge was used to elaborate on the strains and care of children in non-parental care and guide questions for future research.

DATA ANALYSIS

Three levels of statistical analysis were conducted; these were univariate, bivariate and multivariate linear regression. Additional information from the five interviewees was used to illustrate the complex relationships between children's well-being and their living environments.

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[3] The original collector if the data, or ICPSR, or the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for use of the data or for the interpretations or inferences based on such uses.

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Operationalization and Descriptive Analysis

Univariate analyses offered critical descriptive information about the child's academic achievement and emotional health (the dependent concepts), strains in the child's natal family environment, and the child's life after separation from the natal family.

Child's Well-being: Emotional Health and Academic Success

The separation of a child from his or her natal family can be enormously stressful on a child, especially if that reason for separation involved some trauma. Furthermore, depending on the reason for the separation, social workers have posited that continued involvement of the birth family could cause additional emotional strain on the child which, in turn, can hamper their academic progress. Therefore, the emotional stress caused by the child's transfer into non-parental care was used as the first dependent concept. Academic success, the second dependent concept, will be looked at through the emotional health of the child.

Child's Emotional Health. Caregivers' assessments of the mental and emotional well-being of the children were used to measure the child's emotional health (Table 1.A). Roughly a third (33.5%) of the children had received some emotional counseling in the last year. However, very few had emotional or behavior problems that extensively limited them in their daily lives. For example, only about two percent of caregivers faced difficulties enrolling their child in school because of behavior problems. Only about fifteen percent of the children had difficulty remembering or concentrating because of an emotional condition. On balance, the children in the study had very good emotional health, as demonstrated by a strong score on the index of emotional health (mean of 5.57 on a sale of 0 to 7).

TABLE 1.A. Child's Emotional Health (n= 1097-1100)
2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care, National Center of Children's Health

Concept	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Child's Emotional Health	WB2. During the past 12 months, has [S.C.] received any treatment or counseling from a mental health professional?	0 = Yes 1 = No	33.5 % 66.2
	WB4X08. Difficulties did you face in enrolling [S.C.] in school? – Child's learning or behavioral issues	0 = Yes 1 = No 2 = No difficulties enrolling	2.2% 14.4 83.5
	WB12. Because of a physical or emotional condition, does [S.C.] have serious difficulties concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?	0 = Yes 1 = No 2= No physical/emotional condition	15.3% 39.0 45.5
	WB15. Because of a physical or emotional condition, does [S.C] have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?	0 = Yes 1 = No 2= No physical/emotional condition	1.9% 17.5 80.5
	Index of Child's Emotional Health[1]	Mean (SD) Min – Max	5.57(1.26) 0-7

[1]Index of Child's Emotional Health = WB2 + WB4X08 + WB12 + WB15 (range of r = 0.03 – 0.42**)

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Child's Academic Performance. As per the caregivers, their children's academic performance was above average; a third (33.3%) rated the children's performance in reading and writing as excellent; slightly over a fourth (27.8%) reported excellent performance in math. The academic success of the children under their care was evidenced by the mean academic performance index of 7.17 score on a scale from 2 to 10 (Table 1.B).

TABLE 1.B. Child's Academic Performance (n= 1031)
2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care, National Center of Children's Health

Concept	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Child's Academic Performance	WB6. How would you describe [S.C.]'s school performance in reading and writing?	1 = Poor	6.9%
		2 = Fair	12.7
		3 = Good	19.4
		4 = Very Good	27.7
		5 = Excellent	33.3
	WB7. How would you describe [S.C.]'s school performance in math?	1 = Poor	8.0%
		2 = Fair	15.5
		3 = Good	22.6
		4 = Very Good	25.5
		5 = Excellent	27.8
	Index of School Preformance[1]	Mean (SD)	7.17 (2.31)
		Min-Max	2-10

[1]Index of Child's Academic Performance=WB6+WB7 (r=.687**)

Dysfunctionality in the Natal Family Environment

Scholars have argued that the dysfunctionality of the natal home environment can negatively impact the child's future well-being, even after they are removed from their birth homes. The reasons for separation, whether it was voluntary or involuntary on the part of the birthparents and the duration of time the children were exposed to the dysfunctionality, are critical. Furthermore, age and sex of the child are important elements in the pre-separation life of the child; female children and older children can be expected to have more trouble adjusting to the separation from their birthparents.

Reasons for Mother's Separation. The birthmothers could have been involuntarily removed from the home for reasons ranging from incarceration, abuse, removal by CPS, illness, and/or drug and alcohol abuse. When mothers were involuntarily separated from their children it was mainly because of drug and alcohol problems (21.3%). But, roughly half the mothers voluntarily separated from their children (53.8%). Mothers who voluntarily gave up their mothering role cited the following reasons: mother's busy schedule (2.0%), problems with her significant other (2.6%), financial problems (7.2%), not wanting to care for the child (8.2%), that the current caregiver could do a better job (4.2%), and/or living in a bad neighborhood (1.2%). A third were separated for only one reason (35.8%), mainly not wanting to care for the child; about 10 percent of mothers were separated for two or more reasons (Table 1.C. on next page).

Reasons for Separation from Father. More fathers (63.5%) than mothers (53.8%) involuntarily separated from their child. The most common reasons for the fathers' involuntary separation was the father was in jail (14.5%), followed closely by drugs and alcohol problems (14.1%). As for voluntary reasons, 11.4 % of fathers expressed that they didn't want to take care of the child and gave them up (Table 1.D).

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TABLE 1.C. Mother's Reasons for Separation (n=994)
2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care, National Center of Children's Health

Concept	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Type of Separation:	Involuntary vs. Voluntary Separation	0 = Mother did not involuntarily separate from child	53.8%
		1= Involuntary separation	46.2
		1=One reason	35.8%
Mother Involuntary Separation[1]	Number of reasons	2=Two reasons	8.1
		3= Three reasons	2.2
		4=Four Reasons	0.2
Mother Voluntary Separation[2]	Voluntary Separation	0=Mother did not voluntarily separate from child	75.4%
		1=Voluntary separation	24.6
	Number of reasons	1 = One reason	20.6%
		2 = Two reasons	3.1
		3 = Three reasons	0.8
		4 = Four reasons	0.1

[1] Index of Mother's Involuntary Separation= P5x01 (incarceration) +P5x04 (CPS removal) +P5x05 (illness) +P5x09 (drug/alcohol problem) + P6x01 (incarceration) +P6x02 (deported/detained) +P6x04 (CPS removal) +P6x05 (illness)+P6x09 (drug/alcohol problem). Question P5 asked respondents why the child doesn't currently live with their birthmother and P6 asked why the child didn't live with their birthmother previously, if it was different from the current reason.

[2] *Index* of Mother's Voluntary Separation=P5X03 (abuse) +P5x06 (too busy) +P5x07 (spousal/ partner problems)+P5x08 (financial difficulty)+P5x10 (gave child up) +P5x11 (believes current caregiver can do a better job) +P5x12 (neighborhood not good)+ P6x03 (abuse) +P6x06 (too busy)+P6x07 (spousal/partner problems)+P6x08(financial difficulty)+P6x10 (gave child up)+P6x11 (believes current caregiver can do a better job) +P6x12 (neighborhood not good).

TABLE 1.D. Reasons for Father Separation (n=1003)
2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care, National Center of Children's Health

Concept	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Type of Separation	Involuntary or Voluntary Separation	0 = Father did not involuntarily separation from child	63.5%
		1=Involuntary separation	36.5
		1 = One reason	29.1%
Father Involuntary Separation[1]	Number of reasons	2 = Two reasons	6.4
		3 = Three reasons	0.9
		4 = Four reasons	0.1
		7 = Seven reasons	0.1
Father Voluntary Separation[2]	Voluntary Separation	0 = Father did not voluntarily separate from child	75.8%
		1= Voluntary separation	24.2
	Number of reasons	1 = One reason	21.2%
		2 = Two reasons	2.5
		3 = Three reasons	0.4
		4 = Four reasons	0.1

[1] IndexFather's Involuntary Separation= P23x01 (incarceration) +P23x04 (CPS removal) +P23x05 (illness) +P23x09 (drug/alcohol problem) + P24x01 (incarceration) +P24x02 (deported/detained) +P24x04 (CPS removal) +P24x05 (illness)+P24x09 (drug/alcohol problem). Question P5 asked respondents why the child doesn't currently live with their birthmother and P6 asked why the child didn't live with their birthmother previously, if it was different from the current reason.

[2] Index of Father's Voluntary Separation=P23X03 (abuse) +P23x06 (too busy) +P23x07 (spousal/ partner problems)+P23x08 (financial difficulty)+P23x10 (gave child up) +P23x11 (believes current caregiver can do a better job) +P23x12 (neighborhood not good)+ P24x03 (abuse) +P24x06 (too busy)+P24x07 (spousal/partner problems)+P24x08(financial difficulty)+P24x10 (gave child up)+P24x11 (believes current caregiver can do a better job) +P24x12 (neighborhood not good).

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Length of Time Separated from Birthparents[4] The time a child lived in a dysfunctional natal environment will likely have an impact on how well they are able to adjust to their new living situation and how successfully they are able to form a relationship with their new caregiver. It is interesting to note that 12.2 percent of the children had been living with their current caregiver since birth. Additionally, 21.9 percent had been living with their caregiver for at least 10 years. The remaining two thirds of children were relatively evenly distributed between 0 months to 119 months. On average, children had lived with their caregivers for about six and a half years.

TABLE 1.E. Time Separated from Birthparents (n=1015)
2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care, National Center of Children's Health

Concept	Dimensions	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Time Separated from Birthparents	Time	H14R. Derived, standardized to months, and combined. When did [S.C.] start living with you on a regular basis without his or her parents.	0-119 = 0 – 119 months 120 = 10 or more years 121 = Since birth	65.9% 21.9 12.2

Child's Life in Non-Parental Care

Once the children have been removed from their natal-family environments, the responsibilities for their primary socialization are transferred from birthparents to current caregivers. A large majority (88.3%) of children were in the care of non-parental family members and not in foster homes.

In this new environment, the child may have the opportunity to repair some of the damage caused by the strains in their natal family life. Some critical elements in non-parental care that might help or hinder the smooth transition process were: involvement of the birthmother and father, the caregiver-child relationship, the birthparent-caregiver relationship, the type of caregiver, as well as the caregiver's age, SES, and health.

Birthparent Involvement. The level of involvement of birth families in the lives of children placed in non-parental care manifested in different ways. While some children had the opportunity to keep in contact with their parents frequently, this is not true for all. Furthermore, such interactions with birthparents could have a negative or positive impact, depending on the quality of the relationship. Because the birthmother and birthfather may interact differently with their children, the two were analyzed separately.

The birthmother's involvement indicated the degree to which birthmothers participated in their children lives (Table 1.F.). Mothers were moderately involved in their children's lives (mean index of 10.11 on a scale of 0-24), and maintained a fair amount of contact with their children, but were not involved in decision making. Specifically, caregivers indicated that children had some contact with their mother, though it was not very frequent. Only about a third (32.5%) of

[4] Length of time separated from birthparents measured by time lsiving with current caregiver.

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mothers had cared for their child for a whole day or overnight. But, even though only about seventeen percent of mothers saw their child several times a week, a quarter (25.9%) had some sort of communication with their child through mail or phone. However, mothers were rarely consulted when decisions were to be made about their schooling (53.2%) or health (51.4%); half of the caregiver's never consulted the birthmother. Only about ten percent of the mothers were consulted all of the time regarding these decisions (9.3% regarding schooling and 12.6% regrading child's health).

TABLE 1.F. Birthmother and Father Involvement
2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care, National Center of Children's Health

Concept	Dimensions	Variables	Values and Responses	Mother (n=1087-1097)	Father (n=1085-1098)
Birthparent Involve-ment	Contact: During the past 12 months, how often has [S.C.]:	P8. Seen [his/her] mother/father?	0 = No mother/father	17.8%	27.3%
			1 = Not at all	18.0	27.9
			2 = Once or twice a year	13.1	10.5
			3 = Several times a year	14.4	11.9
			4 = 1-3 times a month	11.2	8.9
			5 = About once a week	8.8	4.3
			6 = Several times a week	16.7	9.2
		P9. Has contact with [his/her] mother/father[1]	0 = No mother/father	17.7%	27.4%
			1 = Not at all	15.1	25.3
			2 = Once or twice a year	11.4	7.5
			3 = Several times a year	10.7	10.8
			4 = 1-3 times a month	11.1	8.8
			5 = About once a week	9.4	5.3
			6 = Several times a week	25.9	14.9
		P11. Has [S.C.]'s mother/father ever cared for [him/her] during the day or overnight?	0 = No mother/father	17.6%	27.0%
			1 = No	49.9	51.0
			2 = Yes	32.5	21.9
	Decision Making[2]:	P14. School or day care arrangements	0= No mother/father	17.6%	27.0%
			1 = Never	53.2	56.1
			2 = Sometimes	12.3	7.5
			3 = About half the time	2.2	1.3
			4 = Most of the time	5.4	3.1
			5 = All of the time	9.3	4.9
		P15. Health or health care?	0 = No mother/father	17.6%	27.0%
			1 = Never	51.4	55.9
			2 = Sometimes	11.8	6.8
			3 = About half the time	1.6	1.6
			4 = Most of the time	5.0	3.6
			5 = All of the time	12.6	5.0
		Indices of Birthmother's[3] and Father's[4] Involvement	Mean (SD)	10.11 (7.13)	7.37 (6.51)
			Min – Max	0 -24	0-24

[1]. Contact by talking on the telephone, texting, email, connecting on Facebook or other social media, or by receiving a card, letter, or package from [his/her] mother/father;

[2]. When there are decisions to make about [S.C's], how often do you talk it over with [S.C.]'s mother/father first?

[3]. Index of Mothers' Involvement = P8 + P9 + P11 + P14 + P15 (range of r = 0.65*** to 0.90***);

[4]. Index of Fathers' Involvement = P26 + P27 + P29 + P32 + P33 (range of r = 0.69*** – 0.92***).

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Children were even less likely to have contact with their <u>birthfathers</u> than birthmothers. The contact level between children and their fathers was low (Table 1.F). Less than a quarter (21.9%) of the children had been cared for by their father during the day or overnight. A quarter never saw their father (27.9%) or communicated with him (25.3%). Another quarter did not have a father. Further, like the mothers', half of the fathers were rarely consulted when decisions were made about their child's health (55.9%) or education (56.1%). Only about five percent were always consulted regarding these decisions (4.9% and 5.0% respectively). The mean index of 7.37 (on a scale from 0 to 24) indicated that, on average, fathers had little involvement in their children's lives.

<u>Relationship with Caregiver</u>. Once removed from their natal home, the caregiver becomes the children's primary current caregiver. Therefore, this relationship will likely play an essential role in the children's emotional health and school performance. In order to measure the strength of relationship between the current caregiver and child, caregivers assessed how close they felt to the child, and how well they felt they can respond to their child's problems. In Table 1.G the degree of closeness between caregivers and their child is presented.

TABLE 1.G. Child's Relationship with Caregiver (n=1090-1096)
2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care, National Center of Children's Health

Concept	Dimension	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Relationship with caregiver	Relationship strength	CC1. How would you describe your relationship to [S.C.]?	1 = Very distant 2 = Somewhat distant 3 = Somewhat warm/close 4 = Very warm and close	0.6% 1.3 12.9 85.2
		R14A. When problems arise with [S.C.], I handle them pretty well.	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Somewhat disagree 3 = Somewhat agree 4 = Strongly agree	1.1% 1.9 26.0 71.0
		R14I. I have a good understanding of [S.C.]'s feelings and problems.	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Somewhat disagree 3 = Somewhat agree 4 = Strongly agree	0.6% 1.4 20.5 77.5
		Index of Relationship with Caregiver[1]	Mean (SD) Min-Max	11.25 (1.12) 3-12

[1]Index of Relationship with Caregiver = CC1 + R14A + R14I (range of r= 0.26*** - 0.38***)

Caregivers were confident in their relationship with the child in their care; the majority (85.2%) indicated that they had very warm and close relationships with the children. Caregivers were also confident in their ability to deal with problems when they arise, and about their understanding of their child's feelings. Over 95% claimed that they felt somewhat accomplished in these goals. In sum, caregivers reported a very healthy relationship with their child (high mean index of 11.25 on a scale from 6 to 12).

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Relationship Between Birthparents and Current Caregiver. Another important aspect to consider when assessing the well-being of children in non-parental care is the relationship that the current caregivers have with the birthparents of the child (Table 1.H). About a third (78.6%) of caregivers reported that they knew the child before they came to live with them, suggesting that they also knew the birthparents. Additionally, one third (33.0%) of the caregivers indicated that they got along somewhat well with the birthparents, and another forty percent specified that they got along very well with the birthparents. The mean score of 4.52 on a range from 0 to 6 (on the index of relationship between birthparents and caregivers) confirmed the general positive relationship between caregivers and birthparents.

TABLE 1.H. Relationship of Birthparents and Caregiver (n=1044-1100)
2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care, National Center of Children's Health

Concept	Dimensions	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Relationship between Birthparents and Caregiver	Previous history	H11. Did you know [S.C.] before you began caring for [him/her]?	0 = Legitimate skip 1 = No 2 = Yes	16.5% 4.9 78.6
	Relationship	P36R. How well do you get along with [S.C.]'s [mother/father/parents]?	0 = No birthparents 1 = Don't get along at all 2 = Don't get along very well 3 = Get along somewhat well 4 = Get along very well	10.3% 7.5 7.4 33.0 41.8
		Index of Relationship between Birthparents and Caregiver[1]	Mean (SD) Min-Max	4.52 (1.73) 0-6

[1]Index of Relationship between Birthparents and Caregiver = H11 + P36R (r=.373[**])

Caregiver's Health and Other Relevant Assets. Previous research has indicated that caregiver assets, be they their heath, SES, or age, are relevant to the well-being of children placed in their care. For example, poor caregiver health, poverty, and older age can negatively affect their relationship with the child (Billing, Ehrle & Kortenkamp 2002).

On average, the caregivers were not foster parents, and were roughly 60 years old (born between 1950 and 1954) (Appendix A). The caregivers in this study were in relatively good mental, emotional, and physical health (Table 1.I, Mean health index = 7.66 on a range of 3-12). Only a few caregivers reported that they were in poor physical health (only 5.9%) or mental health (1%). Further, only a third had a physical impediment that prevented them from doing work around the house, and the overwhelming majority (92.6%) was not classified as depressed.

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TABLE 1.I. Caregivers' Health and Socio-economic Resources (n=1070-1097)
2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care, National Center of Children's Health

Concepts	Dimensions	Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
Caregiver's Health	Physical Health	R1_1. Would you say that, in general, your health is:	1= Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Good 4 = Very good 5 = Excellent	5.9% 16.2 33.2 28.0 16.5
		R5. Do you have a physical health condition that limits the amount or kind of work or activities that you can do in your household?	0 = No 1 = Yes	62.7% 37.3
	Mental health	R3_1. Would you say that, in general, your mental health and emotional health is:	1= Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Good 4 = Very good 5 = Excellent	0.5% 6.9 27.0 36.7 28.8
		Respondent classified as being depressed (DEPRESSED).	0 = No 1 = Yes	92.6% 7.4
		Index of Caregivers' Health[1]	Mean (SD) Min-Max	7.66 1.6) 3-12
Caregiver's Socioeconomic Status	Education	HIGHEDU. Derived. Highest level of education attained by respondent/spouse in the household	1 = Less than high school 2 = High school graduate 3 = More than high school	11.4% 28.8 59.8
		POVLEVEL1_5. Derived. Poverty level of this household based on DHHS poverty guidelines.	1 = At or below 50% povlevel 2 = 50% < pov. level > 100% 3 = 100% < pov. level > 200% 4 = 200% < pov. level > 400% 5 = Above 400% pov. Level	9.4% 17.2 30.1 28.5 14.7
		Index of Socioeconomic Status[2]	Mean (SD) Min-Max	5.71 (1.6) 2-8

[1] Index of Caregivers' Health = R1_1 + R3_1 + R5 + DEPRESSED;
[2] Index of SES = HIGHEDU + POVLEVEL1_5 (r=.363[**]).

The caregivers had slightly above average socioeconomic status (Table 1.I). Over half of the caregivers had continued their education past a high school degree. Additionally, about a third of respondents fell between 100% and 200% of the poverty line.

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Summary

In general, as per reports from the caregivers, the children in their care were emotionally healthy and academically successful. Most birthparents were primarily involuntarily separated from their children. Furthermore, this separation happened about six and a half years before the 2013 survey. After the children were separated from the natal home, the birth families were not very involved (as per the caregiver), though mothers were slightly more involved than the fathers.

As for the new home environments, caregivers reported a very close relationship with their child, and a relatively good relationship with the birthparents of their child. The majority of caregivers were not foster parents to the children; rather they were relatives. The average caregiver in this sample was born in the 1950s, was middle class, and was in relatively good health.

Bivariate Analysis

The next step in the analytic process, bivariate analysis, was used to gain a preliminary understanding of the connections between academic success and emotional health of the child and their natal and non-parental family environments (Appendix C). The more emotionally healthy the child was the better they did academically ($r=0.27^{***}$). However, as expected, there were constraints on the child's well-being. For example, children who were involuntarily separated from their parents did not fare as well academically. Birthfather's involuntary separation ($r=-0.10^{***}$) had a stronger negative bearing on school performance than the birthmother ($r=-0.06^{*}$). But, when birthparents were voluntarily separated from their children it did not make a difference for their school performance or emotional health.

As for the non-parental care environment, the following factors had the potential for repairing the child's school performance: involvement of birthparents (birthmother involvement $r= 0.07^{*}$ and birthfather $r= 0.10^{***}$), a strong relationship between the caregiver and child ($r=0.18^{***}$) a good relationship between birthparents and caregiver ($r=0.08^{*}$), caregivers who were in good health ($r=0.16^{***}$) and had more resources ($r=0.08^{*}$). In addition, younger children and girls generally did better academically than older children ($r=-0.14^{***}$) and boys ($r=0.09^{**}$) respectively.

When it came to the children's emotional health, strong relationship with their caregivers ($r=0.20^{***}$) and good caregiver health ($r=0.12^{***}$) were important considerations. Children who had been living with caregivers longer were generally emotionally healthier ($r=0.17^{***}$) as were younger children ($r=-0.33^{***}$). Additionally, female children also fared better emotionally ($r=0.08^{**}$) than their male peers.

A few additional patterns in the children's non-parental care environment were worth noting. Both fathers ($r=0.10^{**}$) and mothers ($r=0.13^{***}$) who did voluntarily renounce their roles as the child's primary caregivers were more likely to be involved in the lives of their children. Finally, younger children had stronger relationships with their caregiver ($r=0.18^{***}$), as did male children ($r=-0.07^{***}$).

Multivariate Regression

Finally, sequential multivariate linear regression was used to identify the unique effects of the dysfunctional natal environment and the child's post-removal life, first on the emotional health and then on the academic performance (Table 3) of children. The child's emotional well-being was first regressed on the natal and caregiving living environments. Second, the child's academic performance was regressed on their emotional health and family environments.

Table 3. Regression Analyses of the Relative Net Effects of Disruptions in the Natal Family, and Life in Non-parental Care On Child's School Performance[1] and Emotional Health[2] 2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care, National Center of Children's Health

	Child's Emotional Health[1] Mode 1 (β)	Child's Academic Performance[2] Model 2 (β)
Child's Emotional Health	---	0.22***
Age of Child[3]	-0.36***	-0.03
Sex (Female) of Child[4]	0.11***	0.06
Disruptions in Natal Family:		
Time Separated from Birthparents[5]	0.23***	-0.04
Mother's Involuntary Separation[6]	-0.03	-0.01
Mother's Voluntary Separation[7]	-0.08**	0.01
Father's Involuntary Separation[8]	-0.03	-0.07*
Father Voluntary Separation[9]	0.01	-0.02
Caregiving Environment:		
Father Involvement[10]	0.04	0.07*
Mother Involvement[11]	-0.02	0.04
Relationship with Caregiver[12]	0.10**	0.13***
Caregiver's Health[13]	0.11***	0.09*
Caregiver's SES[14]	-0.05	0.06
Constant	4.52***	1.17***
Adjusted R^2	.197***	.113***
DF 1 & 2	7&907	13&848

*** p ≤.001, ** p≤.01, *p≤.05;
[1]Index of Emotional Health = WB2 + WB4X08 + WB12 + WB15; range=0-7(strong emotional health)
[2]Index of School Performance = WB6+WB7; range=2-10(preforming well in school);
[3]Age of Child=AGE_CNCR range=1-6 (ranged from 6-17 years old);
[4]Sex (Female) of Child = SEX; 0(male)-1(female);
[5]Time Separated from Birthparents = H14R; range=0-121 (0 months to since birth);
[6]Index of Mother's Involuntary Separation=P5x01+P5x04+P5x05+P5x09+ P6x01+ P6x02+ P6x04+ P6x05+P6x09; range=0-4(four reasons);
[7]Index of Mother's Voluntary Separation= P5X03+P5x06+P5x07+P5x08+P5x10+P5x11+ P5x12+ P6x03 + P6x06 + P6x07 + P6x08 + P6x10 + P6x11 + P6x12; range=0-4(four reasons);
[8]Index of Father's Involuntary Separation= P23x01+P23x04+P23x05+P23x09+   P24x01 + P24x02 +P24x04+P24x05+P24x09; range=0-4(four reasons);
[9]Index of Father's Voluntary Separation=P23X03+P23x06+P23x07+P23x08+P23x10+P23x11+P23x12+ P24x03+P24x06+P24x07+P24x08+P24x10+P24x11+P24x12; range=0-7(seven reasons);
[10]Index of Father's Involvement = P26 + P27 + P29 + P32 + P33; range=0-24(very involved);
[11]Index of Mother's Involvement = P8 + P9 + P11 + P14 + P15; range=0-24(very involved);
[12]Index of Relationship with Caregiver = CC1 + R14A + R14I; range=3-12 (strong relationship);
[13]Index of Caregiver's Health = R1_1 + R3_1 + R5 + DEPRESSED; range=3-12 (strong relationship;
[14]Index of SES of Caregiver = HIGHEDU + POVLEVEL1_5; range=2-8 (high socioeconomic status).

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As predicted[5], strains in the natal family had lasting negative effects on the well-being of the child (Model 1). Specifically, children who had lived in the dysfunctional family environment longer were not as healthy emotionally as children who were removed earlier (β =0.23[***]). Furthermore, mothers who voluntarily separated from their children did more damage to their children's emotional health (β =-0.08[**]). Female children were much healthier emotionally than their male peers (β =0.11[***]). Younger children were also healthier emotionally (β =-0.26[***]).

However, the children's emotional health and life in non-parental care did help repair some of the damage done to children, as demonstrated by the academic success of the children (Model 2). For example, children did better academically when they were emotionally healthy (β =0.22[***]). In addition, caregivers who had strong relationships with the children (β =0.13[***]), fathers who were involved (β = 0.07[*]) and caregivers in good health (β =0.09[*]) positively influenced the academic success of the child.

A few final notes about the cumulative effects on the child, or lack thereof, of their lives in the natal and non-parental care homes. The health of the caregiver was an asset for both the emotional (Model 1 β= 0.11[***]) and academic well-being (Model 2 β =0.09[*]) of the children. On the other hand, time spent in the dysfunctional natal family was a negative factor only for the child's emotional health (Model 1 β =.23[***]) but not for their academic well-being. Similarly, only fathers who were involuntarily separated from their children negatively impacted the academic (Model 2 β=-.07[*]) but not the emotional health of children. On the other hand, mothers who voluntarily separated from their children negatively impacted the children's emotional health (Model 1 β=-0.08[**]) but not their academics.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

These findings, from the multilinear regression analysis, have important theoretical and potential programmatic applications for improving the lives of children in non-parental care. But, they also highlighted limitations and suggestions for future research.

Empirical, Theoretical, and Applied Implications

That the dysfunctional natal family environment negatively impacted the child's emotional health was consistent with the predictions of the General Strain Theory (Figure 1). This was most evident in the case of children who were not as exposed to the dysfunctionality in the natal family and were more emotionally healthy than children who remained in the situation longer. However, it was only the voluntary separation of the mother that negatively impacted the child's emotional health. The professional interviewees spoke to the challenges and benefits of the birth family involvement in the life of their child, even after the child was removed from their care. The Child Counselor (Interviewee #3) opined that a child's feeling of abandonment by the mother might be difficult to repair, and never really can go away. The Agency Consultant (Interviewee #4) concurred; in her professional experience, the reasons for removal are directly related to the degree of trauma the child has experienced, which, in turn, directly affects their

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[5]   A preliminary multivariate regression indicated that among the factors chosen to indicate the non-parental care environment, the caregiver-birthparent relationship, age and type of caregiver were not significantly related to either academic or emotional well-being of the children and therefore eliminated from the final regression. Time separated from birthparents, parental involvement after removal, age and sex of child, and the SES and health of the caregiver were retained.

well-being. If the trauma was severe, birthparents and the child are less likely to be able to form a healthy relationship.

Figure 1: Empirical Model of Effects of Strain in Natal Family Environment, Life in Non-parental Care and Age and Sex On the Academic Success and Emotional Health[1,2]
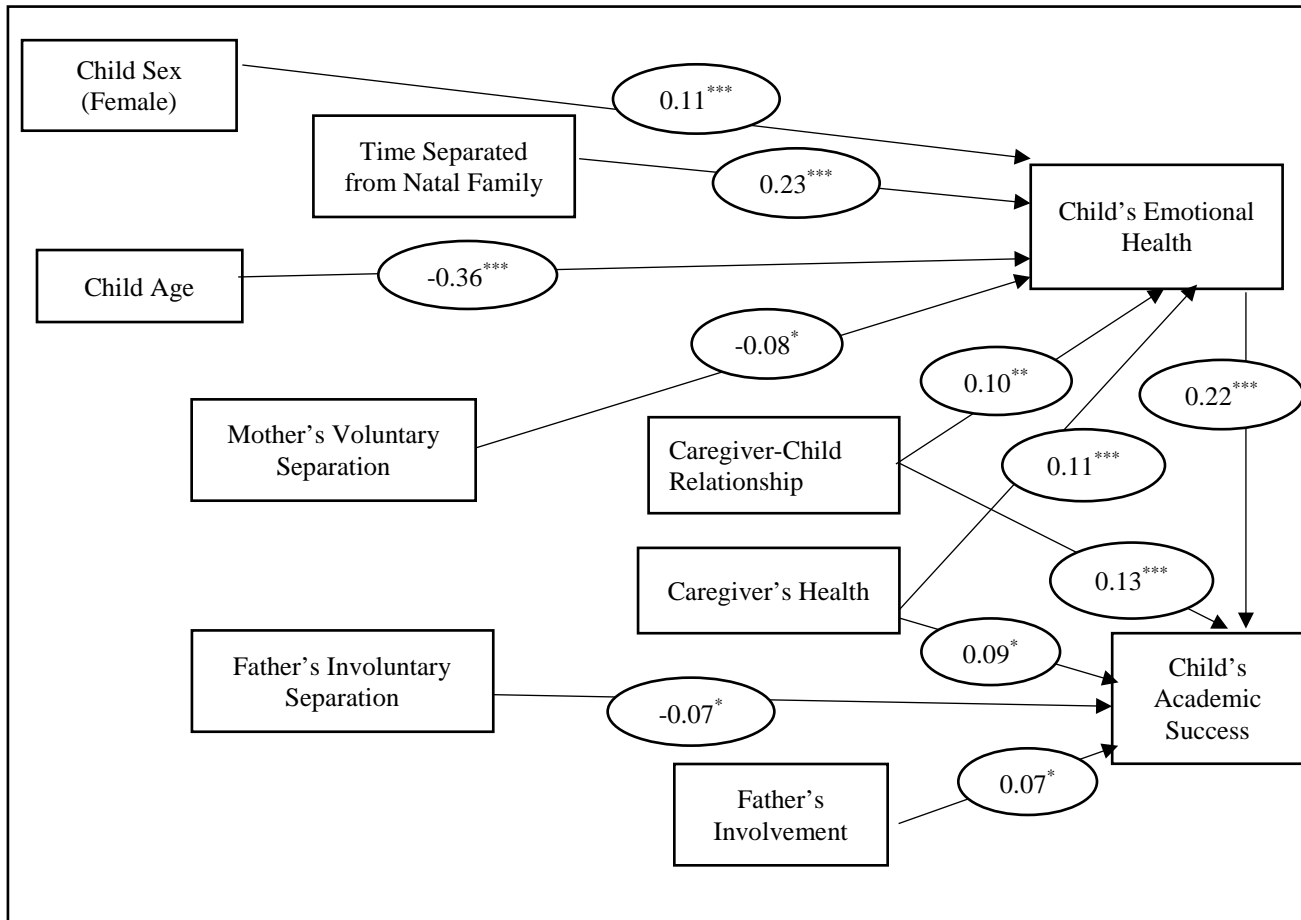
1. See Table 3 for variable coding;
2. The following variables were not mapped because of non-significant effects: Father's Voluntary separation, Mother's Involuntary Separation, Mother's involvement, and Caregiver's SES.

Furthermore, children who had strong relationship with their caregivers fared far better both in their academic achievement and emotional health than those who did not. In other words, the caregivers who had become the children's primary socializing agent positively impacted the self-concept of a child, demonstrating the importance of socialization and forming bonds with caregivers, as well as the malleability of the self-concept (Social Bond Theory, Chicago School of Fluid Self Concept). The Staff Counselor (Interviewee #5) supported this interpretation; she claimed that the goodness of fit between the caregiver and child is critical and that caregivers must be able to maintain connection in face of the child's reactivity. The Child Counselor

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(Interviewee #3) concurred; to provide permanency and stability is crucial to the child's success because it provides them with a figure they are able to attach to. A heathy caregiver-child relationship protected and nurtured the children in their new environment, resulting in better emotionally adjusted children.

However, contrary to the theoretical predictions, mother's involvement had no impact on the child's overall well-being, but the father's involvement improved the academic performance of the child, even if slightly. The Assistant Executive Director from the wrap-around agency (Interviewee #2) explained this unexpected finding thusly: fathers and mothers have different expected gender roles, with the mother traditionally being more involved in the child's schooling; so when the fathers are involved, it has a different effect on the children. The Social Worker (Interviewee #1) also generally supported this reasoning; she has seen very few cases where the father was involved. Children, therefore, expect less from their father, so their time and resources go further. In other words, the child's core self-concept might still be affected by the relationship with the birth family, particularly with the father. There is something that the father contributes to the child that continues to be positive for the children's well-being. One possible hypothesis suggested by three of the five interviewees is that this relationship is due to the gendered resources the father can contribute to the child. For example, perhaps the father is more likely to provide monetary benefits for the child, such as giving financial support to aid the caregivers, or provide gifts for their children (Interviewee #1).

On balance, the Social Worker (Interviewees #1) and the Assistant Executive Director from the wrap-around agency (Interviewee #2) were convinced that that depicting a positive image of the birth family and attempting to include them if possible in the child's life, could be beneficial to the child. Birthparent involvement can help the children have a better sense of their self. They did caution that often times birthparents are unreliable and do not follow through on their parenting obligations. The Child and Adolescent Counselor (Interviewee #3) reinforced the idea that stability and permanency are of utmost importance for the child's well-being. Therefore, if the bond between the child and caregiver is strong, and the birthparents are unreliable, it may be best to limit the amount of contact children have with their birth family, while still attempting to portray a positive image of the birthparents. Finally, the Staff Counselor and Information and Development Coordinator (Interviewee #5) added: it is beneficial for the biological family to attend family therapy with the child and the caregivers, with the goal being to help the family system work through the presenting problem and return the child home.

While the survey data affirmed the importance of the birth family, it was the caregiver who had the greatest positive impact on the children, both academically and emotionally. Theoretically speaking, the stronger relevance of the caregiver-child relationship than the birth family–child interactions was predicted using the Chicago School of Fluid Self Concept. It is understandable that socialization by the current caregivers was more salient for the repair of the child's bruised self-concept than the birthparents who were no longer the primary caregivers. That the caregivers' relationships with the birthparents were not relevant for the child's well-being was also a logical aftermath of both parents surrendering their primary parenting roles. A strong caregiver-child relationship and bond (Social Bond theory) is one of the greatest assets children in non-parental care can have. To the Agency Consultant in a Software Company (Interviewee #4), the caregiver-child relationship is the most important so that the focus remains on providing stability for the child.

A few additional notes about the well-being of children in non-parent care. Female children (vis-à-vis male) were more likely to be successful in school and to be more emotionally healthy. The Child and Adolescent Counselor (Interviewee #3) connected this gendered outcome to the way

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men and women are taught to deal with emotions. Males, even children, are expected not to be emotional, and to buck it up, which could have a negative impact on their emotional healing. Further, older children did not do as well in school while children who were out of their parent's care longer were less well-adjusted. The Social Worker (Interviewee #1) felt that the older the children are, the harder it is to take them away, because they will always want their parents. The Assistant Executive Director (Interviewee #2) added, as children get older, they become more aware of their situation, and depending on how many homes they have been in, they may begin to feel rejected and realize how different their living situation is from that of their peers. Consequently, as suggested by the Child and Adolescent Counselor (Interviewee #3), early removal of a child from a dysfunctional natal family environment offered the child better chances to mend the damage caused by the strain in the natal family and more time to form strong bonds with new adults.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

While this mixed methods research offered interesting findings of theoretical and practical import, it also had limitations. An obvious limitation was that only about 20 percent of the variability in the child's emotional health and 11 percent of the child's academic performance was explained by the dysfunctionalities in the natal family environment and the post-removal life of the child. The narrow set of indicators used to assess the child's emotional health and academic performance also cut into the strength of the findings. It would be useful to have more detailed measurements of the child's emotional health (signs of emotional distress, such as bedwetting and nightmares, and counseling received) and academic performance (including grades and teacher impressions of classroom behavior).

Further research should investigate the disparity between the emotional health of female and male children in non-parental care. For example, does it have to do with the gendered socialization of the child? Additionally, taking a longitudinal view on the well-being of children in non-parental care, from the perspective of both the child and caregivers, would go a long way in identifying the resources needed to ensure the greatest amount of success in their future lives in their many dimensions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Demographics of children and Caregivers
2013 National Survey of Children in Non-parental Care
National Center of Children's Health

Variables	Values and Responses	Statistics
SEX. Derived. Sex of Selected Child (n=1101)	0 = Male 1 = Female	50.0% 50.0
AGE_CNCR. Age of [S.C.] in years at time of NSCNC interview (n=1101).	1 = 6 – 7 years old 2 = 8 – 9 years old 3 = 10 – 11 years old 4 = 12 – 13 years old 5 = 14 – 15 years old 6 = 16 – 17 years old	14.3% 16.3 14.6 19.6 14.2 21.1
Caregiver's Year of Birth (n=1086)	1 = >1969 2 = 1965 – 1969 3 = 1960 – 1964 4 = 1955 – 1959 5 = 1950 – 1954 6 = 1945 – 1949 7 = 1940 - 1944 8 = <1940	6.3% 4.4 12.7 21.3 20.0 17.1 10.6 7.8
Type of Caregiver: CAREGIVER_CNC. Non-parental caregiver type at CNC. (n=1037)	0 = Foster care 1 = Non-foster care	11.7% 88.3

Appendix B

Letter of Consent and Interview Protocol

I

Letter of Consent

Dear _____:

I am a Sociology Senior working on my Research Capstone Paper under the direction of Doctor Marilyn Fernandez in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. I am conducting my research on the effects of birthparent involvement and child-caregiver relationship on the well-being of children in non-parental care.

You were selected for this interview, because of your knowledge of and experience working in the area of social work with children.
I am requesting your participation, which will involve responding to questions about what effects children in non-parental care's well-being and will last about 20 minutes. Your participation in this

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study is voluntary. You have the right to choose to not participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time. The results of the research study may be presented at SCU's Annual Anthropology/Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference and published (in a Sociology department publication). Pseudonyms will be used in lieu of your name and the name of your organization in the written paper. You will also not be asked (nor recorded) questions about your specific characteristics, such as age, race, sex, religion.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call/email me at (425) 591-8796 or jheid@scu.edu, or Dr. Fernandez at (408-554-4432 mfernandez@scu.edu

Sincerely,

Juliet Heid

By signing below you are giving consent to participate in the above study. (If the interviewee was contacted by email or phone, request an electronic message denoting consent).

_____   _____   _____
Signature   Printed Name   Date

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, through Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at (408) 554-5591.

Interview Schedule for Supplemental Qualitative Interviews

Interview Date and Time: _____
Respondent ID#: __ (1, 2, 3….)

1. What is the TYPE Agency/Organization/Association/Institution (**NO NAME**, please) where you learned about (and/or worked) with this issue:

   _____

2. What is your position in this organization? _____

3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?

   _____

4. Based on what you know of children in non-parental care, how well do these children do emotionally and academically? Can you expand a bit?

5. In your opinion, what explains why some children in non-parental care do well while others do not? (PROBE with: Could you expand a bit more?).

6. [If the respondent does not bring up your independent concepts as potential causes), PROBE:

   a. How about the involvement of the birthmother? _____:

   b. How about the involvement of the birthfather?

   c. Would it be better for the child if the birthfather is involved?
   d. Would it be better for the child if the birthmother is involved?
   e. What are the impacts of voluntary separation?
   f. What are the impacts of involuntary separation?
   g. Is it helpful for the child if the birth family and the caregivers have a good relationship?
   h. Do you think that the caregiver's relationship to the child would be more important, or maintaining a relationship with the birth family?

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        i.   Do you find that girls and boys respond differently to being removed from their birthparents?

        j.   How do you think age impacts a child's ability to adjust to their new living situation?

7.   Is there anything else about this issue/topic I should know more about?

Thank you very much for your time. If you wish to see a copy of my final paper, I would be glad to share it with you at the end of the winter quarter. If you have any further questions or comments for me, I can be contacted at (jheid@scu.edu). Or if you wish to speak to my faculty advisor, Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, she can be reached at mfernandez@scu.edu.

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Appendix C
Indices of Child's Academic Success and Emotional Health

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)	(K)	(L)	(M)	(N)	(O)	(P)	(Q)
Child's Emotional Health[1] (A)	1.0																
Child's Academic Success[2] (B)	0.27***	1.0															
Mother Involuntary Separation[3] (C)	-0.02	-0.06*	1.0														
Mother Voluntary Separation[4] (D)	-0.04	0.01	-0.1***	1.0													
Father Involuntary Separation[5] (E)	-0.03	-0.1***	0.30***	0.05	1.0												
Father Voluntary Separation[6] (F)	0.00	-0.12	0.07*	0.31***	0.04	1.0											
Mother's Involvement[7] (G)	-0.04	0.07*	-0.00	0.13***	0.02	0.02	1.0										
Father's Involvement[8] (H)	0.03	0.10***	0.01	0.04	0.05	0.10**	0.22***	1.0									
Caregiver-Child Relationship[9] (I)	0.20***	0.18***	-0.05	-0.01	-0.0	0.05	0.02	0.04	1.0								
Birthparent-Caregiver Relationship[10] (J)	-0.04	0.08*	-0.01	0.06*	-0.0	0.04	0.48***	0.40***	0.07*	1.0							
Caregiver's Health[11] (K)	0.12***	0.16***	-0.03	0.02	-0.0	0.01	0.00	-0.01	0.17***	0.06	1.0						
Caregiver's SES[12] (L)	-0.03	0.08*	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.00	-0.06	0.02	-0.01	0.02	0.33***	1.0					
Type of Caregiver[13] (M)	0.03	0.05	-0.10**	0.09**	-0.0	0.05	0.06*	0.10***	0.04	0.07*	-0.05	0.01	1.0				
Caregiver's Age[14] (N)	-0.04	0.02	-0.02	0.00	-0.0	0.02	0.11***	0.10***	-0.05	0.09**	0.01	-0.02	0.06*	1.0			
Sex of Child[15] (O)	0.08**	0.09**	0.04	0.02	-0.0	-0.01	0.02	-0.01	-0.07*	0.00	-0.01	0.00	-0.02	0.01	1.0		
Age of Child[16] (P)	-0.3***	-0.1***	-0.07*	-0.03	-0.0	-0.06	-0.02	0.00	-0.2***	0.01	-0.03	0.06*	0.06	0.13***	-0.0	1.0	
Time Separated from birthparents[17] (Q)	0.17***	-0.03	0.07*	0.06	0.04	0.04	-0.06	0.01	0.02	-0.01	-0.06	-0.05	0.10**	0.13***	-0.0	0.19***	1.0

*** p ≤.001, ** p≤.01, *p≤.05;
[1-17] Refer to Table 3 for variable coding.

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The Ideology and Praxis of Political Moderates:
More Liberal than Conservative?
A Research Note

By

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ABSTRACT: Who is a political moderate in the United States today? What are their stances on important national issues and who do they think should be the agents affecting structural change? In what is commonly perceived to be a polarized political climate in the United States, the middle ground often seems non-existent. However, if the United States is as polarized between right and left as some scholars say, then why do so many Americans self-identify as moderate and why do studies tend to neglect a prominently existing ideological group? In the 2014 Chicago Council Survey on American Public Opinion (n = 2108), moderates were more closely aligned with liberals on almost every foreign and domestic policy issue (excluding the size of the military and immigration policy) while their praxis was slightly more reflective of conservatives. Partisan sorting theory, an application of Blumer's symbolic interactionism in the political arena, did not fully capture the political moderates, whose ideology did not often match their praxis.

INTRODUCTION

The political landscape in the United States appears to be polarized between the liberal left and the conservative right. The current dichotomy is reflected prominently in our gridlocked Congress and contentious political rhetoric in the media, the means through which the average citizen consumes politics. However, in the midst of a political climate that is often portrayed as polarized, there exist those who are neither with one side nor the other. They are self-identified moderates, and they are rarely the focus in matters pertaining to American politics. Acknowledging, understanding, and identifying those with moderate political perspectives and their opinions on who should influence the government could shed light on the feelings of the large, even if seemingly non-existent American center. Moderates, who are often viewed as the swing vote (and thus able to influence national election results depending on their leanings), comprise an important, but overlooked, section of the political population in the United States.

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As the two professionals interviewed for this study reiterated time and time again, no one really pays attention to or studies them because they are less interesting than the extremes.

This study's two main goals were: first, to highlight and differentiate the opinions of the political middle from the conservative right and liberal left; second, to shed light on how different ideological groups' opinions on foreign and domestic policy matters influence their preferences for the influential agents of change in U.S. foreign policy. Preferences for who should influence the government were defined as their *political praxis;* the preferences represent the practical modes and institutions through which conservatives, moderates, and liberals believe change should come about.

A more thorough understanding of people's ideologies may be uncovered by distinguishing ideological groups on their opinions about foreign and domestic policy matters and identifying how those opinions influenced their political praxis. A more nuanced understanding of each group's ideology and praxis (and particularly the ideologies and praxes of those we disagree with) may enable civil discussions and debates regarding social, economic, or foreign policy issues. In turn, this could initiate a depolarization of the American political climate by highlighting moderates' voices instead of only the often heard conservatives or liberals. Moreover, moderates' opinions could offer a third option or a consensual middle ground of compromise between left and right views in our everyday interactions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of extant literature on political polarization and the political middle was conducted in order to contextualize the relevance and complexity of moderates. For a variety of reasons, there has been limited research on the hidden, but subtly thriving, political middle. Political polarization is a particularly complicated phenomenon; it has been measured on vastly different dimensions like identity and issue positions as well as at varying levels of society ranging from political elites to the general public.

Political Polarization

Political polarization, when addressed, is a hotly debated topic amongst scholars. For one, the extent to which it permeates the political climate in the United States is disputed (Baldassarri and Bearman 2007). The points of contention in the conversations lie in the levels (elite vs. general public) at which they posit polarization to exist. Some scholars focused their efforts in observing how party polarization among political elites (i.e. members of Congress and other elected officials) exists and, in fact, has increased over the last forty years on a number of issues (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014; Levendusky 2008). Using an elite polarization theory framework, these scholars argued that as political elites have become more polarized in their issue stances, so too, has the general public. Elites are often the sources or direct informers of political knowledge among the general citizens. As elites take public stances on issues and implement policy, they send voters clear cues on how the public should vote or feel about certain issues; in turn the public often conforms to the polarized views of elites (Levendusky 2008).

On the other hand, scholars like Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope claimed that polarization in the country is strictly an elite phenomenon (2005). In their book, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America,* they argued that Americans are moderate, tolerant, and ambivalent in their

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political attitudes, and that, "we divide evenly in elections or sit them out entirely because we instinctively seek the center while the parties and candidates hang out on the extremes (Fiorina et al. 2005: ix).

However, yet another set of experts were not convinced by Fiorina et al.'s work and countered with new claims that polarization in the electorate is as great or even greater than polarization amongst political elites. For example, Abramowitz and Saunders (2005) used ANES data from 1972 to 2004 to document the growing gaps between self-identified Democratic and Republicans. During the three decades between 1972 and 2004, the two party identifiers were increasingly different on issues such as jobs, living standards, health insurance, and presidential approval. Another key finding from Abramowitz and Saunders was that secularism and religiosity separated Democrats from Republicans respectively, citing it as one of the main axes of difference between red state voters and blue state voters.

In turn, Fiorina (and colleagues Abrams and Pope), in a separate article (2008) defended the original finding and countered Abramowitz and Saunders' critiques of the 2005 work on methodological and empirical grounds. Fiorina et al. argued that the polarization Abramowitz and Saunders found was only after they did only after extensive recoding and aggregation of data. Additionally, they (Abramowitz and Saunders) overstated geographic polarization citing contrary election evidence; many states that vote Democrat in the presidential election elect Republican governors and vice-versa. Moreover, Fiorina et al. also referred to a 2006 study by Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder Jr. that characterized most Americans as ideological moderates on both economic and moral issues.

One finding from Abramowitz and Saunders' 2005 study that was not refuted by Fiorina et al. was that more people identified as Republicans or Democrats in 2004 than did in 1972, revealing some semblance of a polarization dynamic. However, it is not clear whether increased partisanship on certain political issues subsequently spills over to polarization in the general American public. For example, while Baldassarri and Gelman found partisanship and alignment on various issues to be positively correlated, the relationship was weak. They concluded, "since the parties are now more clearly divided on a broader set of issues – it is easier for people to split accordingly, without changing their own views" (2008: 37). Their study harked back to the idea of elite polarization (in a sense) more uniformly locating the voting public to the left or the right. Yet, the opinions held by the general public on a wide range of issues had not concurrently changed along party lines, indicating that more polarized identification did not coincide with corresponding partisan opinions. Furthermore, a more recent study by Wood and Oliver (2012) questioned if there existed any meaningful relationship between people's ideological self-identification and their political attitudes or behavior. Ideological self-identification was found to be temporally unstable and did not directly correspond consistently on issue stances. On balance, Wood and Oliver concluded that the general public was less polarized than some posit.

Political Sorting

Political sorting has been another theme in the scholarship on politics. According to the political sorting model, political partisan identities have converged with ideological, religious, and movement-based politics (Mason 2012). For example, Republicans have sorted themselves into categories like conservative, religious, pro-life, and racially not black while Democrats are generally considered to be liberal, secular, pro-choice, and more often black. As these identities have converged more consistently, individual identities and political parties have converged

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creating a more salient identity for, let's say, a Republican. The result of the more sharply defined identities is more in-group bias, more active defending of one's own party, and anger towards the other party (Mason 2012). Mason's political sorting complemented Baldassari and Bearman's self-segregation into ideologically homogenous groups in which all people within the group shared the same political opinions (2007). Even though public opinion was generally heterogeneous (and thus less polarized than the homogenous groups would suggest), Mason acknowledged that in-group bias, anger towards the other party, and opinion-homogeneous groups, among other factors, contributed to social polarization but not issue polarization (2015).

Multiple Determinants of Ideology

Mason's (2012) political sorting concept intimated salient factors that have contributed to semblances of polarization in the general public along conservative versus liberal ideologies. More recent scholars specified some of the factors and life experiences that shape political ideology. Bond and Solomon's 2015 Facebook survey of 78,000 Facebook users found age, marital status, and gender to be important. Some examples: the older people got the more conservative they became; married people tended to be more conservative than the not married; and women tended to be more liberal than men.

Similarly, Baldassarri and Goldberg identified socioeconomic factors (education and income) that contributed to people's political ideologies (2014). In their study they identified three distinct groups: ideologues, alternatives, and agnostics, each of who had their own belief system based on their level of education and income. The alternative group was a particular point of interest because they were comparable to moderates. The more economically affluent and better-educated in the alternate group were more conservative on economic issues but were more liberal on social and moral issues. Not only were there multiple factors that contributed to the alternative group's ideology, there were also multiple layers within it, adding further complexity to the concept of ideology in sharp contrast to a singular self-identification. Additional, even if less salient, components in political ideologies were egalitarianism and political sophistication; Feldman and Johnston found that egalitarianism and less religiosity predicted economic and social liberalism (2010). Approaching the determinants of political ideology from more than just a demographic standpoint offers insight to citizens' worldviews, which were also proven to influence their political ideologies.

The Forgotten Middle

As evident in the scholarship reviewed above, the political middle has been largely forgotten. A notable exception is a recent 2014 study conducted by the Pew Research Center (PRC) where the political middle was the focus. The political middle in the Pew research Center study was comparable to the alternatives and agnostic groups in Baldassarri and Goldberg's work. But, the PRC political middle straddled a demographically diverse landscape. Some specifics illustrate the diversity in the political middle. The political middle was comprised of three distinct groups: Young Outsiders, who leaned Republican and were affluent and well-educated, wary of big government but liberal on social issues; the Hard-pressed Skeptics, who leaned Democratic, were poorly educated, economically disenfranchised, and were the most distrustful of the government; the Next Generation Left, who leaned Democratic and were well-educated and affluent, liberal on social issues but hesitant about the social safety net and sympathetic toward Wall Street; It was noteworthy that a larger portion of the less partisan middle the PRC data leaned toward the Democratic party (Pew Research Center 2014).

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A second recent study jointly by Esquire and NBC News in 2012 demarcated the "American Center" but also highlighted the diversity within it. They too identified sub-groups in the political center that were similar to most of PRC groupings. For example, the Whateverman, young voters in the Northeast and West who were politically apathetic were comparable to PRC's Hard-Pressed Skeptics. The Pick-up Populists, who were mostly white, low-income voters in the South and Midwest who worried the economy is unfair and that government is wasteful were also comparable to the Hard-Pressed Skeptics. The MBA Middle, mostly white, well-educated and affluent voters who were fiscally conservative but socially liberal were much like PRC's Young Outsiders. Only the Minivan Moderates, mostly white suburban mothers in the Midwest and South with pro-choice/anti-gun tendencies and a distrust of government, were not comparable to any of the PRC groupings. In short, the very existence of distinct political groups and divisions within them indicates that a person's political ideology is not unidimensional, let alone being classified as conservative, moderate, or liberal.

Summary and Moving Forward

It is quite clear that the elites in the United States are polarized. It is also clear that elite polarization has contributed to sorting the general public along party lines, but not their opinions. Political sorting has occurred along party identities and ideologies (i.e. Republican and Democrat) as well as other salient socio-demographic characteristics like religiosity, and race. However, even as Americans become more frequently sorted into distinct partisan poles, the political middle is alive and richly diverse demographically and in its attitudes towards government. For example, people's political self-identifications often conflict with their opinions (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008). Besides, Americans in general are ideologically moderate in their issue positions and opinions (Fiorina et al. 2005, 2007 & Ansolabehere et al. 2006).

Yet, this less partisan group, which comprises a sizable percentage of the general American population, has rarely been the focus of much research. Even though data on the political moderates do exist, a more nuanced analysis has been lacking. The research presented in this paper squarely focused on the forgotten middle.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The limited research that exists on moderates has categorized them as monolithic, more economically conservative and generally more conservative across the board (Baldassarri and Goldberg 2008 & Pew Research Center 2005). In order to test these singular claims about political moderates, the middle or moderates were contrasted against conservatives and liberals on the following dimensions: their identities, opinions on various foreign and domestic policy issues and suggested praxis ideas. Also largely unknown is how issue positions and opinions shaped who the American people believe should be influencing policy decisions. That is, not much is known about how people arrive at their political praxes, the practical means and agents through which Americans want to see change enacted. The specific change agents considered in this analysis were the American people, elected officials, civil institutions, religious leaders, and military leaders.

In this vein, two sets of formal research questions were posed: To what extent were identity symbols, opinions of political moderates on issues and related praxis distinctive from or

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reflective of conservatives and liberals? (2) Which, if any, of the three axes, identity symbols and/or issue/praxis opinions, uniquely identify moderates?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Extending Political Sorting Beyond Symbolic Referents

According to the partisan sorting theory self-identifications have converged along ideological, religious, racial, and gendered lines. These facets of partisan and ideological identities represent symbolic referents that people attach significance to in order to differentiate themselves from other groups. At the root of sorting theory is symbolic interactionism, which has three basic premises according to the theorist, Herbert Blumer: First, "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them." Second, "the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows." Third, these meanings are "handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing the things he encounters" (Blumer 1969:2). The "things" that Blumer referred to can be anything sociological such as social position, social roles, cultural prescriptions, norms and values, and group affiliation to name a few (Blumer 1969:3).

Where do moderates fit on the political sorting spectrum? If, as previous researchers have suggested, partisan sorting in the American political arena takes place along partisan and ideological salient identity symbols (such as religiosity, race, education, and income), it was predicted that salient identities markers would be the primary axes along which moderates were separated from the two other groups at opposite ends of the ideological spectrum. On the other hand, a case can be made that the political sorting has occurred along opinions on issues that are generally less sorted and less polarized than salient identity factors. Further, if it is issue opinions, an overlooked, symbolically meaningful referents, that differentiate the three ideological groups it was predicted that moderates will reflect the opinions and praxes of both conservatives and liberals, with a slight tendency to lean to the left both on the ideological-praxis spectrum' praxes from one another. In other words, moderates, who supposedly carry a mix of conservative and liberal views as the term implies have not been sorted (Pew Research Center 2014).

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

The explanatory sequential mixed methods design used in this study was structured as follows: Analysis of secondary quantitative data provided a statistical overview of the positions of moderates, liberals, and conservatives on a variety of national issues and salient identity markers. These profiles were then supplemented, post-quantitative analysis, by narrative interview insights from experts in the field of political science. The findings from the two approaches were compiled into a singular portrait of the political moderates in the U.S.

Secondary Survey Data

The quantitative survey data used in this study were drawn from 2014 The Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and Foreign Policy. The Gfk Group (Gfk, formerly Knowledge Networks) conducted the survey on behalf of The Chicago Council of Global Affairs. GfK sampled households from its KnowledgePanel, a probability-based web panel designed to

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be representative of the United States; there were 3,146 people surveyed with a response rate of 61% (Smeltz, Kafura, Daalder, Page, Holyk, Busby, Monten, and Tama 2014)[2].

One necessary clarification pertaining to the quantitative data must be disclosed. Because many of the opinion questions had response rates of 50% or less, multiple imputations were used to analyze missing data based on respondents' answers to other questions with higher response rates. In essence, around half of the responses to public opinion questions have been determined through missing data analysis and represent more complete estimates of respondents' answers.

Qualitative Interviews

Two interviews were conducted with experts in the field of political science. Interviewee #1 has eleven years of experience in the field, specializing in voting behavior, political psychology, and the news media. Interviewee #2 has four years of experience with a keen interest in political psychology and people's ideologies at the end of their lives. Their professional perspectives were used to expand on the survey findings. Refer to Appendix A for Consent Form and Interview Protocol.

DATA ANALYSES

In the following sections, salient identities, issue opinions, and praxis ideas of political moderates were compared to liberals and conservatives. The analyses offered a comparative descriptive portrait of identity markers, issue and praxis positions of the three groups. Gamma correlations tests, which measured differences in opinions between two ideological groups, at a time, were used to sort out the three groups. $\Gamma < .30$ was treated as a marker of opinion convergence while $\Gamma > .30$ was treated as opinion polarization.

Profiles of Moderates

Univariate analyses were used to profile moderates, liberals, and conservatives along salient identity markers and political ideologies. Two dimensions of ideologies were used; issue opinions and praxis recommendations.

Political Ideology

The sample population was more conservative (36.3%) than liberal (28.1%). But moderates, at 35.6%, made up a comparably sizeable portion of the respondents (Table 1.A). Respondents in the survey self-identified their political identification.

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[2] The original collector if the data, or ICPSR, or the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for use of the data or for the interpretations or inferences based on such uses.

Table 1.A Self-Identified Political Ideology

Indicator	Values and Responses	Statistics (n = 2067)
Q1005. In general, do you think of yourself as extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal moderate, slightly conservative, conservative, or extremely conservative?	1 = Conservative 2 = Moderate 3 = Liberal	36.3% 35.6 28.1

Salient Identity Markers

On average, conservatives made the most money and were the most highly educated, followed by liberals and moderates respectively (Table 2). The modal liberal (36.1%) and conservative (34.9%) had at least a college degree; in contrast the average moderate was a high school graduate (37.8%).

Table 2. Sociodemographic Identity Markers

Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics[1]					
		Con. (n=750)	CM r=Δ	Mod. (n=736)	ML r=Δ	Lib. (n=581)	CL r=Δ
PPINCIMP: Household Income[2]	Mean (SD) Min-Max	12.47 (4.23) 1-19	-.13**	11.28 (4.78) 1-19	.06*	11.84 (4.64) 1-19	-.07**
PPEDUCAT: Highest Degree Received	1 = Less than HS 2 = High school 3 = Some college 4 = Bachelors degree or higher	10.1% 29.6 25.3 34.9	-.11**	12.2% 37.8 25.5 24.5	.09**	15.0% 24.4 24.4 36.1	ø
PPAGECAT4: Age	1 = 18-29 2 = 30-44 3 = 45-59 4 = 60+	14.5% 22.3 27.5 35.7	-.09**	17.7% 26.0 30.6 25.8	ø	17.9% 27.4 27.0 27.7	-.09**
Gender	0 = Male 1 = Female	56.4% 43.6	.11**	45.9% 54.1	ø	49.6% 50.4	.07*
Living Setting	1 = Rural 2 = Suburban 3 = Urban	29.7% 51.5 18.3	ø	29.5% 47.7 22.8	.14**	19.7% 47.1 33.2	.17**
Q.1075 Apart from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?	1 = More than once a week 2 = Once a week 3 = Once/twice a month 4 = Several times a year 5 = Hardly ever 6 = Never	14.9% 30.4 7.4 13.3 20.0 14.0	.20**	7.4% 18.9 9.1 11.5 31.8 21.3	ø	6.2% 16.4 8.3 13.8 29.0 26.4	.25**
What is your race?	0 = White Non-Hispanic 1 = Not White	75.2% 24.8	.19**	57.5% 42.5	ø	52.5% 47.5	.24**

** p < .01, * p < .05, or ø non-significant levels.

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Conservatives were the oldest group by almost 4 years on average (51.39) followed by moderates (47.67) and then liberals (47.12). Conservatives were also the only male-dominated group (56.4%) while liberals and moderates were majority women; moderates being the most female-dominated group (54.6%).

The majority of conservatives (51.9%) and the plurality of moderates and liberals (47.7% and 47.1% respectively) lived in the suburbs, but conservatives and moderates were more likely to be from rural areas while liberals were most likely to live in urban areas. Additionally, conservatives were by far the most religious group; 52.6% conservatives attended monthly religious services at the very least while 53.1% of moderates and 55.4% of liberals attended religious services hardly ever or never.

Thus, moderates, while they had a unique sociodemographic identity, can be sorted as leaning towards liberals in their sociodemographic make-up. They were slightly younger than conservatives, more likely to be women, being less religious, and not being white.

Issue Opinions

A variety of issues of national and global importance were covered in the analyses. They ranged from past and present military matters, to immigration policy, climate change and the United States' energy production strategies, diplomatic relationships with foreign governments and leaders, and domestic government spending. In the analyses to follow, conservative, moderate, and liberal groups were disaggregated so that their opinions on issues could be ascertained. The ultimate goal was to see whether moderates were closer to conservatives or liberals in both their stances on different issues.

Opinions on Military Issues

Military matters carry great weight in the overall standing of the United States. Public opinion about the role of the military is an important measure of political ideology in the U.S. Opinions about important military issues covered the size of the military as well as past/present military decisions by the American military.

As seen in Table 3.A, to moderates, like their conservatives counterparts, maintaining military superiority worldwide was very important. At the same time moderates, like liberals wanted reduced military presence in Afghanistan and were convectively against the two wars on terror. In other words, moderates wished to protect the perception that the U.S. is able to defend itself, but only if absolutely necessary.

Some specifics from Table 3.A. are useful to elaborate on these broad patterns. The majority of moderates (53.7%) and conservatives (62.7%) believed that maintaining military superiority worldwide was very important while the plurality of liberals (45.4%) believed so. Even though moderates were more partial in prioritizing the size of the military, they remained closer to liberals on military issues, advocating (like liberals) that troops be brought home from Afghanistan on time or sooner and giving strong consensus with liberals that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were not worth it. While all three groups agreed that the two wars on terror were ultimately not worth it, moderates still leaned slightly towards liberals' side in their dissent towards the wars (CM Γ = .30**, ML Γ = .21** and CM Γ = .17**, ML Γ = .07**).

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Table 3.A. Public Opinion on Military Issues

Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics[1]					
		Con. (n=721-750)	CM $\Gamma = \Delta$	Mod. (n=722-736)	ML $\Gamma = \Delta$	Lib. (n=571-581)	CL $\Gamma = \Delta$
Q7.[2] 04 Maintaining military superiority worldwide	1 = Not important at all	7.5%		8.3%		11.2%	
	2 = Somewhat important	29.9	ø	38.0	ø	43.4	.30**
	3 = Very important	62.7		53.7		45.4	
Q270.[3]	1 = Withdraw all troops from Afghanistan before the end of 2014	20.8%		29.6%		32.2%	
	2 = Bring all troops home as scheduled by the end of 2014	36.1	.24**	40.8	.07	42.2	.30**
	3 = Leave some troops in Afghanistan beyond 2014	43.1		29.6		25.6	
Q227[4]	0 = Not worth it	37.8%	.30**	24.5%	.21**	17.6%	.48**
	1 = Worth it	62.2		75.5		82.4	
Q271[5]	0 = Not worth it	32.1%	.17**	25.4%	.07**	22.8%	.23**
	1 = Worth it	67.9		74.6%		77.2	
Index of Public Opinion on Military Issues[6]	Mean (SD) Min-Max	4.53 (1.60) 2-8	.22**	5.05 (1.46) 2-8	.13**	5.32 (1.42) 2-8	.34**

[1] CM $\Gamma = \Delta$, ML $\Gamma = \Delta$, CL $\Gamma = \Delta$ represents the difference of opinion between conservatives and moderates, moderates and liberals, and conservatives and liberals respectively; ** p < .01, * p < .05, or ø non-significant levels.
[2] Below is a list of possible foreign policy goals that the United States might have. For each one please select whether you think that it should be a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, a somewhat important policy goal, or not an important goal at all:
[3] Currently the U.S. is scheduled to withdraw combat forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Do you think that the U.S. should: Withdraw all troops from Afghanistan before the end of 2014, bring all troops home as scheduled by the end of 2014, or leave some troops in Afghanistan beyond 2014 for training, anti-insurgency and counter terrorism activities?
[4] All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United, do you think the war in Iraq was worth fighting, or not?
[5] And what about the war in Afghanistan? All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war in Afghanistan has been worth fighting, or not?
[6] Index of Pub. Op. on Military Issues = Q7_04 + Q270 + Q227 + Q271.

Immigration Policy

Immigration policy was a second vector along which the three ideological groups were compared. In recent times, illegal immigration at the U.S.-Mexico border and the admittance of Syrian refugees has sparked contentious debates regarding the strictness with which the United States should enforce in its immigration policy. As a hot button issue in today's political landscape, opinions on questions about large numbers of immigrants coming to the United States and illegal immigration were investigated.

Another rare area in which moderates were more closely aligned with conservatives was immigration policy (Table 3.B.). Even though the plurality of moderates and liberals believed that

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large numbers of immigrants coming to the United States was an important but not critical threat, more moderates (35.1%) saw the influx of immigrants as a critical threat than as not an important threat at all (23.6%). In contrast, liberals were more likely (37.7%) to think that immigration was not an important threat; only a fifth (22.5%) said it was a critical threat.

Table 3.B. Public Opinion on Immigration Policy

Indicators	Values / Responses	Statistics[1]					
		Con, (n=750)	CM $\Gamma = \Delta$	Mod. (n=736)	ML $\Gamma = \Delta$	Lib. (n=581)	CL $\Gamma = \Delta$
Q5[2] 08 Large numbers of immigrants coming to the United States	1 = Critical threat	45.6%		35.1%		22.5%	
	2 = Important but not critical threat	33.3	.15***	41.3	.28***	39.8	.40***
	3 = Not an important threat	21.1		23.6		37.7	
Q7[3] 08 Controlling and reducing illegal immigration	1 = Very important	57.1%		48.2%		34.1%	
	2 = Somewhat important	36.5	.17**	42.7	.27**	49.9	.42***
	3 = Not important at all	6.4		9.1		16.0	
Index of Public Opinion on Immigration Policy[4]	Mean	3.25		3.49		3.97	
	(SD)	(1.28)	.15**	(1.26)	.27**	(1.28)	.39**
	Min-Max	2-6		2-6		2-6	

[1] CM $\Gamma = \Delta$, ML $\Gamma = \Delta$, CL $\Gamma = \Delta$ represents the difference of opinion between conservatives and moderates, moderates and liberals, and conservatives and liberals respectively; ** p < .01, * p < .05, or ø non-significant levels.
[2] Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interest of the United States in the next 10 years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all:
[3] Below is a list of possible foreign policy goals that the United States might have. For each one please select whether you think that it should be a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, a somewhat important policy goal, or not an important goal at all.
[4] Index of Public Opinion on Immigration Policy: Q5_08 + Q7_03.

In short, moderates and liberals were further apart in their immigration policy opinions than they were from conservatives (ML Γ = .28**, CM Γ = .15**). In fact, the majority of conservatives (57.1%) and the plurality of moderates (48.2%) viewed controlling and reducing illegal immigration as a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, while the plurality of liberals (49.9%) believed it was only a somewhat important goal. The closer alignment between conservatives and moderates (CM Γ = .15**) on immigration matters than between moderates and liberals (ML Γ = .27**) was evident in the overall immigration opinion index; opinions of moderates on immigration policy were more reflective of conservatives than liberals.

Environmental Issues.

A third issue that has grabbed national and even global attention is the environment. While there is consensus within the scientific community that climate change is real and that humans are contributing to global warming, polarized political rhetoric divides conservatives and liberals on the subject; conservatives are often labeled as climate deniers while liberals are more commonly viewed as the bastions of the environmental movement. Therefore, this is a critical area in which to examine where moderates fall (Table 3.C).

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Table 3.C. Public Opinion on Environmental Issues

Indicators	Values / Responses	Statistics[1]					
		Con. (n = 750)	CM $\Gamma=\Delta$	Mod. (n = 736)	ML $\Gamma=\Delta$	Lib. (n = 581)	CL $\Gamma=\Delta$
Q5_09[2] Climate Change	1= Not an important threat	38.8%	.36***	18.3%	.23***	12.4%	.53***
	2 = Important but not critical threat	33.9		39.1		32.0	
	3 = Critical threat	27.3		42.5		55.6	
Q310[3]	1 = Too much	39.1%	.58***	8.7%	.35***	6.7%	.74***
	2 = About the right amount	35.2		36.5		19.7	
	3 = Not enough	25.7		54.8		73.6	
Q320 1-6[4]							
Q320_1[5]	1 = Strongly oppose	14.0%		5.2%		4.0%	
	2 = Somewhat oppose	20.3		16.9		10.7	
	3 = Somewhat favor	37.0	ø	38.0	ø	26.9	.48***
	4 = Strongly favor	28.7		38.9		58.4	
Q320_2[6]	1 = Strongly favor	34.2%		18.5%		14.6%	
	2 = Somewhat favor	39.3	.30*	40.6	.22*	29.9	.48***
	3 = Somewhat oppose	19.1		27.1		31.2	
	4 = Strongly oppose	7.3		13.8		24.3	
Q320_3[7]	1 = Strongly favor	46.3%		25.4%		18.5%	
	2 = Somewhat favor	34.2	ø	42.8	ø	32.6	.54***
	3 = Somewhat oppose	14.7		21.9		24.7	
	4 = Strongly oppose	4.8		9.9		24.2	
Q320_4[8]	1 = Strongly oppose	12.8%		7.2%		4.0%	
	2 = Somewhat oppose	27.4	ø	21.0	ø	12.6	.48***
	3 = Somewhat favor	39.6		42.3		38.2	
	4 = Strongly favor	20.2		29.5		45.2	
Q320_5[9]	1 = Strongly favor	29.9%		15.4%		13.0%	
	2 = Somewhat favor	39.6	ø	44.1	ø	30.6	.46***
	3 = Somewhat oppose	24.7		29.2		31.1	
	4 = Strongly oppose	5.7		11.4		25.3	
Q320_6[10]	1 = Strongly favor	39.7%		26.7%		30.8%	
	2 = Somewhat favor	44.6	.23**	50.8	-.06	47.7	.17**
	3 = Somewhat oppose	11.3		18.7		16.5	
	4 = Strongly oppose	4.4		3.9		4.9	
Q320_7	1 = Strongly oppose	37.9%		21.4%		13.5%	
	2 = Somewhat oppose	38.0	.27*	45.3	.35*	32.4	.53***
	3 = Somewhat favor	18.8		25.2		30.1	
	4 = Strongly favor	15.3		8.1		24.0	
Index of Environmental Issues[12]	Mean	18.75	.42*	21.84	.34*	24.24	.64***
	(SD)	(4.53)		(3.58)		(4.29)	
	Min-Max	9-33		9-34		9-34	

[1] CM $\Gamma = \Delta$, ML $\Gamma = \Delta$, CL $\Gamma = \Delta$ represent difference of opinion between conservatives and moderates, moderates and liberals, and conservatives and liberals respectively; **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$, or ø non-significant.
[2] Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interest of the United States in the next 10 years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all:
[3] To deal with the problem of climate change, do you think your govt. is doing:
[4] Thinking about how to address America's dependence on foreign energy sources, please indicate whether you favor or oppose each of the following:
[5] Increasing tax incentives to encourage the development and use of alternative energy sources;
[6] Increase the use of hydraulic fracturing to extract oil and natural gas from underground rock formations;
[7] Opening up land owned by the federal government for oil exploration;
[8] Requiring auto-makers to increase fuel efficiency, even if the car price would go up;
[9] Increasing the mining and use of coal for generating electricity;
[10] Maintaining existing nuclear power plants to reduce reliance on oil and coal;
[11] Raising taxes on fuels such as coal and oil to encourage individuals and businesses to use less.
[12] Index of Pub. Op. on environmental issues = Q5_09 + Q310 Q320_01 + Q320_02 + Q320_03 + Q320_04 + Q320_05 + Q320_06 + Q320_07.

Moderates and liberals agreed that climate change was a real problem (Table 3.C.). And moderates more often than not aligned with liberals' views on how to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. The plurality of moderates (42.5%) and majority of liberals (55.6%) believed climate change was a critical threat while the plurality of conservatives (38.8%) believed it was not an important threat. The majority of moderates (54.8%) and liberals (73.6%) thought that the government was not doing enough to deal with climate change while the plurality of conservatives (39.1%) thought the government was doing too much. And more often than not moderates aligned with liberals' views on strategies that would reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

On possible actions that the government should take to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, moderates were more likely to be closer to liberals than they were to conservatives. As for possible actions that the government can take to reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil, moderates aligned more closely with liberals than with conservatives. Some examples: moderates and liberals both strongly favored the development and use of alternative energy sources through tax incentives (38.9% and 58.4% respectively) while conservatives (37.0%) showed less supportive of this strategy. Even though conservatives and moderates (pluralities) favored (somewhat) fracking to extract oil and natural gas with liberals opposing this strategy, moderates were further apart from conservatives (CM Γ = .30**) than from liberals (ML Γ = .22**).

Opinion ambiguities were also found on strategies ranging from opening up federal land for exploration, to requiring automakers to make more fuel-efficient cars, and increasing coal mining for electricity use; moderates were effectively in between both conservatives and liberals with no leaning to either side, standing alone in their middle of the road opinions. When it came to maintaining nuclear power plants, conservatives stood alone in favoring their upkeep the most while moderates and liberals shared slightly less favorable views on the strategy though it is notable that the differences in opinion were weak (CM Γ = .23**, CL Γ = .17**, ML Γ not significant). Moderates did reflect conservatives more on raising taxes on coal and oil (CM Γ = .27*, ML Γ = .35*), as both groups opposed the idea while liberals were generally in favor of the strategy.

Overall, moderates were slightly closer to liberals than conservatives on environmental issues, as evidenced by the index of environmental issues (CM Γ = .42*, ML Γ = .34*); the index also revealed wider differences in opinion between all three groups than on any other topical issue. The large difference in opinion between conservatives and liberals on environmental issues (Γ = .64**) proved environmental issues to be the most polarized area of opinion amongst all that were observed.

Foreign Relations

Economic and diplomatic foreign relations represent non-military approaches to dealing with the leadership of various countries and organizations. The extent to which each ideological group wanted to engage in diplomacy with foreign leaders before resorting to military issues was viewed as another axis along which the three ideological groups might differ. Questions pertaining to foreign relations addressed people's perceptions of foreign economic and national security threats and attitudes towards controversial foreign leaders and organizations, as well as the historic Iran nuclear deal (Table 3.D).

Table 3.D. Public Opinion on Foreign Relations

Indicators	Values/Responses	Statistics[1]					
		Con. (n = 750)	CM Γ = Δ	Mod. (n = 736)	ML Γ=Δ	Lib. (n = 581)	CL Γ=Δ
Q5.[2] 02 U.S. debt to China	1 = Critical threat	57.3%		46.2%		41.0%	
	2 = Important but not critical	35.5	.20[*]	44.0	.12*	44.6	.31[***]
	3 = Not important	7.2		9.8		14.5	
04 Islamic fundamentalism	1 = Critical threat	49.6%		37.8%		34.6%	
	2 = Important but not critical threat	39.7	.20[*]	48.8	.11*	45.4	.29[**]
	3 = Not important	10.7		13.5		20.0	
Q175.[3] 01 Taliban	0 = Should not be	58.9%	26[***]	45.9%	.05	43.6%	.30[***]
	1 = Should be	41.1		54.1		56.4	
02 Iran	0 = Should not be	40.7%	ø	29.8%	ø	22.3%	.41[***]
	1 = Should be	59.3		70.2		77.7	
03 Hamas	0 = Should not be	59.3%	.28**	45.0%	.16[**]	37.0%	.42[***]
	1 = Should be	40.7		55.0		63.0	
04 North Korea	0 = Should not be	43.8%	.20*	34.4%	10[*]	29.8%	.30[***]
	1 = Should be	56.2		65.6		70.2	
05 Cuba	0 = Should not be	31.4%	ø	22.5%	ø	16.7%	.39[***]
	1 = Should be	68.6		77.5		83.3	
06 Hezbollah	0 = Should not be	59.0%	ø	46.0%	ø	36.5%	.43[***]
	1 = Should be	41.0		54.0		63.5	
Q239.[4]	0 = Oppose	48.3%	ø	34.3%	ø	25.0%	.47[***]
	1 = Favor	51.7		65.7		75.0	
Q240.[5] 01 Not pressure Iran to stop enriching uranium	1 = Strongly oppose	61.5%		44.6%		47.2%	
	2 = Somewhat oppose	22.1	.27**	30.6	-.05	30.1	.23[***]
	3 = Somewhat support	10.2		17.4		15.8	
	4 = Strongly support	6.2		7.4		6.9	
02 Continue diplomatic efforts to get Iran to stop enriching uranium	1 = Strongly oppose	13.4%		6.5%		5.4%	
	2 = Somewhat oppose	12.6	ø	12.2	ø	8.7	.24[***]
	3 = Somewhat support	32.8		36.5		33.0	
	4 = Strongly support	41.2		44.8		52.8	
03 Impose tighter economic sanctions on Iran	1 = Strongly support	66.1%		53.4%		57.0%	
	2 = Somewhat support	22.9	.21**	33.0	-.06	29.8	ø
	3 = Somewhat oppose	6.3		9.3		8.5	
	4 = Strongly oppose	4.7		4.2		4.8	
04 Authorize a military strike against Iran's nuclear energy facilities	1 = Strongly support	36.9%		26.0%		21.2%	
	2 = Somewhat support	34.8	ø	37.8	ø	30.2	.35[***]
	3 = Somewhat oppose	20.2		24.3		27.4	
	4 = Strongly oppose	8.1		11.9		21.2	
Index of Public Opinion on foreign relations[6]	Mean	15.61		17.56		18.58	
	(SD)	(4.16)	.29**	(3.56)	.17**	(3.36)	.44[***]
	Min-Max	6-27		6-27		6-28	

[1] CM Γ = Δ, ML Γ = Δ, CL Γ = Δ represents the difference of opinion between conservatives and moderates, moderates and liberals, and conservatives and liberals respectively; **p < .01, *p < .05, or ø non-significant.

[2] Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interest of the United States in the next 10 years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all:

[3] As you may know there is currently a debate about whether U.S. government leaders should be ready to meet and talk with leaders of countries and groups whom the U.S. has hostile or unfriendly relations. Do you think the U.S. leaders should or should not be ready to meet and talk with the leaders of:

[4] As you may know, the U.S. and other countries have reached an interim deal with Iran that eases some of the international economic sanctions against Iran. In exchange, the deal requires that Iran accept some restrictions on its nuclear program - but not end it completely - and submit to greater international inspections of its nuclear facilities. Do you favor or oppose this interim agreement?

[5] If Iran commits a major violation of this agreement, would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the UN Security Council taking each of the following actions:

[6] Index of Pub. Op. on foreign relations = Q5_02 + Q5_04 + Q175_01 + Q175_02 + Q175_03 + Q175_04 + Q175_05 + Q175_06 + Q239 + Q240_01 + Q240_02 + Q240_03 + Q240_04.

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On matters pertaining to foreign relations, moderates either reflected liberal views or stood alone separate from both other groups (Table 3.D). For example, moderates and liberals were more convergent in their beliefs that our debt to China and Islamic fundamentalism were not as a critical of threats as conservatives believed (Debt: ML Γ = .12*, CM Γ = .20*, Islam: ML Γ = .11*, CM Γ = .20*). Additionally, moderates and liberals were most likely to believe that our government leaders should be willing to meet and talk with the leaders of the Taliban, Iran, Hamas, North Korea, Cuba, and Hezbollah over conservatives, who were outright in their opposition to the idea of meeting with terrorist groups (the Taliban, Hamas, and Hezbollah); the exception was the majority of conservatives did believe that U.S. leaders should be meeting with the governments of Iran, North Korea, and Cuba.

There were similar alignments in the opinions on the Iran nuclear deal. Moderates and liberals were most in favor of the deal while conservatives displayed haphazard support. In regards to what measures should be taken if Iran breaks any part of the nuclear deal, moderates either tended to directly reflect liberals or be effectively between conservatives and liberals. While the three groups tended to show opinion convergence with respect to the U.S. response toward violations, conservatives favored the harshest measures in response to any violations that may occur, including their strong support for authorizing a military strike against Iran's energy facilities. Overall, the index of public opinion on foreign relations confirmed that moderates were more reflective of liberals than conservatives (CM Γ = .29**, ML Γ = .17**).

Government Spending

While government spending mostly addressed domestic policy (excluding defense spending), uncovering the opinions of the three groups on aspects of government that more directly affect the American people was treated as an important area of ideological distinctions (Table 3.E).

It was noteworthy that there was a general consensus among the three groups on the actions regarding three out of the five areas of government spending (education spending, defense spending, and Social Security spending). At the same time, opinions on government spending revealed a distinct separation of conservatives from moderates and liberals across most fiscal issues. Moderates (74.5%) and liberals (78.5%) most wanted to expand education spending with conservatives slightly lagging behind in their support. Moderates found themselves effectively in between the other two groups when it came to defense spending. Liberals (39.6%) were most in favor of cutting back on defense spending as opposed to conservatives (32.0%) who were most in favor of expanding it. The majority of moderates (57.3%) and liberals (61.1%) were in favor of expanding Social Security as opposed to only the plurality of conservatives (45.2%) who wanted to expand it. Stark differences emerged on healthcare spending and welfare spending. The majority of moderates (59.1%) and liberals (67.6%) expressed favoritism toward government healthcare in wanting to expand healthcare spending; conversely, the majority of conservatives (64.0%) wanted it kept the same or cut back. On welfare and unemployment programs the majority of conservatives (59.9%) and the plurality of moderates (37.6%) wanted to cut back on these programs contrary to the plurality of liberals (37.5%) who wanted the programs expanded. However, moderates' opinions on welfare and unemployment programs were more closely aligned with liberals than they were with conservatives (CM Γ = .35**, ML Γ = .24**). Moreover, the differences in mean scores confirmed that moderates were more reflective of liberals' views on government spending than were of conservatives' views (CM Γ = .32**, ML Γ = .20**).

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Table 3.E. Public Opinion on Government Spending

Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics[1]					
		Con. (n = 750)	CM Γ =Δ	Mod. (n = 736)	ML Γ =Δ	Lib. (n = 581)	CL Γ =Δ
Q25.[2]							
01 Education	1 = Cut back	13.7%		6.0%		4.8%	
	2 = Kept about the same	24.5	.29***	19.5	.11***	16.7	.38***
	3 = Expanded	61.7		74.5		78.5	
02 Defense Spending	1 = Expanded	32.0%	ø	25.5%	ø	18.8%	.32***
	2 = Kept about the same	44.4		44.7		41.7	
	3 = Cut back	23.6		29.8		39.6	
03 Social Security	1 = Cut back	11.1%		5.7%		5.7%	
	2 = Kept about the same	43.7	.24**	37.0	.07	33.2	.30**
	3 = Expanded	45.2		57.3		61.1	
06 Healthcare	1 = Cut back	36.3%		16.6%		13.6%	
	2 = Kept about the same	27.7	.41***	24.3	.16***	18.8	.53***
	3 = Expanded	36.0		59.1		67.6	
10 Welfare and unemployment programs at home	1 = Cut back	59.9%		37.6%		25.1%	
	2 = Kept about the same	23.7	.35**	36.1	.24**	37.3	.54**
	3 = Expanded	16.4		26.2		37.5	
Index of Public Opinion on Government Spending[3]	Mean	10.30		11.55		12.16	
	(SD)	(2.52)		(2.17)		(2.20)	
	Min-Max	5-15	.32***	5-15	.20***	5-15	.47***

[1] CM Γ = Δ, ML Γ = Δ, CL Γ = Δ represents the difference of opinion between conservatives and moderates, moderates and liberals, and conservatives and liberals respectively at the **p < .01, *p < .05, or ø non-significant levels.

[2] Below is a list of present federal government programs. For each, please select whether you feel it should be expanded, cut back or kept about the same:

[3] Index of Pub. Op. on government spending = Q25.01 + Q25.02 + Q25.03 + Q25.06 Q25.10.

In summary, all three ideological groups wanted to expand education spending with moderates and liberals in greatest support for the expansion. Conservatives and moderates wanted defense spending to be either kept the same or expanded while liberals wanted it kept the same or cut back. Moderates and liberals aligned in their desire to either maintain or expand Social Security, healthcare, and welfare and unemployment program spending. Moderates were generally more reflective of liberals in their views on the allocation of government funds. Whether or not domestic policy issues affected the praxes of conservatives, moderates, and liberals on foreign policy remained to be seen.

Political Praxis or Preferred Agents of Influence

A third dimension along which the political sorting hypotheses were tested was the preferred agents of change or influence. Agents of change were grouped into categories based on the role that each group occupies in American society. The American People stood alone in their own category while Congress and the President were placed into an Elected Official category. U.S. interest groups, large corporations, and universities and think tanks were defined as civil society (non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest the will and interests of citizens); religious leaders and military leaders also stood alone in their own categories.

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Overall, conservatives, moderates, and liberals tended to agree about the amount of influence that the American people and elected officials should have the most influence on foreign policy (Table 4). While there was a difference between conservatives and liberals on how much influence elected officials should have, the relationship was weak ($\Gamma = .11^{**}$).

Table 4 Preferred Agents of Influence

Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics[1]					
		Con.	CM $\Gamma = \Delta$	Mod.	ML $\Gamma = \Delta$	Lib.	CL $\Gamma = \Delta$
Q125.[2]							
01 The American People	Mean (SD)	8.00 (2.23)	ø	7.99 (2.26)	ø	8.09 (2.16)	ø
02 Congress	Mean (SD)	6.86 (2.58)		6.67 (2.65)		6.77 (2.52)	
03 The President	Mean (SD)	7.02 (2.71)		7.7 (2.42)		8.11 (2.11)	
Index of Elected Officials[3]	Mean (SD) Min-Max	13.93 (4.68) 0-20	ø	14.41 (4.42) 0-20	ø	14.88 (3.83) 0-20	.11**
04 U.S. interest groups	Mean (SD)	3.83 (2.82)		4.48 (2.84)		4.38 (2.94)	
05 Large corporations	Mean (SD)	3.68 (2.72)		3.99 (2.81)		3.70 (2.91)	
06 The media	Mean (SD)	2.94 (2.89)		3.93 (2.97)		4.11 (3.05)	
08 Universities and Think Tanks	Mean (SD)	4.08 (2.86)		5.00 (2.79)		5.46 (2.80)	
Index of Civil Institutions[4]	Mean (SD) Min-Max	14.93 (9.46) 0-40	.18**	17.68 (9.54) 0-40	ø	17.89 (9.17) 0-40	.19***
07 Religious leaders	Mean (SD)	4.64 (3.05)	ø	4.21 (2.97)	-.16***	3.51 (3.07)	-.21***
09 Military Leaders	Mean (SD)	6.60 (2.57)	-.07*	6.35 (2.61)	-.16***	5.74 (2.63)	-.23***

[1] CM r = Δ, ML r = Δ, CL r = Δ represents the difference of opinion between conservatives and moderates, moderates and liberals, and conservatives and liberals respectively; **p < .01,* p < .05, or ø non-significant levels.
[2] How much influence do you think the following SHOULD have on U.S. foreign policy. 0 means they should not at all be influential and 10 means they should be extremely influential.
[3] Index of Elected Officials = Q125.02 + Q125.03.
[4] Index of Civil Institutions = Q125.04 + Q125.05 + Q125.06 + Q125.07 + Q125.08.

However, differences did emerge between the three groups on how much influence civil institutions, religious leaders, and military leaders should have; here contrary to moderates' left leanings in most issues, moderates tended to side with conservatives instead of liberals. Conservatives and moderates thought religious and military leaders should have more influence than liberals. While liberals and moderates believed civil institutions should have more influence than conservatives. In summary, there were small differences between the three ideological

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groups in how much influence the various agents should have. But, moderates actually were more aligned with conservatives in their preferred agents of change.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Empirical Implications

Differences emerged between conservatives and liberals on almost every sociodemographic identity marker, issue, and aspect of praxis, indicative of a clear difference between the two partisan ideological groups. But, moderates, as expected, were a much more complex group and effectively inconsistent with either conservative or liberal identity markers, issue opinions, or praxes.

When it came to identity markers, moderates were more similar to liberals. Unlike conservatives, moderates were young, female, less religious and less likely to be whites. But moderates were more like conservatives in their tendency to live in rural/suburban areas instead of urban/suburban areas, and stood alone in their lower average levels of income and education. Interviewees #1 and #2 found the sociodemographic markers in this study to be consistent with how conservatives and liberals are generally perceived and were not surprised by moderates' general identity makeup.

While moderates' identity markers were especially complex, their issue positions more clearly converged to reflect liberals overall. In four out of five issue areas (military action, environmental issues, foreign relations, and government spending) moderates leaned to the left, leaving only the area of immigration policy as a clear reflection of their more conservative views. Essentially, moderates (like liberals) wanted to maintain a large military in case of necessary intervention. They believed in climate change and cautiously supported alternative sources of energy while still considering existing American energy sector jobs. They thought the country should be engaging in diplomatic relations with foreign governments and even terrorist leaders and be ready to step in against Iran if they violate the current nuclear deal. And finally, moderates (like conservatives) displayed anti-immigrant sentiments and strongly desired to control and reduce illegal immigration. Interviewee #2 posited that the negative connotation that certain people ascribe to the term, *liberal*, as careless or reckless in ideology, may have led liberally opinionated people to self-identify as moderate. On balance, issue positions revealed the clearest differences between all three ideological groups and showed the clear leanings of moderates to liberals.

Group political praxes however, were less distinguishable than both issue positions and identity markers. In other words, conservatives, moderates, and liberals, generally shared a similar idea of who should be influencing foreign policy. When small differences did arise, moderates had leanings towards both conservatives and liberals. For example, moderates agreed with liberals that civil institutions should have more influence than conservatives thought but agreed with conservatives that religious leaders and military leaders should have more influence than liberals thought. The mixed bag of praxis and identity markers that moderates turned out to have made these two factors effectively impossible to sort moderates along.

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Theoretical Implications

By examining identity markers as political sorting measures (as has been done in previous research) and of hitherto unexamined measures such as issue positions and praxis, this research has added layers to the complexity at which political sorting takes place in American society. In this study, it was issue positions along which pronounced differences emerged among all three groups, followed by identity markers and then praxis. Furthermore, issue positions revealed a level at which moderates may be sorted slightly to the left while still maintaining less convictive views than either ideological pole. So while identity markers may still be a legitimate indicator of political sorting, issue positions (though not always polarized), represented a clearer set of differences between conservatives, moderates, and liberals.

Interestingly enough, praxis was an especially agreeable axis for all three groups. In other words, political sorting had limited applicability when it came to political praxis. However, the general convergence in opinions on who should be influencing foreign policy represents hope that we, as a nation, are not as divided along ideological lines as we can appear to be.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite offering a more nuanced portrayal of the forgotten middle, moderates, the study was not without its limitations, both methodological and substantive. On the methodological side, response rates were too low on many of the questions, so missing data analysis was employed, thus providing the most accurate approximations of potential answers, but it is unknown how exact the imputed responses were. Further, attempting to identify political moderates, a diverse and complicated ideological group, with but a single self-identification on a seven-point scale, was rather limiting. Similar limitations hampered measurement of issue and praxis positions. Future research should investigate more specifically what agents of change ideological groups want to be at the forefront of various issues, such as the ones examined in this research.

And finally, research should also attempt to combine the Pew Research Center's typology of the political middle with uncovering groups' praxes as a way to better understand the locus of change that the American people think is ideal. Linking issue positions with praxis ideas might offer a clearer portrayal of political moderates.

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Appendix A
Consent From and Interview Protocol

Consent Form

Dear _____:

I am a Sociology Senior working on my Research Capstone Paper under the direction of Professor Marilyn Fernandez in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. I am conducting my research on self-identified political moderates and their ideology and praxis as compared to conservatives and liberals.

You were selected for this interview, because of your knowledge of and experience working in the area of Political Science.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve responding to questions about the formation of people's political ideologies and the factors that contribute to people's political ideologies and will last about 20 minutes. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose to not participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time. The results of the research study may be presented at SCU's Annual Anthropology/Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference and published (in a Sociology department publication). Pseudonyms will be used in lieu of your name and the name of your organization in the written paper. You will also not be asked (nor recorded) questions about your specific characteristics, such as age, race, sex, religion.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call/email me at akwo@scu.edu or (317) 292-2250 or Dr. Fernandez at (408) -554-4432 mfernandez@scu.edu
Sincerely,
Alec Kwo

By signing below you are giving consent to participate in the above study. (If the interviewee was contacted by email or phone, request an electronic message denoting consent).

_____   _____   _____
Signature   Printed Name   Date

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, through Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at (408) 554-5591.

Interview Protocol

1. What is the organization/institution where you learned about political ideology?
2. What is your position in this organization?
3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?
4. Based on what you know about partisanship and ideological leanings on public opinion, where do political moderates stand in relation to conservatives and liberals?
5. Are moderates generally left out of political discourse?
6. Do you know of certain factors that contribute to people being conservative, moderate, or liberal?
7. Have you ever heard of moderates leaning left on most issues?

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Interviewee #1. November 20, 2015. Assistant Professor of Political Science.

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Interviewee #2. February 24, 2016. Lecturer of Political Science.

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SCU SOCIOLOGY MAJOR REQUIREMENTS
(Cohort 2010 and forward)

Foundation: (2 lower division courses) *REQUIRED*

Sociology 1	Principles of Sociology
Anthropology 3	Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology

Lower division elective (*recommended but not required*):

Sociology 33	Social Problems in the United States

Inquiry Sequence: (3 Theory/ Methods courses)

Sociology 119	**Sociological Theory** (*winter quarter of junior year*)
Sociology 120	**Survey Research and Statistical Analysis** (*winter quarter Junior Yr*)
Sociology 118	**Qualitative Methods** (*spring quarter of Junior year*)

Capstone Courses: (*Majors must take EITHER*)

Sociology 121	**Research Capstone** (*fall quarter of senior year*)
OR	
Sociology 122	**Applied Capstone** (*in the senior year*)

FIVE Upper Division Sociology Electives: Including at least _TWO_ each from 2 OF 4 CLUSTERS

Criminology/Criminal Justice Cluster

Sociology 158	Sociology of Deviance
Sociology 159	Sociology of Crime
Sociology 160	Sociology of Law
Sociology 161	Sociology of the Criminal Justice System
Sociology 162	Gender & Justice

Immigrant Communities Cluster

Sociology 137	Social Change
Sociology 138	Populations of India, China and the United States (was Demography)
Sociology 150	Immigrant Businesses in the United States (was Ethnic Enterprises)
Sociology 180	Immigrant Communities

Inequalities Cluster

Sociology 132	Social Stratification
Sociology 134	Globalization and Inequality
Sociology 135	Gender and Social Change in Latin America
Sociology 140	Urban Society and Social Conflict
Sociology 153	Race, Class, and Gender in the United States
Sociology 165	Human Services
Sociology 175	Race and Inequality

Organizations/Institutions Cluster

Sociology 127	Group Dynamics
Sociology 148	Stakeholder Diversity in Contemporary American Organizations
Sociology 149	Business, Technology, and Society
Sociology 152	Women and Men in the Workplace
Sociology 157	Sociology of Family
Sociology 163	Sociology of Work and Occupation
Sociology 164	Collective Behavior
Sociology 172	Management of Health Care Organizations

Other Recommended (but not required) Outward Bound Courses (after 118, 119, 120 & 121)

Sociology 125	Honors Thesis
Sociology 198	Internship (Preferably in the Senior year)
Sociology 199	Directed Reading/Directed Research

Up-dated 5/20/13. If you have any questions regarding the above listed requirements, please feel free to give us a call in the Sociology Department and we will be happy to answer your questions. The department phone number is 408/554/279.

Credits: Cover design credits go to Mr. Chris Zamarripa, class '13 and student of graphic design and art at Santa Clara University.