THE
McNair Scholars JOURNAL

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
1947

VOLUME 8
Contents

The Oak Park Redevelopment Plan: Housing Policy Implications for a Community Undergoing Early Stage Gentrification  
by Joaquín Castañeda ................................................................................................................................. 1

The Unintended Consequences of Public Policy that Affect Children of Incarcerated Mothers  
by Kimberley Folkes ...................................................................................................................................... 17

Understanding a Latino Queer Identity and Its Policy Implications for Higher Education  
by Ricky J. Gutierrez .................................................................................................................................... 34

The Power of Words: Student Perception of Multi-Cultural Centers within Institutions of Higher Education  
by Nancy Huante ........................................................................................................................................... 47

Venezuela and the Common Market of the South: A Case Study of Regional Integration in Latin America  
by Ashley T. Martinez ................................................................................................................................... 66

Exploring the Standpoint of Chicana Professors’ Influence, Their Teachings, Research and Community Involvement: The Search for Chicana Empowerment in Academia  
by Maribel Rosendo-Servin .......................................................................................................................... 91

Name-Brand Sneakers: Social Implications of Adolescent Consumption  
by Courtney Smith ........................................................................................................................................... 110

PSAs: A Means for Influencing College-Aged Young Adults  
by Tiffany M. Smith ....................................................................................................................................... 124
Foreword

An undergraduate research journal is an academic publication dedicated to providing a forum in which new scholars engage with the history and tradition of the academy. Over the years, the McNair Scholars Journal at California State University, Sacramento has become a valued tradition of the McNair experience. Past scholars have served as models for our current group of blossoming researchers. Faculty members committed to the value and practice of research have guided our scholars through the research process.

The articles in this year’s publication address a wide variety of topics reflecting on the diversity of research interests and activities pursued by the McNair scholars and their faculty. The objective of the journal is to allow the scholars an opportunity to further develop their academic writing skills and publish their work. Along the way, they have learned to not only locate, read, and synthesize the work of other scholars in their fields, but also, they have had an opportunity to define, narrow, and complete a research project.

McNair scholars are learning about multiple facets of the academy through their participation in the program. Specifically, the journal affords them the experience of reviewing and commenting on research projects from a variety of disciplines. The journal also underscores the multi- and interdisciplinary capabilities of our students. In a vibrant academic community, scholars from across the curriculum share ideas and information. The McNair Scholars Program is designed to provide the students with experience in this context so that they will seek to contribute to the academy as doctoral students and eventually as professors.

The journal would not be possible without the continuing support of the faculty mentors, the Office of the Provost, the Deans of the academic colleges, the McNair Scholars Program staff, and countless other members of the university community. I hope that you enjoy reading the outcome of this significant endeavor.

Chevelle Newsome, Ph.D.
Associate Dean for Graduate Studies
Director for the McNair Scholars Program
The Oak Park Redevelopment Plan: Housing Policy Implications for a Community Undergoing Early Stage Gentrification

Joaquín Castañeda
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Stan Oden, PhD

Abstract

With the reemerging discussion of gentrification in the urban landscape, an exploratory case study of the Oak Park Redevelopment Plan in Sacramento, California, was conducted to better understand the community’s gentrifying characteristics and the implications once the redevelopment goals are met. In addition, a conceptual framework (CF) was formulated in order to examine the components and processes of gentrification. The findings suggest that the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency’s redevelopment polices act as a catalyst for gentrification that exclusively favors the in-migration of middle- and upper-income owner-occupiers into the area at the expense of lower-income residents. These implications include the displacement of low-income renter-residents, changes to a neighborhood’s socioeconomic and cultural characteristics, and compromising the neighborhood’s ethnic diversity and affordability.

Oak Park, the first suburb of Sacramento, California established in 1889, was granted annexation by the city of Sacramento in 1911 (Simpson, 2004). Oak Park was the most prosperous when inhabited by northern Europeans and continued with the influx of southern Europeans during the 1920s, until the turn of the 20th century. The neighborhood’s prosperity was highlighted by Oak Park’s historic amusement park, Joyland, the trolley system that connected Joyland to the downtown area, and the California State Fair Grounds that were originally located in Oak Park. Though the community experienced significant development until the 1920s, an abrupt decline in the 1930s was initiated by a national economic depression from which Oak Park never recovered.

Oak Park was economically devastated by the Great Depression, which caused many businesses to leave the area, including the city’s amusement park, Joyland, in 1927, and the abandonment of the trolley system (Simpson, 2004). The community’s inability to recover from the Great Depression, coupled with the growing suburban sprawl of inexpensive post-World War II track housing, created conditions for ‘white flight’ which gradually diminished Oak Park’s tax base and political infrastructure as property values plummeted (Simpson, 2004). Furthermore, Simpson (2004) highlights the construction of Highway 99 in the 1950s “split [the adjacent communities of Land Park and Oak Park] (see appendix A) which virtually guaranteed [Oak Park’s] urban blight that would follow in the 1960s and 1970s,” (p. 7) while with the construction of Highway 50 to the north further isolated Oak Park from downtown. Oak Park’s economic decline escalated in 1968 when the
California State Fair Commission decided to move the fair grounds from its original location in Oak Park into northern Sacramento (Simpson), which further contributed to Oak Park’s economic decline due to lost revenue generated by tourism and property taxes.

During the 1950s and through the 1970s, Euro-American middle- and upper-income suburban enclaves emerged outside of Sacramento’s urban core while Oak Park experienced an influx of African Americans into its community (Dingemans, 1979). During this time, African Americans made up 40-50 percent of the population (Decennial Census, 1960 & 1970). The outmigration of affluent, Euro-American residents took with them the tax base, political and social networks, and economic power that historically maintained the neighborhood. Also, during this time, Oak Park and similar neighborhoods were “redlined” by mortgage lenders (Dingemans, 1979). Redlining is a lending practice that discriminates against minority and low-income neighborhoods and creates a racial disparity of access to home ownership, which limits the ability of these residents to accumulate wealth, in comparison to their Euro-American counterparts (Ross & Tootell, 2002; Wyly & Holloway, 1999). A 1976 study on the redlining and mortgage lending practices in the Sacramento area indicated a distribution disparity of mortgage loans. In addition, Dingemans’ (1979) study reveals that “high correlations also indicate strong associations between mortgage lending and ethnicity characteristics… [emphasizing that] the level of lending is low near centers of black concentrations in the southeastern and northern sectors” of Sacramento (pp. 229-230). The Oak Park neighborhood falls directly into this geographic designation.

The redlined neighborhood and its inability to maintain and attract businesses and homeowners led to a continual decline which coincided with an increase in crime. In response to the increasing crime rates in Oak Park, Sacramento’s police department enforced a strong ‘law and order’ policing strategy that alienated and racially discriminated against Oak Park residents T. Quintero, personal communication, March 16, 2007). This strategy resulted in a police raid of Sacramento’s Black Panther Party branch located in Oak Park (Simpson, 2004). On June 15, 1969, a six hour gun fight ensued between police and party members that resulted in one police death, 10 wounded and 37 arrested (“Racial Tension Erupts in Sacramento,” 1969). These violent and racially motivated incidents sent urgent messages to community leaders and elected officials that they needed to come together and find solutions for the plight of the Oak Park community (“Sacramento ‘Summit Meeting’ Proposed,” 1969). On August 21, 1969, a month after the racial conflict, the City Council designated the area of Oak Park for redevelopment (see appendix A), obtained federal funds in 1971, and adopted the Oak Park Redevelopment Plan on January 9, 1973 (SHRA, 1973). The goal and objective of the redevelopment plan from 1973-present is “to revitalize the Oak Park Neighborhood and to create a viable and attractive urban residential community,” achieved by “major policy decisions regarding
Oak Park” (SHRA, 1973, p. 4) with the purpose of seeking remedies for the community’s continual decline. Though the policy was recast as a redevelopment plan, the actuality of the policy is a Urban Renewal Plan as defined in the Housing Act of 1949 (SHRA, 1973).

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to: 1) critically examine the Oak Park Redevelopment Plan and its implementation strategies, and 2) to investigate whether this redevelopment policy is a catalyst for gentrification that creates inequities and contributes to the plight of the poor. The Oak Park Redevelopment Plan is designed to “provide a forward looking, imaginative and realistic approach to revitalize an older area of the City and to recreate a viable, attractive urban residential community for the future” (SHRA, 1973 p. 1). In order to better understand how this redevelopment project will impact the social, political, economic, and demographic future of Oak Park it is important to know: 1) For whom is this “viable and attractive community” intended; 2) Is the gentrifying policy a means to a better end.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

The following literature review focuses on several issues that provide insight into the gentrifying causes and implications of local governmental redevelopment policy, including: 1) the Sacramento Housing & Redevelopment Agency’s (SHRA) Redevelopment Plan of Oak Park, and 2) the role of private investment and other institutions in urban redevelopment. Although there are a multitude of gentrification-related topics, this review of the literature places a stronger emphasis on policy and market oriented issues and to a lesser degree on social issues, such as social division and community conflict, though these issues are equally important.

The reinvestment in historically disenfranchised urban neighborhoods and the subsequent influx of the middle- and upper-classes into the urban core have changed the urban landscape. Scholars of urban policy refer to this process as *gentrification*. In a seminal study, Glass defines *gentrification* as the process by which a working-class neighborhood is replaced by the middle- and upper-class. Glass (1964) notes, “Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district…working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed” (p. xvii). According to Hammel and Wyly (2001), gentrification is “the class transformation of urban neighborhoods that were devalorized by previous rounds of disinvestment and outmigration” (p. 213), a trend plaguing neighborhoods disproportionately populated with low-income residents. For the purposes of this study, gentrification will be defined as the processes in which the immigration of middle- and upper-classes into disinvested urban neighborhoods displaces low-income residents (Atkinson, 2002; 2004; Glass, 1964; Hammel & Wyly, 2001; Smith, 2002). This process is exacerbated by public policy
and market forces that ultimately results in a change in character and ecology of the neighborhood (Atkinson, 2002; 2004; Hammel & Wyly, 2001; Smith, 2002). As the definitions indicate, gentrification has a significant impact on neighborhoods. The process supports the turnover of race and class in the urban landscape, thus reconstructing the urban space exclusively for the affluent, largely Euro-American population (Hammel & Wyly, 1999; 2001). While many view gentrification as an urban policy cure, the remedy comes at the expense of the low-income and long time residents who pay a sizeable social cost, in the case of Oak Park they lose their ability to stay in the community (Lees, 2000).

Connections between Public Policy and Gentrification
According to Atkinson (2004), governments do not consider how their redevelopment efforts may initiate and support gentrification in urban, low-income neighborhoods once their redevelopment goals are met. Redevelopment efforts change the ecology of neighborhoods, typically a change that does not embrace low-income residents and threatens their tenure in the community. Though the housing market and the flow of new capital into the neighborhood has been cited as one of the primary causes of displacement, oftentimes referred as “Rent Gap Theory” (Smith, 1979), it is critical to redirect attention to examining the extent to which the city’s redevelopment plan for Oak Park protects low-income residents and who specifically benefits from the redevelopment.

Following is a discussion that expands on the question of why local governments neglect to scrutinize any gentrifying characteristics that may arise from their redevelopment policies. A study by Newman (2004) reveals that local governments have little incentive to assist low-income residents during the redevelopment of their neighborhoods because they are not the targeted consumers of private investment. With the increasing pressure of the devolution of federal housing programs in an era of a dismantling welfare state, urban policy makers at the local level rely on the deconcentration of poverty, mixed-income housing projects, and the re-introduction of the middle and upper class home ownership as an effective redevelopment strategy (Hammel & Wyly, 1999; Newman, 2004). Cameron (2003) describes another form of gentrification that is driven by “neither gentrifiers, nor capital, but public policy” (p. 2372), emphasizing the intent of the redevelopment strategy is the displacement of the low-income and economically inactive ‘social tenants’ with a higher social stratum of owner-occupiers that have comparatively higher incomes and social status. Parallel to these findings, Levine’s (2004) study of the relationship between government policy and gentrification suggests that “gentrification is not solely the result of a natural phenomenon and market forces; it is also the result of government policy shaped by strong pro-development interests” (p. 89).
From the previous information given, there is a clear link between the inequities faced by low-income, urban residents within their neighborhoods and local governmental policies that act as catalysts of gentrification, an outcome that favors deregulation, privatization, and more influential groups over others (Atkinson, 2004; Dávila, 2004). The literature confirms that local governments have turned a blind eye towards the gentrifying implications of their redevelopment policies and would rather address the physical barriers of the neighborhood rather than the social barriers that contribute to the neighborhood’s continual decline and neglect.

**Market Causes of Gentrification**

Some experts explain the cause of gentrification as ‘supply constraints and speculative gains’ of property owners and real estate investors in urban neighborhoods. In a seminal study, Smith (1979) discusses the concept “Rent Gap Theory,” a theory that explains how the disinvestment and re-investment into low-income and urban neighborhoods exacerbates gentrification. Smith (1979; 1987) summarizes that real estate and property owners disinvest out of a neighborhood and create conditions that result in a substantial ‘rent gap.’ Smith (1987) defines RENT GAP as “the gap between the actual capitalized ground rent (land value) of the plot of land given its present use and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned a ‘higher and better use’” (p. 462). Once the rent gap or difference between the actual and potential property value has substantially grown, investment capital begins to flow back into a neighborhood in the form of redevelopment. According to Kennedy and Leonard (2001), this newly viable market serves as a natural phenomenon for private investment, and provides a high rate of economic return (Smith, 1996). The intent of Smith’s (1979; 1987; 1996) analysis is to demonstrate how governmental redevelopment policies along with strategic investment practices act as catalysts for gentrification that change the housing stock and produces an “economic change in the land and housing market,” which are critical indicators of gentrification (p. 463).

**Consumption-Cultural Causes of Gentrification**

Contrary to Smith (1979), Ley’s (1986) classic study of gentrification focuses attention not on housing markets and capital flow, but on the consumption-cultural preferences of the migrating middle- and upper-classes into the urban neighborhoods. Ley (1986) labels this migration as “The Embourgeoisement of the Inner City”. This new, emerging urban class (middle- and upper-classes) is characterized as “a community of ‘urban pioneers’ entering a troubled neighborhood with the goal of turning the area for the better and reclaiming the neighborhood they once abandoned” (Ley, 1986). They reject suburban conformity, preferring a more cosmopolitan lifestyle of culture and identity. This factor is important, because embourgeoisement can only be accomplished with the process of redevelopment of urban and low-income neighborhoods (Ley, 1986). The neighborhood’s embourgeoisement through redevelopment (Ley, 1986) is
based on the consumption-cultural preferences of the middle- and upper-class owner-occupiers who become attracted to the neighborhood for the following reasons: 1) proximity to downtown amenities, 2) an urban culture, 3) new service-economy that caters to the middle-class (i.e., cafés [Starbucks], art galleries, theater houses), 4) architecturally unique homes, and 5) the premium of a short commute (Comey, Levy & Padilla, 2006; Meligrana & Skaburskis, 2005; Silver, 2006). As these studies reveal, such redevelopment in low-income urban neighborhoods is done to provide amenities and a physical upgrade of the housing stock for the in-migrating middle- and upper-classes. However, the redevelopment paints a different picture when posed with the following question: Is the investment in a café or a new social program likely to address the needs of low-income residents?

Gentrification and Displacement
Displacement of the urban poor is the most contested and controversial of all implications in regards to gentrification. A 1978 national housing report prepared by the Department of Housing and Urban Redevelopment, defined displacement as:

Any household...forced to move from its residence by conditions which affect the dwellings or its immediate surroundings, and which:
1. are beyond the household's reasonable ability to control or prevent;
2. occur despite the household's having met all previously imposed conditions of occupancy;
3. make continued occupancy by that household impossible, hazardous, or unaffordable” (as cited in Braconi & Freeman, 2004).

As the report suggests, displacement is an involuntary phenomenon beyond the control of the affected residents, for whom future occupancy proves impossible, hazardous, and most importantly unaffordable (Grier & Grier, 2004).

Interestingly, researchers note that displacement in gentrifying neighborhoods involves the “market removal” of low-income residents (Atkinson, 2004; Dávila, 2004; Smith, 2002). This removal is accomplished with rent inflation, increased housing prices, and illegal eviction strategies by landlords who are quick to re-convert rental properties into single family homes or condominiums (Atkinson, 2004; Dávila, 2004; Smith, 2002). As the property values of historic urban neighborhoods decrease, the areas become more appealing for in-migrating middle-class residents and realtors to redevelop (Newman & Wyly, 2006; Ley, 1996; Smith, 1987, 1996). A major concern here is about the social cost for the redevelopment’s success? Who will pay the social cost, and at what price?

Although it is known that such displacement occurs with low-income residents, policy makers need to critically analyze the impact of redevelopment upon these residents. In her study of El Barrio in New York
City, Dávila (2004) indicates that low-income residents in neighborhoods with high concentrations of public assistance and rent subsidies are extremely vulnerable to displacement. Contrary to these findings, Braconi and Freeman (2004) suggest that displacement is “associated with a lower propensity of disadvantaged households to move” (p. 51) out of their gentrifying neighborhoods, based on their study of New York during the 1990s. Though Braconi and Freeman’s (2004) analysis on gentrification found the displacement of low-income residents inconclusive, the research highlighted that rent regulation was considered a marginalized housing policy that has “a certain logic in the context of gentrification,” (p. 52) emphasizing the point of the vulnerability of rental households. These studies on gentrification point to the vulnerability of low-income residents and their susceptibility to displacement.

**Methodology**

A qualitative approach was utilized to interview representatives from several local government agencies. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed; representatives included the Southern Area Director and Redevelopment Planner of the SHRA, and the Area Director and Neighborhood Services Coordinator for the Neighborhood Services Department Area 3 for the City of Sacramento. Before the interviews were conducted, the researcher obtained Human Subjects Committee approval from the university. In addition, this researcher reviewed policy documents from the redevelopment project and interviewed key informants in order to gain a better understanding of how the initiative is affecting the community of Oak Park.

**Conceptual Framework of Gentrification**

In consultation with the McNair mentor and other faculty guidance, the researcher formulated a conceptual framework (CF) diagram to clarify the processes of gentrification and inserted the case study of Oak Park to analyze and discuss in detail the changes that are happening in the neighborhood (Figure 1). The framework is used as a guide to examine the material conditions and components of the gentrifying neighborhood.

**Demographics**

Quantitative analysis of the census track-level reports was used to measure the community’s vulnerability to further gentrification. Statistical data from the 1960-2000 Decennial Census and the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council 2007 Census reports for track-
level reports 18, 27, and 37 (data from all three track-level reports were averaged together) were utilized to obtain the demographics of the Oak Park redevelopment area. In addition, primary sources were utilized to make links with the most current literature relevant to the study of gentrification. Lastly, to offer a brief historical account of Oak Park’s decline and neglect, archival research, such as news articles and government documents, was used to examine when and why Oak Park became a disinvested neighborhood.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher chose to focus on the redevelopment policy of Oak Park to create a clearer conceptual framework of gentrification processes and, in particular, to examine the case of Oak Park in order to examine the real material conditions and components of this process, which have serious consequences for people in urban neighborhoods.

Here the researcher will reintroduce the conceptual framework into the discussion of the gentrification processes of Oak Park discussed in the methodology section. Though the framework components are sequential, many, but not all, happen simultaneously. As depicted in Figure 1, each component is connected to one another. Gentrification has a cyclical pattern and hierarchical structure with several stages. The process begins and ends with a dominate Euro-American neighborhood.

Early History of Oak Park

Over 150 years ago, Oak Park emerged as the first suburb of Sacramento, California, located approximately two and a half miles south of downtown. This new neighborhood was developed with an elaborately distinct architectural style, such as Victorian Queen Ann, craftsman, vernacular, and bungalow homes. This is an early indication that developers envisioned a middle- and upper-class neighborhood (Simpson, 2004). During the neighborhood’s beginning at the turn of the 19th century and into the first half of the 20 century, the area was populated with a stable middle- and upper-class of Euro-Americans (SHRA, 2003; Simpson, 2004). But by the 1950s and 1960s, Oak Park entered a transitional period.

Community in Transition

The next stage in the cycle of gentrification is neighborhood change. Beginning in the 1950s, Oak Park experienced the ‘white flight’ of the affluent class as they sought residence in inexpensive track homes around the greater Sacramento area, created by suburban sprawl (Quintero, T.; personal communication, March 16, 2007). This was a result of the construction of Highway 99, which divided the Oak Park neighborhood in two: the more affluent area west of Highway 99 and the ethnic poor to the east of Highway 99, which resulted with community blight, and the in-migration of ethnic minorities (Quintero, T., personal communication; March 16, 2007; Simpson, 2004; see appendix A). These conditions were a result of the
exit of the Euro-American population out of Oak Park, which removed the neighborhood’s stable tax base, purchasing power, political weight, and overall infrastructure as they out migrated elsewhere (Quintero, T. personal communication, March 16, 2007; Bumgardner, E., April 3, 2007). By the 1970s, Oak Park experienced a high concentration of ethnic minorities. The African American population was as high as 50% in one track-level report and had a total neighborhood average of 39.3% (Decennial Census, 1970).

Decline of the Community and the Rise of Renters  
As the in-migration of ethnic minorities increased, the Oak Park neighborhood began a steady decline which produced a dominate renting class. Oak Park’s decennial census statistics from 1970 to 2000 (Figures 2 & 3) demonstrate this trend. The figures show that over the span of thirty years, the number of home owners steadily decreased as the renting population emerged as a large majority, in addition to a steady increase in the level of poverty.

As shown, Oak Park has become a magnet for renters in a neighborhood with a poverty level. This renting population of 65% is a critical component with in the gentrification conceptual framework, since the housing tenure of the renting class becomes volatile as property values increase (Braconi & Freeman, 2004; Dávila, 2004; Smith, 1979; 1987; 1996). In addition, the increase of renters and decrease of owners indicates the decline in home equity and, in affect, property values.

Following the discussion, the researcher also analyzed the demographics of the renting population to further illustrate the vulnerable renting class, emphasizing the neighborhood’s susceptibility to gentrification (Figure 4).
The results showed that 34% of the renting class rely on public assistance for income, 28% spend 50% or more of their income on rent, and 53% occupy pre-1939 homes that have a high architectural value. These statistics are significant because they: 1) confirm the high poverty rate of renting occupants, and 2) show than half of all renters occupy homes that have historical significance, which are extremely attractive for private investors and homeowners to redevelop and are the first in be on the market and sold (Bumgardner, E., personal communication, April 3, 2007).

Of additional importance is the discussion of renters in Oak Park. The data obtained from the Decennial Census from 1970 through 2000, clearly illustrates a problematic trend (Figure 5). The percentage of renters with incomes below $10,000 annually has been steadily decreasing; however, interestingly the percentage of renters who spend 35% or more of their income on rent has continually increased since 1970 (with a peak during the 1990 recession). Analysis of this information suggests that although the wages of the renting population have been increasing, more of their income is going towards rent. Renter’s wages are increasing but they cannot keep up with the rising rent costs. These symptoms are producing conditions for further gentrification.

**Redevelopment Policy and In-Migration of the Middle-Class**

In 1973 Oak Park was zoned as a redevelopment area in order to remedy neighborhood blight by implementing a tax increment fee, in which homer
owners pay a percentage of their property value when bought. These funds are then allocated and redistributed by the Sacramento Housing & Redevelopment Agency to be reinvested back into the neighborhood for the purpose of “providing a forward looking, imaginative and realistic approach to revitalize an older area of the City and to recreate a viable, attractive urban residential community of the future” (SHRA, 1973, p. 1). Yet this process begs the questions: For whom is this “viable and attractive community” intended for and who will be included and excluded from the community’s future? As an implementation policy, The Oak Park Renaissance Community Master Plan was created in 2002 as a strategic revitalizing plan in order to create a “sustainable” and “livable” neighborhood (SHRA). These two polices are shaping the material conditions and processes of the gentrification of Oak Park.

Given the prior discussion on the renting class’ vulnerability for a future in Oak Park, it’s important that policy makers integrate remedies for low-income renter displacement into the redevelopment policy to mediate gentrification. Unfortunately, the research of public policy documents, demonstrates that the priorities of the SHRA’s redevelopment policy for Oak Park has a primary focus on home ownership over rental occupants as a revitalizing strategy. As noted in the Renaissance Master Plan, the “primary goal of the Renaissance Program is to stabilize the area through the promotion of home-ownership” (p. 56), indicating a heavy reliance on owner-occupied residents who are the minority in comparison to the larger renter-resident population majority (SHRA, 2002; see Figure 2). Interestingly, the Renaissance Master Plan also suggests that “renter families who decide to purchase a home, may move out of the area to purchase a home more suited to their family size” (p. 55), noting that low-income renter households are not suited for permanent residence (SHRA, 2002). The analysis of the policy suggests that the redevelopment initiatives are not geared towards the interests of low-income renters, but toward the interest of the middle- and upper-income owner-occupants.

SHRA’s major redevelopment projects in Oak Park are designed to attract new in-migrating middle- and upper-income residents back into the neighborhood, which are the last two components of the gentrification conceptual framework before the neighborhood returns back into a Euro-American affluent neighborhood. In conjunction with the St. HOPE Development Company (SHDC), the SHRA has subsidized projects including the construction of: The Guild Theatre House, the Brick House art gallery, twelve upscale apartments, a Starbucks, Underground Books, and the 4th Street Lofts Project, which will house seven loft style homes and three live/work loft homes (SHRA, 2006). All of these redevelopment projects are strictly aimed at attracting middle- and upper-classes, while providing chic amenities. SHRA has also renovated several historic Victorian homes as a means of providing a redevelopment catalyst for private redevelopment. Ultimately, “the goal of the redevelopment of Oak Park area is to create an
area that private investment wants to come in” and provide private dollars for revitalization (Bumgardner, E., personal communication, April 3, 2007). With all these gentrifying factors, including Oak Park’s designation as a “Buy a Starter Home” neighborhood, the proximity to downtown Sacramento, and “most importantly, its intrinsic qualities of an older, established neighborhood” (p. 40), places Oak Park under material conditions that have exacerbated the neighborhood’s gentrification (Comey, Levy & Padilla, 2006; SHRA, 2002).

LIMITATIONS
This study was limited to a six-month time period, yet its findings raise issues that policymakers at the local level need to address when they consider a redevelopment plan in a historic and urban low-income neighborhood. With more time, the researcher would have investigated the following multiplicity of layered issues arising out of the redevelopment plan: 1) the changing political landscape that results when an influx of the affluent class gentrifies a neighborhood, 2) the social divisions between renter-occupied and homeowner-occupied residents, 3) how Oak Park’s historic preservation policy acts as a catalyst for gentrification, and 4) the community’s perspective about their gentrifying neighborhood. In addition, the researcher would have conducted an investigation of adjacent communities to reveal any diffusion of gentrification, and interviewed the director of the St. HOPE Development Company, local real estate mortgage firms, and members of neighborhood churches. Since gentrification has become a highly politicized process for some in Oak Park, it is suspected that key informants from the SHRA, who are instrumental in the redevelopment of the neighborhood, ignored the researcher’s attempt to conduct any follow-up interviews.

CONCLUSION
This research study examined the gentrifying implications of the redevelopment policy for an urban community by posing critical questions about gentrification at the policy level, specifically the ways in which we see gentrification taking place at the neighborhood of Oak Park in Sacramento, California.

As described throughout the research, the SHRA has utilized its redevelopment policies and encouraged strategic investment strategies to act as catalysts for gentrification. The larger themes of gentrification illustrated by the conceptual framework, such as the out-migration and in-migration of residents, community decline, as well as the policy initiatives that put a premium on redeveloping for the middle- and upper-classes rather than protecting the housing tenure of the renting poor, suggests a failure of public policy fostering an inclusive and sustainable neighborhood for all Oak Park residents. With the current redevelopment strategy of promoting home ownership rather than initiating tenant protections, such as rent
control or rental programs that advocate affordability, will compromise the neighborhood’s unique ethnic/racial diversity, in addition to its affordability for future generations of low-income residents who will never be able to afford to move into the gentrified community of Oak Park.

Though this study is localized to a single community, it is critical to consider the role low-income residents play in any urban redevelopment policy in order to begin to make the connections between the larger social issues (e.g., poverty, crime, homelessness, & displacement) that arise from urban areas and the gentrifying policies urban planners utilize as effective redevelopment of low-income urban communities.
REFERENCES


Comey, J., Levy, D., & Padilla, S. (2006). In the face of gentrification: Case studies of local efforts to mitigate displacement. The Urban Institute Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. Washington, D.C.


Lees, L. (2000). A reappraisal of gentrification: Towards a ‘geography of gen-


THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF PUBLIC POLICY THAT AFFECT CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED MOTHERS

Kimberley Folkes
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Forrest Davis

ABSTRACT

The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) enacted by Congress and signed into law by former President Bill Clinton on November 19, 1997, attempted to correct problems inherent in the foster care system. However, it created adverse consequences for incarcerated mothers and their children. Pal suggests that policies are supposed to provide internal, vertical, and horizontal consistencies (1997, p. 13). Drawing on Pal’s notion of policy consistency, this research examines legislation, statistics, and case studies to explore and elaborate on the outcome of ASFA on children of incarcerated mothers.

The United States represents a series of ideals to each individual. To some, it means freedom, liberty, and equality. For others, it means the ideal democracy, the right to be heard as an individual, the pursuit of happiness and liberty for all. Do these same ideals hold true for mothers who are incarcerated? What about their children? Can society punish mothers for their crimes without creating long-term effects for their children? This research examines the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and draws on data from policy analyses that intersect with ASFA, such as the Higher Education Reauthorization Act (HEA), and the Lifetime Welfare Ban Provision, to create adverse outcomes for children of incarcerated mothers. Some may view incarcerated mothers as offenders against societal norms, but they also go against traditional family values. Research findings for this population are limited, and are primarily based on small-scale studies or on surveys of prisoners (Simmons 2002, p.10; Johnson & Waldfogel, 2002, p.1). The research consistently shows that often mothers are the sole providers and upon their incarceration their children are either placed with relatives or sent to foster homes (Drummond, 2000, p.43; Moore, 2000, p.1). Before this current research delves into the public policy analysis, it is imperative to understand the framework and the history of welfare reform. In 1974 Walter Mondale was influential in the promotion for the Child Abuse and Prevention Act. This act was responsible for supplying federal monies to various programs to combat child neglect and child abuse. An outcome of this act is our current Child Protective Services, a division within a child welfare agency that administers a narrow set of services (Moore, 2000, p. 1). In 1997 former President, Bill Clinton passed the
Adoption and Safe Families Act, which seeks to identify issues inherent in the foster care system and to provide realistic and stable solutions.

Moore’s (2000) article stipulates the following:

*President Clinton’s initiative is to double by 2002 the number of children in foster care who are adopted or otherwise permanently placed... The drive of this initiative is to offer cash “bonuses” to states for every child they have adopted out of foster care, with the goal of doubling their adoptions by 2002, and sustaining that for each subsequent year (p. 1-2).*

In addition, President Clinton also requested an initiative entitled, Adoption 2002, also referred to as incentive bonuses. Since these acts and initiatives came into being, the welfare system in general and the child welfare system specifically, have changed drastically in terms of how the agencies operate. Moore (2000) suggests that the goal of these incentives is to provide:

*Technical assistance that supports the goal of encouraging more adoptions out of the foster care system; the development of best practice guidelines for expediting the termination of parental rights; the development of special units and expertise in moving children toward adoption as a permanent goal; the development of programs that place children into pre-adoptive placements without waiting for termination of parental rights p. 3).*

In this situation everyone involved in the child’s life directly or indirectly wins, except the birth parents, according to the termination rights granted under ASFA.

**Conceptual Framework**

Dye, defines public policy simply as “what governments chose to do or not to do” (1976, p. 1; 1987, p. 2). For Sharp (1994), public policy “is a set of government objectives and programmatic initiatives that evolve over time” (p. ix). America has never been marvelously enlightened in its politics toward low-income people, especially when they are people of color, and even more specifically when they are women and children of color. The complications are in understanding the history and in particular the far-reaching ramifications of the 1996 welfare reform law (Edelman, 2002, p. 5). As noted by Waters (1997), “Politicians are unaware or do not truly understand how the legislation they mandate/advocate for, impacts the lives of the many people they govern, they are doomed to continue to pass more laws that create more problems than they solve” (p. 1-2). Delgado and Gordon (2002), argue that President Clinton’s welfare reform codified in legislation the transformation of a system originally designed to provide economic support into one whose purpose is social control” (p. 25). Public polices that affect the poor and people of color have abandoned their original mission of providing economic support to keep children and their mothers out of poverty and
the criminal justice system (Delgado & Gordon, 2002, p. 48). By doing so, we see these women and children become victims of the system. Omission of people of color and those who experience a low socioeconomic status reinforces the status quo. We do not want the status quo to remain stagnant, but we want it to transform to better fit the needs of all its members and not be bias and discriminate on any basis. Pal (1997) notes that the intricacies of government means that never do they have the luxury of simply addressing one problem; instead, multiple issues require attention simultaneously (p. 3). Quite often these problems are in different sectors of the government. One problem cannot be dealt with while others are solved; consequently the solutions implemented often create other problems also requiring solutions. Although policies rarely address a single problem, Pal suggests that policies should be consistent across all elements. Programs and activities undertaken should be logically related and policies in one area should not contradict policies in other areas. According to Pal, (1997, p. 12) because governments address clusters of entangled problems that have contradictory solutions, policies should have internal, vertical and horizontal consistency. However, horizontal consistency is most important because the underlying philosophy of government cuts across all policy fields (Pal, 1997, p. 9). The problem, however, is that within the real world because of the sheer sprawl of government and the existence of multiple jurisdictions, there are so many actors with some influence over the policy process, (in this case some actors would be the Child Welfare agency and the Criminal Justice system) and so many agencies with relatively autonomous control of their policy fields, that is not unusual to have contradictory outcomes (Pal, 1997, p. 11).

Policy analysis then is a specific form of inquiry. Pal (1997) suggests that the first stage of evaluation is to seek an authoritative source for the policy statement, then to search the relevant documents for problem definition; goals and instruments to make sense of the articulated policy statement then look for supporting rationale in terms of problem definitions. Definition of the problem is the central element of a policy statement. As Pal points out, the irony is that while problem definition is crucial to understanding the rationale for a policy, and is intricately bound to policy goals, rarely is it articulated in great detail in a policy statement itself (1997, p.7). Hence, most policy goals are “fuzzy” and the real goals or policy might be quite different from the stated goals. For Pal, “Analyzing policy is akin to trying to recreate the maps people used on a journey by studying the path they took to get to their destination” (1997, p. 2).

What happens when issues coalesce and are dealt with within a complex web of governmental bureaucracies that operate by different enabling legislations, or public policy goals? To examine this phenomenon, this researcher looked at the Adoption and Safe Families Act and assessed it in terms of Pal’s notion of consistency. This researcher used the following objectives and research questions to analyze the findings:
RATIONAL
The purpose of this study was to examine public policy inconsistencies by looking at public policy intent versus public policy outcome. This study will contribute to the limited body of knowledge about public policies that affect children of incarcerated mothers. Although other studies have explored the risk factors of what happens to children whose mothers are incarcerated, including Simmons in California Research Bureau: Children of Incarcerated Parents (2002), Drummond in Mothers in Prison (2000) and Waters in Confronting the Realities of a Public Policy Gone Wrong (1997), the literature does not indicate the correlation between the actual policies that govern this specific population and the different provisions that come after. Although the previously mentioned studies proved their individual intent, there is a limited body of research that focuses on collective entities working vigorously and diligently to alleviate the myriad of issues that arises for this population such as foster care placement or parental termination. Most importantly, this study, will contribute to public policy strategies that affect this under examined population. Hopefully it will also get the various entities that make policy mandates that affect these children and their mothers to start talking and provide more provisions that are consistent and provide solutions for the problems that the children endure.

LITERATURE REVIEW
The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), in a special report entitled Incarcerated Parents and Their Children (2002), reports that since 1991 the number of minor children with a parent in state or federal prison increased from 936,500 to 1,498,800 in 1999. Similarly, twenty-two percent of all minor children with a parent in prison were under five years of age (p. 1). BJS also reported that, at midyear 2005, there were 2,186,230 persons incarcerated in U.S. prisons and jails; of the incarcerated women, an average of 7 in 10 has an average of 2.11 minor children below the age of 18. Approximately sixty-four percent of women in state prisons and eighty-four percent of women in federal prisons who had young children lived with those children prior to entering prison (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999; Luke, 2002; Johnson & Waldfogel, 2002; LaLonde & George, 2002). The most recent U.S. Department of Justice statistics indicate that, on any given day, there are approximately 84,000 women in
federal and state prisons, and nearly 70,000 additional women incarcerated in county jails (Greenfeld & Snell, 2000; Beck & Karberg, 2000; Rafter, 1990).

**Crimes Committed by Mothers**
According to Mauer (2003), “Nearly two thirds of the nation’s prisoners are African Americans or Latinos” (p. 1-2). Minority women represent the fastest growing segment of incarcerated females, most of who have been convicted on drug-related offenses (LaLonde & George, 2002, p. 2). According to a 1987 national study by the American Correctional Association, the average adult female offender is a minority between the ages of 25 and 29 who, before her arrest, was a single parent living with one to three children (Simmons, p. 7; Luke, 2002). In 1998 there were more than a quarter million female drug arrests, accounting for about eighteen percent of all arrests for drug law violations. These drug arrest rates in 1998 were 1 for every 538 juvenile females in the resident population and 1 for every 426 adult female residents (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999; Simmons, 2000; Drummond, 2000).

**Mothers in Prison**
LaLonde and George accurately describe the current increase in the prison population, specifically of incarcerated women. According to their study, the rates of incarceration of women in the U.S. began to climb dramatically in the 1980’s. This dramatic increase highlights the difference between the male and female prison population. The difference is that these women are usually custodial prior to incarceration; a woman goes to prison there are often children left behind. This change in the U.S. population has taken place with little to no understanding of the long-term effects on this ability to function as a parent, or the consequences for their children (2002, p. 1-3). LaLonde and George quote Greenfeld and Snell’s research (2000) as reporting, that women incarcerated in federal and state prisons or in county jails are mothers to about 250,000 children (Greenfeld & Snell, 2000; LaLonde & George, 2002). The high percentage of mothers who were sole providers/caregivers upon incarceration resulted in their children being required to live with other relatives or being placed in foster care. Ten percent of mothers and two percent of fathers reported a child now living in a foster home or setting (Mumola, 2000). In a study conducted by Mumola, the findings indicated that, “Fathers cite their child’s/children’s mother as the sole caregiver prior to incarceration” (2000).

**What Happens to the Children?**
What happens to the children of incarcerated mothers? What, if any, is the relationship between the mother’s incarceration and the likelihood of the child becoming a juvenile delinquent or being placed in foster care? Limited research has been done in regards to the effects on children who have been the victims of parental incarceration. The existing research, suggests that many of these children may suffer from multiple psychological problems,
including trauma, anxiety, shame and fear. It is noted by Luke that, these children are six times more likely to end up in prison themselves (2002, p. 933). The children of incarcerated parents are at high risk than other children for a number of negative behaviors that can lead to, an absent of positive intervention, to school failure, delinquency and intergenerational incarceration. The personal and social costs to the children are high (Simmons, 2002; LaLonde & George, 2002; Drummond, 2002; Moses, 2000). According to Drummond children with incarcerated mothers are more likely to refuse to eat, may wet their beds and do poorly in school (2000, p. 42).

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The findings demonstrate that in its attempt to correct problems inherent in the foster-care system, it created adverse consequences for children because of the intersection of the:

- Adoption and Safe Families Act (1997)
- Federal “One Strike”: Eviction Policy

**METHOD**

For the purpose of presentation, this section is divided into the following sections: Definition of Terms, Data Analysis, Case Studies, and Evaluation and Theory Construction.

This paper will evaluate the level of consistency between the Adoption and Safe Families Act, the Lifetime Welfare Ban, and the Higher Education Reauthorization Act, amongst incarcerated mothers and their children, looking at the policy intent versus its outcome. Central to the comprehension of the breadth of this research, is the definition of terms shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Definition of Terms**

The **Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)** of 1997 accelerates the termination of parental rights and prevents individuals with certain convictions from becoming foster or adoptive parents. By 1999, every state had passed legislation that mirrors or is tougher than this federal standard.

The **Child Protective Services (CPS) division** within a child welfare agency administers a more narrow set of services, such as receiving and responding to child abuse and neglect allegations and providing initial services to stabilize a family.

The **Department of Family Services (DFS)** is a section of the CPS division that provides assistance to families.

The **Higher Education Act (HEA)** prohibits anyone with a drug conviction from receiving federal financial aid for post-secondary education.

The **Lifetime Welfare Ban Provision**, Section 115 of the 1996 Welfare Reform Act, provides that persons convicted of a state or federal felony offense for using or selling drugs are subject to a lifetime ban on receiving cash assistance and food stamps from the government.
The researcher collected and reviewed over 25 scholarly articles, case studies, and books, and collected classes of data and studies to discern patterns and to formulate principles that might guide future action for public policy provisions for children of incarcerated mothers.

The background, development, and current conditions of mothers who are incarcerated and their children are observed, recorded and analyzed for stages of patterns in relation to a number of factors using case studies. The public policies in focus were analyzed to determine whether they followed the prescribed procedures and achieved the stated outcomes for the population. Using Pal's theoretical work of policy consistency, an attempt was made to find or describe principles that explain the contradictions and inconsistencies in current public polices, looking to see if the policies subsequently aid or hinder the population. Using a trend analysis, the researcher predicts or forecasts the future direction of events for incarcerated mothers and their children based on the theory construction. In addition, the researcher suggests possible solutions. This research argues that due to internal, vertical and horizontal inconsistencies in public policies, incarcerated mothers not only do the time, but subsequently their children get punished as well.

**Notion of Policy Consistency**

For women of color, the impact of discrimination is compounded by the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality and poverty; a history of institutional discrimination, lack of access to social services, and distrust of governmental systems, some of which were created to act as helping institutions for them. Patricia Hill Collins contends that, “Portraying African-American women as stereotypical mammies, matriarchs, welfare recipients, and hot mommas help justify U.S. Black women’s oppression.” The controlling image of the “Welfare Queen” within the social welfare system is just one of the many racially vilified terms we see that is used to describe women of color. A high percentage of incarcerated mothers are generally poor. As a result, they are more likely to rely and depend on these services. Mauer (2003) provides the following scenario:

*Imagine for a moment that in a courtroom somewhere in America a woman named Eleanor Wilson has just been convicted of the sale of crack cocaine to an undercover officer. Ms. Wilson’s attorney was able to arrange a plea bargain for his client in order to avoid a mandatory five-year prison term, and so Ms. Wilson agrees to serve one year in prison. After a brief sentencing hearing, Ms. Wilson is led off to begin to serve her time. Largely unbeknownst to anyone in the courtroom, though, a host of additional “invisible punishments” have also been imposed on Ms. Wilson (p. 1).*

As a result of her felony drug conviction (and depending on the state in which she lives), Ms. Wilson is now barred for life from receiving welfare benefits. Ms. Wilson will now lose access to student loans for higher
education, may be barred from living in public housing and will lose her right to vote. If she had a place of residence prior to the conviction, all whom resided there will be evicted for their affiliation with Ms. Wilson. In the scenario created, Ms. Wilson is not an actual person, but her story is very real. Mauer draws our attention to the following: Similar scenarios are played out in courtrooms across the country every day, with both men and women falling victim to undisclosed sanctions beyond their stated sentences. These penalties are not normally mentioned at sentencing, but they arise from an array of policy changes, many adopted by Congress in recent years, which have dramatically escalated the barriers to successful community reintegration by ex-offenders. Many of these penalties have not been incorporated in crime legislation, but instead have emerged through policy change in other areas” (2003, p. 1). If there were more consistent provisions in public policies, including drug legislations, these men, women and their children, would not become victims to these veiled penalties. Table 2 shows a Policy Consistency Chart related to ASFA and the termination of parental rights.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act, is an example of a public policy that creates unintended consequences for this population. One might argue that the intent of ASFA is favorable, yet once this act was mandated it failed to do as it was intended. ASFA accelerates the termination of parental rights and prevents individuals with certain convictions (including drug offences) from becoming foster or adoptive parents. By 1999, every state passed legislation that mirrors or is tougher than this federal standard (Anonymous, 2003, p. 1). Under ASFA, parental rights can be terminated if a child has been in foster care 15 of the last 22 months (Stern, 2004; Simmons, 2000; Luke, 2002). A recent Government Accounting Office (GAO) report finds that the maximum median sentence for female offenders in state and local prisons is 60 months. Luke (2002) quotes scholars, including (Bush-Baskette, 1998; Chiancone, 1997; Garcia-Coll et al., 1998; Locy, 1999; Maher, 1997; Marsicano, 1999; and Synder-Joy and Carlos, 1998), as reporting that mandatory minimum sentencing laws require harsh penalties for low-level drug offenses. Research also indicates that women are not likely to receive reduced sentences for the low level offenses, as they rarely inform on their associates in exchange for sentence reductions. So what about their rights
as parents? Police do not routinely ask at the time of arrest whether their prisoners have children or not, nor do sentencing judges or correctional agencies regularly raise this question. Since no agency collects data about these children and their mothers, it is unclear how many are affected, who they are, or where they live.

If one were to measure the policy in terms of its intent, it is fairly safe to say that ASFA did not do what it was intended to do. ASFA creates adverse consequences for the populations it serves. For example, one of the intended goals is to address the current Child and Neglect Law, ensuring that all children being born have the right to be taken care of according to their basic needs of life by their parents/guardians. Yet, Simmons (2000) concluded that children whose parents have been arrested and incarcerated face unique difficulties. Many have experienced the trauma of sudden separation from their sole caregiver, and most are vulnerable to feelings of fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, depression and guilt. In terms of providing a safe and stable environment for these children, they may be moved from caretaker to caretaker, or stay in the foster care system until they age out at the age of 18. The behavioral consequences can be severe, absent positive intervention—emotional withdrawal, failure in school, delinquency and risk of intergenerational incarceration. These children become collateral casualties, yet they seem to fall through the cracks. ASFA also sought to address a number of issues, such as reducing the number of children in the foster care system and increasing the number of children being adopted. This is not the case for many states, despite the added incentive bonuses being awarded by the federal government for doing so. In fact, due to a lack of consistency between the intent of ASFA and its actual outcome, a number of states have made provisions to the federal law to address the growing need for this population. When adopting Pal’s framework, ASFA does not seem to be aligned with other public policies that affect this population as in the case of the Lifetime Welfare Ban. In 1996, Congress imposed a lifetime ban on the receipt of welfare and food stamp benefits for anyone convicted of a felony drug offense. States can choose to opt out of this provision, so far 10 have, but it applies across the board unless they do so. The Lifetime Welfare Ban Provision outlined its goals as: Any individual with a drug felony conviction is permanently barred from receiving cash benefits or food stamps. Each state can opt out of enforcing this ban, or modify its enforcement. As of March 2002, 21 states had the full ban in place denying people with felony drug convictions welfare benefits for life. Eleven states and the District of Columbia have completely opted out of the ban, and 18 other states have modified the ban either by allowing benefits dependent upon drug treatment, denying benefits only for sales convictions, or by placing a time limit on the ban. (Mauer, 2003, p. 2) Women are disproportionately affected by this provision, since they are the primary recipients of welfare benefits and a greater percentage of female inmates are incarcerated for drug offenses. Since the adoption of the ban in 1996, an estimated 92,000 women (in the 23 states
for which data was obtainable) — more than half of them African American or Latina — have become subject to its provisions (Mauer, 2000, p. 1). This finding suggests that, ASFA disproportionately affects women of color.

This policy punishes the mothers and therefore directly has detrimental consequences for their children. If the mother is unable to provide food, clothing and shelter for her children, they will likely end up in the foster care system. ASFA was created to address the current child and neglect law, however if a mother is prevented from providing the basic necessities for her offspring, then is the policy truly accomplishing its intended goals? It is accomplishing its articulated goal of not providing the services to the mothers for themselves and their families. However, are the consequences of the policy unjustifiable? The inconsistencies of policies such as this one, and those of the Lifetime Welfare Ban Provision are that they create other social issues with racial undertones and biases towards this population. Within the past few years, many states have also begun testing newborns for drugs and terminating parental rights at childbirth if the baby tests positive. Such policies have a significant racial and class bias. According to Mauer:

"There is overwhelming evidence that hospitals subject poor women and newborns of color to these practices at disproportionately higher rates. One positive drug test can send a child into foster care and force a mother to fulfill a reunification procedure that is often complex and onerous... Ten states — including New York, Michigan and Ohio — have elected to opt out of the welfare ban, and 21 others now provide exemptions, including those for persons participating in treatment programs (2003, p. 3)."

In 1998 Congress passed an amendment to the Higher Education Act (HEA) that denies federal financial aid to students with drug convictions. Ostensibly designed to discourage drug use, the measure is likely to affect disproportionately low-income students who hope to attend college. Under the law, a student who has been convicted of any offense under any federal or state law involving the possession or sale of a controlled substance is not eligible to receive any grants, loans, or work assistance. In the 2001-02 school year, 48,000 applicants were denied aid under this provision. The prohibition on student loans for higher education, for example, is less likely to present a barrier to college for a convicted drug user from a middle-income family than for a student in a low-income family. Whether intended or not, these penalties exacerbate the racial disparities that pervade the criminal justice system (Mauer, 2003, p. 2-3).

Upon release from incarceration, a mother would attempt to reunify her family, if she has been incarcerated longer than 15 months and her child is in the foster care system, her parental rights are terminated. Job opportunities are slim because she has been jailed and served time, in addition, she may not receive federal assistance. If she is fortunate enough to not be a victim of the previously described scenario, she is considered lucky. If she attempts
to obtain or further her higher education, she may not receive financial assistance to do so. One might ask where the chance for rehabilitation is, if these women cannot find assistance to aid them. The combined impact of these policies is both irrational and counterproductive. Since many of the prohibitions apply only to drug offenders, they create a situation whereby a three-time armed robber can be released from prison and immediately qualify for welfare benefits and public housing benefits that would be denied to a single mother who engaged in a one-time drug sale (Mauer, 2003, p. 2). According to the Drug Policy Alliance of April 2003, the federal “One-Strike” conviction policy allows public housing agencies or Section 8 landlords to evict a tenant or any guest or “other person under the tenant’s control” who is involved in “drug-related criminal activity” on or off public housing premises. The invisible punishments of crime policy serve no legitimate function in the justice system, but substantial barriers to former offenders attempting to re-establish themselves in the community, and more importantly it creates issues for their children. Public policies, such as ASFA, seek to provide stable, nurturing homes for children and prevent children from being lost in foster care drift. This policy highlights the effort creating permanency for children, primarily by freeing them for adoption through the termination of their birth parents’ rights. These policies examined here are not acting in tandem to create admirable solutions for these families.

**Discussion**

In response to the previously stated research questions, ASFA and other policies such as the Higher Education Act and the One Strike Eviction Policy were intended to address and limit the number of individuals who have been convicted of a drug-related offense from receiving services. These policies fulfill their outlined objectives, however in doing so they create unintended consequences of social ills that require the creation of newer provisions to address these adverse effects. As a result of these inconsistent policy provisions, both children and mothers are collateral casualties. The implications of adopting Pal’s theoretical framework would provide more realistic and favorable solutions for policy makers and those the policies affect. There are several benefits of creating consistent provisions for public policies that directly impact incarcerated mothers and their children. For example, if governmental agencies and policy makers adopted Pal’s framework, it would be instrumental in localizing risk factors within specific public policy legislation. In addition, these very entities would be able to tailor and coordinate services and laws to be more consistent for the children of incarcerated mothers. Also, it would diminish the amount of taxpayers dollars spent annually on incarceration and the foster care system. More importantly, this would be an opportunity to eliminate full termination of parental rights and promote rehabilitation strategies for mothers. Lastly, this coordination would make adjustments for reunification after incarceration and foster care
stay of both mother and child, promoting and reinforcing cohesive family units rather than separation.

To address the issue of maternal incarceration and the children involved, this research makes three distinct, though interrelated critical recommendations. First, child welfare policies seek to address the needs of families. In particular, they address families in which children have been neglected/abused according to the agency definitions. More importantly, they desire to ensure that the children have permanent homes. Research indicates the importance of a bond/relationship between a mother and a child. With that said child welfare policies should be revisited and addressed accordingly. There needs to be a redefinition of concepts such as neglect, abuse, permanency and termination rights. Looking at permanency, parental rights should not be completely terminated, uprooting children from one family life and placing them with a new family. In addition, termination rights should be redefined and redirected. If parental rights are being terminated for 15 out of 22 months, when mothers are incarcerated for longer periods of time, something is wrong with termination policies and that should be addressed. By doing that, the policies would be geared towards mother/child bonding rather than termination and adoption. Termination policy suggests that these women need to pull themselves up by their bootstraps; many of these don’t even own boots or if they do, they don’t have straps, they have strings. A call for re-definition would also decrease the potential long-term cost that is typically spent in this area. Most importantly, it is imperative to make sure that the language is understood by those who are impacted. Research indicates that mothers are unaware of policy terminologies and definitions because of a lack of education or ambiguity of the policy; As a result, these women unknowingly sign over custody of their children and are unable to get them back. An additional recommendation of this research is that, there needs to be balanced and consistent policies. Nothing is ever perfect, but at least this will provide an opportunity/attempt to be fair across the board. New circumstances arises everyday, however it is this researchers hope that policies and their provisions will be able to address the needs of this population. The foundations of the U.S. are not set up to assist all people, as a collective. Instead we find individual care being promoted more, we need to mobilize power to change the child welfare and criminal justice system, make them more accountable. There is an urgent need for departments and agencies that will address the complexity of the people they serve. In addition, all entities responsible for making policies that affect this population, needs to dialogue. However, the dialogue needs to be focused on change and not be dialogue for dialogue’s sake. When dialogue occurs, adopting Pal’s notion of policy consistency will provide improved choices for women and their children and tackle other predicaments realistically, providing real solutions. As a result, opportunities and privileges will not be restricted or limited for this population in the future. The final recommendation for this research is to create well balanced, consistent and researched parent resources. The
resources whether it be counseling for the mothers and or their children, programs such as Kinship Care, Safe Haven Centers/Programs or Girl’s Scouts Beyond Bars, these resources must meet the three before mentioned criterion to be successful and provide desired outcomes for the population. These resources cannot just offer a quick fix, instead the long term benefits need to be truly weighed in the beginning and provide options for mothers and children. According to Luke (2003):

Previous research indicates that a positive relationship with a parent is the most important form or resilience that protects children from the kinds of negative outcomes that are common among children of incarcerated mothers. If prison parenting programs are successful in maintaining that relationship, they could save society vast amounts of money. The importance of such research is that it provides consistent and balanced assistance for these families. More importantly, it can be used to inform agencies and communities about the ineffectiveness or effectiveness of programs and funds geared towards this group (p. 943-944).

LIMITATIONS

This study was limited by certain conditions that were beyond the researcher’s control. Despite the escalating numbers of incarcerated mothers entering and exiting prison, very little scholarly information is available about this population. In particular, relatively little is known about their economic prospects, their ability to function as parents, or the consequences that prison and their lives leading up to incarceration has for their children and each of their lives after incarceration. This study was also been limited because there are few case studies published on the specific population considered in this study. In response, some of the data was compared to national statistics to find out things such as the psychological impact on the children, and at what percentage do they themselves end up in the criminal justice or child welfare system. However, due to the limited availability of data and because once the mothers are arrested or released, agencies do not ask questions about their family lives or conduct any follow up, it is difficult for this researcher to offer concrete data. The case studies utilized only focused on specific geographical locations and the norms and mores of each location varies from state to state and country to country. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to all individuals who are in this population.

The study has also been limited by gaps in the literature, suggesting that due to the lack of research, much is not know about the population pre and post-incarceration. In addition, the children’s mothers are being incarcerated for drug-related activities. The researcher was not able to look at current drug policies and how they affect this population. Finally, the study was restricted due to the limited amount of time given to complete this project; the researcher was unable to conduct a lengthy review of the literature.
CONCLUSION

The researcher’s personal, professional and volunteer career is reflective of working first hand with children of incarcerated mothers. The researcher has witnessed the negative impact of not having one’s mother’s present in one’s life. There is an urgent need for qualified people to obtain social work skills and credentials, so as to intervene in the lives of troubled youth. The researcher hopes to add that, despite the frequent production of public policies, it is not implausible that children of incarcerated mothers are still enduring the same issues and concerns today, as yesterday. The concern for the lack of data that draws/showcases a direct correlation between the public policy and the future of its targets is what drove the researcher to pursue this study.

Prominent research in this field suggests that there has been a significant increase in the number of women in the prison system over the last decade. These women are being incarcerated for drug related crimes and activities. It is imperative to understand the profile of these incarcerate women, these mothers. Research indicates that incarcerated women are typically minorities within the age range of 25-29. These women are the sole providers of their house-holds. Such house-holds typically include 1-3 children under the age of 18. Looking at their socioeconomic status in terms of a hierarchy it reveals that these women are the bottom of the scale and have little to no economic skills. Lastly, these mothers are victims of sexual and substance abuse. Upon incarceration there are additional punishments beyond the court appointed sentence, where both children and mothers suffer. Arresting individuals and agencies do not question these mothers about their home situations. This results in their children being shuffled off to live with extended family or to an already overwhelmed foster care system. Many states do not recognize extended family relationships as proper foster care which results in a lack of financial assistance for these units. As a result of these mothers being incarcerated for drug related offenses these women endure lengthy prison sentences. Termination Policy under the 1997, Adoption and Safe Families Act, suggests that if a child is in the foster care system for 15 out of 22 months, parental rights are automatically terminated.

Using the theoretical framework from Pal, it suggests that policies should have internal, vertical and horizontal consistency. That is, policies should be consistent across all elements. Programs and activities undertaken should be logically related and policies in one area should not contradict policies in other areas. Public policies and their provisions that affect this population should be consistent and correlated, rather than contradictory. As a result of governmental intricacies and policy inconsistencies of our government, can society legitimately punish mothers for their crimes without creating long term effects for their children? The results of this research should be used to devise a means for society to legitimately punish the mothers for their crimes without punishing their children. Moreover, it is imperative for the agencies
working with this population to create policies which are implemented consistently across bureaucratic divides.

The Corrections System lacks a tradition of tracking inmates’ children into account in any formal manner. But now that the fastest growing segment of the prison population is single mothers with multiple children it is important to better understand the consequences of this practice. Future research might consider juxtaposing the nexus between drug legislation and the Adoption and Safe Families Act and how those create unintended consequences for the children. Future research may also consider speaking to children within this population, through interviews and surveys in order to acquire a more in depth insight of the problem to come up with realistic solutions.
REFERENCES


LaLonde, R. J. & George, Susan. (2002). Incarcerated Mothers: The Chicago Project on Female Prisoners and Their Children. Chicago: The Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies. Legal Services for Prisoners with Children. Prisoners with Children. San Francisco: Legal Services for Prisoners with Children.


Moyers, B. (2004). Women, Prison and Children. NOW.


UNDERSTANDING A LATINO QUEER IDENTITY AND ITS POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Ricky J. Gutierrez
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Julie Figueroa, Ethnic Studies

ABSTRACT

This exploratory study uses the qualitative method of content analysis to examine past literature focused on a Latino Queer identity and/or the notions of Queer identity in higher education. The research analyzes secondary data and discusses: a) Differing notions of “Queer”; b) advances and limitations of Queer Theory; c) differences between a Queer identity and a Latino Queer identity in higher education; d) significance of coming-out in college; and e) educational policy implications that a Latino Queer identity conveys. Understanding a Latino Queer identity allows for a building of new paradigms for the inclusion of categories that had been previously secondary in analyses of social life. This is important within colleges and universities that serve as institutions whose purpose is to foster leadership by encompassing concerns of constituencies and actively deconstructing discriminatory practices.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Intersex, Questioning and Ally (LGBTIQA) community is commonly known to have emerged out of the Stonewall Riots of 1969, a moment in history that is known to ignite a prominent gay and lesbian liberation movement, especially among young adults and youth, after a police raid of the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York’s Greenwich Village (Kumashiro, 2001). Out of the riots responding to the police raid came gay pride events and the first gay pride parade directly addressing the constant persecution and harassment in Greenwich Village that lead to the breaking point at Stonewall Inn. A new “out and proud” community emerged that provoked not only activists, particularly student activists in their demand for gay rights but also sparked an interest among scholars in the study of homosexuality. Homosexuality or bisexuality has been traced to individuals who have held positions of leadership, philosophers, and artists who have contributed to the culture and knowledge of today, including Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Plato, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci (Mohr, 1994).

However, these historical references to a homosexual identity have largely been conceptualized by a male-centered, Eurocentric idea of what it means to be gay or Queer. Although studies have emerged that look at the gay and lesbian community, the research primarily highlights the health risks of living such a lifestyle. Contemporary structures of what it means to be Queer have mostly been Hollywood-defined to encompass an upper-class, trendy persona, such as those depicted in television series, such as Queer as Folk and Will & Grace. On the rare occasion when the gay and lesbian community is visited with the cross-sectional identity of race and ethnicity, studies narrowly...
emphasize the higher risks of being infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), essentially creating an atmosphere of fear when self-identifying as a Queer person of color. A Stonewall-constructed gay and lesbian community therefore has been formulated that defines certain notions of gay and Queer excluding a diverse set of definitions or constructions of what it means to be Queer and fails to recognize the contributions that a variety of communities have made. For example, when revisiting the important historical reference point of the Stonewall Riots of ’69, much of the anger that initially ignited the outrage is rooted in the bravery of many Latina and African American drag queens that frequented Stonewall in Greenwich Village (Kumashiro, 2001).

Few previous studies have examined the social process of cross-sectional identities encompassing race and sexuality emphasize a cultural deficit model, placing blame on communities of color and regarding racial minorities as too homophobic, or unable to accept different sexual identities (Almaguer, 1991; Garcia, 1998). Although not innocent in reproducing social inequalities along the lines of gender and sexuality even within the Civil Rights struggles of racial minorities, the systematic oppression of LGBTIQA people and the discrimination towards perceived non-heterosexual behavior is perpetuated beyond distinct cultures, and does not solely exist within racial minority communities (Horacio, 2001).

Within the context of higher education, few institutions focus on issues that affect the LGBTIQA student community, hindering these schools to affectively address discriminatory practices that pertain to groups that may identify as Queer and to empower these students to act in resistance. Because education, especially higher education, tends to emphasize its slogan of “building tomorrow’s leaders,” colleges and universities have the responsibility of recognizing and instilling empowerment within this growing student population. What does this mean when attempting to understand a Queer student community? Do traditional ideas of coming-out or revealing one’s sexual orientation incorporate a Latino identity? And what does coming-out as a Latino Queer imply for higher education policies? These questions are considered in this study in order to begin to understand what a Latino Queer identity suggests for higher education policy.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This research does not strive to outline the experiences of all self-identified Latino Queer students but rather offers resources for colleges and universities to constantly rethink educational practices by understanding how the collective identity of being Latino and Queer expands traditional notions of the role higher education plays. This change would require institutions of higher education to expand notions of leadership to include a Queer consciousness instead of an apathetic Queer community on campus resulting in a silencing of Queer issues. Colleges and universities can then be more
active in offering resources to self-determined communities that struggle for social justice. At the most basic level, this study seeks to influence colleges and universities to begin collecting data on their LGBTIQQA student in order to be more inclusive of all its constituencies.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

The term “Queer” is commonly used, especially among youth, as an umbrella term encompassing the LGBTIAQ community (Kirsch, 2000). “Queer” as an identity has taken many forms. Historically, Queer was used as a derogatory term for those who did not identify themselves as heterosexual. However, just as the term “Chicano” was redefined in the 1960s as a tool for empowerment, much of the upcoming gay and lesbian youth reclaimed the term “Queer” also as a form of empowerment or a way to define themselves (Kirsch, 2000). In this aspect, “Queer” has certain sociopolitical connotations when claimed by those who reject traditional sexual and gender identities and are ‘breaking the rules’ of sex and gender. This usage allows the term to retain a non-normative status but suggests that a person can be heterosexual and Queer or a conforming homosexual can be “non-queer” (Kirsch, 2000). *Queer*, for the purposes of this research, encompasses a political sexuality where alliances are made on common grounds as an identity through action and consciousness. Queer in this manner is available for anyone to adopt who is actively involved in the political and social justice agenda against a heteronormative society.

In contrast to Queer, “homosexual” or “gay” are very different terms. These terms tend to describe a specific sexual orientation. Psychologists historically used the term *homosexual* as a medical condition to describe a mental disorder of people who had homosexual tendencies (Garcia, 1998). The word *gay* is more commonly used, but is derived and more specifically relates to same-sex attraction between two men. Even with the restrictive definitions of these terms, they are more widely used in popular culture to describe perceived non-heterosexual behavior. Many youth and the popular hip-hop artist Eminem have even claimed the word “gay” as a synonym for “stupid”, when using the term in the phrase “that’s so gay.” Guzman (2006) describes *gay* as a hegemonic term that has been claimed by a white, male society acting as a gender and racial exclusive character.

Similarly, to describe a form of bias against this marginalized group, *homophobia* is a commonly used term describing the act or belief that homosexuality is wrong or immoral (Rhoads, 1994). Homophobia however directly relates to a fear of homosexuality and does not encompass other sexual/gender minorities such as bisexuality or transgendered. Homophobia may also be considered as an act or a lashing out against gay or lesbian people but does not critically examine the institutionalized sexual/gender prejudice. The term *heterosexism* has consequently been adopted to describe the systematic oppression of LGBTIQQA people and is not found in the
individual per se but rather as a socially constructed bias that upholds a predisposition to heterosexuality and heterosexual behavior (Rhoads, 1994). This opposition offers its notion of Queer to not only issues related to sexuality but includes issues of gender and desire (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 1997). Structures of heterosexism draft the relationship between homophobia and sexism. Gender roles are maintained, in part, by homophobia because of the fear of being called gay or lesbian when stepping outside of the construction of what it may mean traditionally to be a man or a woman.

The definitions discussed in this paper are critical in understanding what the term Queer may suggest for certain groups and only touches the surface of what Queer students may experience on a daily basis. Knowing the discourse of a community is the beginning to understanding a Latino Queer identity and is important when delving into scholarly work and positioning these terms in academia.

Advances and Limitations of Queer Theory
The definitions and explorations discussed previously in this paper have lead scholars to develop a new theoretical framework of the concept of Queer. Queer theory adopts a social constructionist perspective and posits new ideas that sexuality and gender are neither innate nor natural, but it is limited in exploring other paradigms or questions about what a chosen sexuality conveys (Sullivan, 2003; Kirsch, 2000). The framework debunks the idea of stable genders and sexualities and exploits incoherencies in them, which sustain a normalized heterosexuality (Jagose, 1996). The term Queer theory was formulated in the early 1990s by de Lauretis (1991) but was conceptualized as a by-product of third-wave or lesbian feminism in the ‘70s. It refers to gender and sexuality as more fluid and not fixed on terms such as those spelled out in the acronym LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgendered). Sexuality and gender can therefore be constantly changing within an individual and these ever-changing dynamics calls for a degrouping of what is commonly known as the “Queer community” without placing all LGBT people into a collective basket.

Queer theory has moved beyond ideas of sexuality and gender and is disseminated to define and explain anything that is non-normative. Queer theorists have ‘queered’ all aspects that may not fall into the social norms, even delving into and Queering ‘straight’ sex (Sullivan, 2003). But this broad and widely used definition of Queer theory has received criticism, the first originating from the woman who first coined the term. De Lauretis, barely three years after she introduced the phrase at a 1989 conference in University of California, Santa Cruz, abandoned the term on the grounds that it had been conquered by the mainstream forces and institutions that it was originally used to resist. She now perceives the framework as “devoid of political or critical acumen she once thought it promised” (Jagose, 1996, p. 2).
The desensitizing of the theory is due to its emphasis on individuality and the focus on labels rather than on social change and transformation of the social structure (Kirsch, 2000). Now more than ever we live in a culture that is “oriented towards separating the individual from the social, promoting an ideal that we are all unique, special, unfettered by structural forces outside our control” (Kirsch, 2000, p. 3). This takes concentration off a collective identity that brings alliances on common grounds developed through identity as being or identity through cause. While Queer Theory investigates how sexuality and gender are defined, it does not socially position these terms. Whether innate or socially constructed what does sexuality and gender convey when existing in a shared system of meanings and behaviors? Queer theory does little to answer these questions of overlapping themes and fails to recognize the intersectionality of identities. The stress on individuality and regarding everyone as unique draws separations and segregates what it may mean to be Queer and a person of color.

The Intersectionality of being Latino and Queer
In *Queer Aztlan*, Moraga (1993) describes how she reformulated notions of Queer to encompass Chicano nationalism. Scholars such as Almaguer (1991) have taken a rigid look at examining the Latino Queer community in the U.S. in comparison to the more salient White Queer community. Although he recognizes that there is a difference, Almaguer describes the U.S. Chicano gay identity through the experiences of men in Mexico who have sex with other men, essentially decontextualizing the formation of such a gay identity. Two commonly held misconceptions also arise in his writing about sexuality and “Latino culture:” 1) the Latino family being sexually repressive and rigidly structured around machismo; and (2) religion, in the form of Catholicism, in its blessing of heterosexual unions condemns non-heterosexual practices (Trujillo, 1991; Ramirez, 2003). Although these misconceptions may be argued, it is important not to apply these characteristics as specific to the Latino community, and solely argue that the Latino community is more homophobic than other groups.

Patriarchy and religion cross cultural lines and these oppressive institutions affect other communities as well as the Latino community. “Despite the strong tradition of heteronormativity in the Latino communities, Latinos and Latinas in the U.S. have been a part of the LGBT communities at least since World War II” (Ramirez, 2003, p. 7). Chicana writer, Ana Castillo mentions that, from her experience within the Latino community, sexual talk was common among men and women, at times, even in the presence of young children (Trujillo, 1991). The true geo-political issue is the invisibility of the Latino Queer community (Ramirez, 2003). There is a vibrant Latino Queer community, but the overall Queer community is “overwhelmingly white and devoid of strong Latina and Latino representation” (Ramirez, 2003, p. 9). The rise of the Latino Queer culture was in large part due to Chicanas. Chicanas and Latinas started writing rich literature that discussed...
the intersections of race and sexuality (Almaguer, 1991). In the early 1980s, Lesbian feminists began conceptualizing the framework for a Latino Queer identity with the collection of work in This Bridge Called My Back (1983). This is when such discussion began. Two prominent writers during this period were Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga.

Moraga and Bracho conceptualized a Queer Aztlán after realizing the limitations of a Queer Nation and the failure of Chicano Nationalism to accept gay men and lesbians (Moraga, 1986). She describes the metaphysical space of a Queer Aztlán as a sense of belonging. Alfaro also depicts this feeling of being trapped between two worlds in this excerpt from his poem.

**Orphan of Aztlán**

*I am a Queer Chicano*  
*A native in no land*  
*An orphan of Aztlán*  
*The Pocho son of farm worker parents*  
*The Mexicans only want me*  
*when I talk about Mexico*  
*But what about Mexican Queers in L.A.?*  
*The Queers only want me,*  
*when they need to add color*  
*add spice*  
*like salsa picante,*  
*on the side*  
*With one foot on*  
*each side of the border,*  
*not the border between*  
*México and the United States,*  
*but the border between*  
*Chicano and Queer,*  
*I search for a home in both*  
*yet neither one believes that*  
*I exist*

As this poem suggests, students in higher education may feel trapped or unrecognized when deciding which student organization to choose from, whether a Queer organization or a Latino/Chicano organization, each group only seeing a fraction of their Latino Queer identity. Because of this experience, some students feel pressured to hierarchize oppressions and choose to be active within one community only. In his piece *El Chicano y El Joto* (1996), de León describes how his two identities could not be balanced, and that when he finally came-out in college he paid less and less attention to the Chicanismo he had held inside himself.
Many colleges and universities do not give validation to these intersecting identities. Although institutions of higher education have recognized racial issues and even others have addressed Queer issues, they fail to combat the oppressive status of higher education in its complexity in their “inability to acknowledge multiple and intersecting oppressions” (Snider, 1996, p. 2). Often these struggles fall short in recognizing the differences between being Queer, and being a racial minority and Queer. Latino Queer students experience different hurdles or obstacles when formulating an identity than other students might. Some students come to the “…conclusion that not only is sexual orientation not THE defining identity for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people of color in the way it appears to be for many gay, lesbian, and bisexual White people – it may not even be a defining identity for them…” and relegated to lesser importance (Clark, 2005, p. 11). Being Queer for Latinos carries different implications on higher education then being White and Queer carries.

**Latino Queer Identity in Higher Education: Coming-Out in College**

Higher education has served as a pivotal point for many students to “come-out.” The college life often represents independence and entails new social networks. Waiting until college to come-out is still highly prevalent in Queer youth. Although most lesbian and gay adults recognize their affectional orientation to themselves during adolescents, most did not come-out until they entered college (Rhoads, 1994). Coming-out however can be highly subjective as well. Is a student considered “out” if his parents back home do not know, but everyone else does? Certain authors have written on the developmental process of sexual identity, creating a variety of stages involving self-recognition, self-statement, positive self-esteem, etc. that people pass through when coming-out (Garcia, 1998). Although these linear models may recognize a social aspect of how context may affect a person’s state of mind they are too rigid when discussing identity or culture (Garcia, 1998). These models fail to recognize that identity and culture are socially constructed. Sexual identity is not so deterministic, based on biology. Although a social constructionist theory may not highlight where same-sex attractions stem from, a Queer identity is constructed and more fluid. And rather than assuming that ‘culture’ is something that is always already done and ‘completed,’” it is instead more malleable and open for re-interpretation and contestation (Ramirez, 2003, p. 77).

The coming-out process in itself has largely been constructed from a white, middle-class perspective. The “coming-out” discourse within the gay and lesbian community fails to see race as a factor in revealing sexual orientation (Rhoads, 1994). This factor is problematic because it overlooks the difference between those who are able to come-out in a privileged setting and those who must discount multiple “othered” identities. Snider offers the following on this point:
Rarely does the dominant faction of the lesbian and gay community address the fact that one’s social and cultural positioning and access to privilege prior to coming out directly affect the manner in which one’s coming out is imparted and received... It is assumed, a priori, that being out is beneficial, that being ‘true’ to yourself is vitalizing force (as if there is a unitary self, and it would know the truth presented to it.) Within this discourse, a rigid dichotomy between the ‘true’ self and the repressive/d self is assumed, and not coming out is seen as a reflection of internalized homophobia (1996, p. 3).

Most scholars recognize that coming-out is an ongoing process as individuals continue meeting new acquaintances that they “come-out” to because of the assumed norm of heterosexuality (Garcia, 1998; Snider, 1996; Rhoads, 1994). Yet it is rarely recognized that “being out” is a status that is afforded primarily to White people. An LGBT identity is easier for white people to put on (Clark, 2005). With multiple oppressed identities for Latinos or other people of color, coming-out may be a more complex decision. Latinos may also have to deal with the burden of having other stigmatized identities, such as linguistic, national origin, religious, and socioeconomic. Higher education administrators need to understand these differences of coming-out in order to be more inclusive of all its Queer students and to facilitate a positive coming-out process for students who desire to be out and create change.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study’s methodology takes a comparative content-analytical approach to the literature formulated around the research question to better understand Latino Queer identity and its implications on higher education. An excess of 15 articles and books were reviewed and interpreted that pertained to the areas of study that discussed either Queer identity in higher education or the Latino Queer community in general. The researcher analyzed textual information produced within the last 30 years.

**DISCUSSION**

Education, more specifically higher education has the potential to be a catalyst for the development of active students and act as a conduit for social change. Institutions of education in the past have seen active students challenge their own structures of power. Colleges and universities are being forced to analyze social issues to encompass concerns of constituencies that had been excluded from academic-theory building. Feminist writers, in particular, are altering the foundation that concerns itself with the place of women in society. Other major identities of race, class, and sex, also became central in the inclusion of historically disenfranchised categories. A traditionally White, middle-class charged curriculum has been disputed and the original idea of the ‘college experience’ is disrupted. No longer can we
argue that all students are equally advantaged or privileged and therefore require the same needs.

Even so with the emergence of radical social critiques within the context of higher education, institutions can act as social reproduction agents, reconstituting the dominant cultural patterns (Rhoads, 1994). As we see the cost of college continue to rise, access to student loans and grants is eroding. As a consequence, the gap in educational opportunities between rich and poor has become more evident, transforming quality education into a luxury of the wealthy and, primarily, white. College and university programs that are aimed at increasing diversity and retention rates of marginalized students are portrayed by some as superfluous and are in constant threat of budget cuts. This attack on higher education needs to be challenged but theories that apply themselves to social issues have yet to completely convince the public and university administrators of this necessity.

Sexual minority students, at times, are not included within the theories or discussions that emerge on how to recruit and retain historically disenfranchised communities. While some college and universities acknowledge the presence of Queer students, few institutions gather and maintain data on the number or needs of sexual minority students. Albeit Queer theory has surfaced within an institutional context, the framework came to be when radicalism was viewed as passé. Moreover, its limitations have created apolitical resources that serve the needs of students only at an individual level, such as psychological counseling. As a result, the intersections of a racial or ethnic identity and a sexual minority identity have received minute attention by educational institutions. These two identities have therefore been segregated, not accounting for a student population that identifies both as Queer and as a member of a racial minority group (Wilson, 1996). Institutions of higher education should consider the following:

- **PRIDE or LGBTIAQ centers** need to take an active role in addressing and existing as a place where students are safe to organize as a collective Queer student voice to challenge heterosexism, racism, sexism, and classism on or around their campus.

- Such centers must take the focus off the individual and become more proactive about looking into the factors that contribute to the prejudice towards differing sexualities.

- Resources need to offer culturally-sensitive information, and not simply translate the text that already exists.

- Queer events on campus need to be outreached to the entire student population rather than to only those students who are “out” or White.
Campus and classroom curriculum should be more inclusive of different sexualities, offering to students or requiring them to address issues of a heteronormative society.

Campuses should collect data on their Queer student population and conduct campus climate surveys that concentrate on sexuality. Taking these actions, colleges and universities would allow for an atmosphere where Latino Queer students may be better understood by the institutions that seek to foster leadership within their student population. In return, these campuses would produce quality education that is inclusive of all its constituencies and consequently increase student learning outcomes and retention rates of the population.

LIMITATIONS

Due to the research design, there are number of limitations to be noted. Time did not allow for the research to include human subjects, eliminating the possibility to construct surveys or interviews that would have offered an in depth analysis of the research question. Because there was no statistical analysis of the data, the external validity of the design was jeopardized and findings or discussion therefore cannot be applied to the population. The analysis is also restricted due to the availability of material.

CONCLUSION

The experiences and concerns of Latino Queer students must be validated, recognized, and acted upon by an institution that wishes to foster leadership in its student population, which, in turn, increases rates of retention and academic success for this community. Higher education institutions serve as “producers of cultural discourse, and that ‘knowledge’ embedded into their productions serves as powerful regulatory role for social process” (D’Augelli, 1989, p. 4). This indicates an obligation for colleges and universities to examine historical and contemporary perspectives of “Queer,” understand intersectional identities of Latino and Queer, are aware of differing coming-out processes, and challenge the limitations of Queer theory. Colleges and universities subsequently act consciously to avert the oppressive structures that disenfranchise a Latino Queer identity, and therefore seek to deconstruct them.

Colleges and universities must take a more active role and collect data on their sexual minority population and become conscious about the multiculturalism that exists on their campuses. Many campus PRIDE or LGBT centers do not have reading material in Spanish or offer information about the different coming-out processes. These culturally responsive actions can be taken to facilitate a campus environment more open to fluid and intersecting identities. As a result, Latino Queer students will be able to empower themselves for positive social change within the college context without having to fraction off their identities. Feeling included may improve rates of retention, which
could be more closely examined, and Queer advocacy centers can be more efficient in addressing the entire student body.

In addition to these outcomes that are offered in this exploratory study, the research puts forward an expanding concept of Queer and the social process of Queer Latino students, especially in terms of coming-out and also within the limitations of Queer theory. What is learned from this research is minimal to what actions need to be taken. Inadequate studies have been conducted within academia and rarely do institutions of higher education initiate their own research analyzing the needs of these students. Understanding a Latino Queer identity involves more than what has been discussed in this study. Not only do identities need to be contextualized but also this research opens the doors to an in depth examination with the possibility of different qualitative methods being implemented. With this, higher education can be more inclusive of identities from marginalized communities and implement policy that seeks to eliminate heterosexism. This will not only be beneficial for a Latino Queer community but the college campus on which these actions are taken. Institutions can in turn rise up, with its students, as colleges and universities that stand against all systems of oppression.
REFERENCES


The Power of Words: Student Perception of Multi-Cultural Centers within Institutions of Higher Education

Nancy Huante
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Julie Figueroa

Abstract
This mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) study explores the significance of the Multi-Cultural Center (MCC) located on the California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) campus. This research will deconstruct the revitalization process the MCC is undergoing. Utilizing a survey, 40 undergraduates students from the four grade levels (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior) and various disciplines from CSUS were surveyed to better: a) identify the instances that lead students to access Multi-Cultural centers in higher education; b) to discuss similarities and differences among student perceptions and experiences related to using the culture center; and c) to identify the motivating forces that lead administrative bodies to situate a Multi-Cultural Center on campus, and to what extent the center corresponds well with the students.

As of 2005 ethnic groups represent a small number of the students at California State University of Sacramento (CSUS); the low enrollment of ethnic minority students is not representative of the concept of diversity that institutions of higher education attempts to enhance. It is important to question the ideas the university’s administration has in developing a diverse educational setting.

Looking closely at some contemporary numbers on minority student representation, one realizes that minority student representation has not increased dramatically. Table 1 from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) illustrates that of a total of 27,932 CSUS students, only 14.5% is of a Hispanic background (IPED College Data, 2006-2007). Tables 1 suggest that students are still not

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total enrollment:</td>
<td>27,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate enrollment:</td>
<td>23,256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Undergraduate enrollment by gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Undergraduate enrollment by race/ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-resident alien:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black non-Hispanic:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White non-Hispanic:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity unknown:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Enrollment data Fall 2005)
receiving the adequate support necessary to improve their representation rates.

The educational gap shown here developed a strong solidarity between community members interested in social justice and students of all levels, which include city college students and those who are considered marginalized. This whole community was in search of equal opportunity in education.

In order to support the progress of such students, faculty, staff, and community members demanded the educational system house programs and centers that would facilitate and expand the experience of ethnic minority students within higher education. Some programs included the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) that counteracted the traditional and often exclusionary practices in higher education and Multi-Cultural Centers (MCC). These types of programs challenged the traditional operations within institutions of higher education and began the “difficult task of remaking our institutions” giving opportunity to a larger diverse population (Knowles & Prewitt, 1969). Programs like these are important for those students classified as low-income and who come from underrepresented ethnic groups and need assistance getting through the college application process and college itself. Overall, the creations of multicultural services on campus are an effort to improve race relations and a way to diversify campus (Young, 2002).

**Development of the Multi-Cultural Center**

The MCC was developed as a centralized place on campus that engaged ethnic minority students, served the needs of underrepresented groups (such as African American, Chicana/o, Latina/o, Native American and Asian Pacific American), and discussed the major effects and solutions for retention rates on a college campus (Kirwan, 2004). This physical space symbolized the importance of being included in an institution that is informed and operated by white power structures (Young, 2002; Patton, 2006). In addition, one of the MCCs goals was to expand cultural awareness and heighten the appreciation of diversity within higher education (Kirwan, 2004). Ethnic minority students were a growing population and the MCC represented a “home” operated by people who had interest in the progress of these particular students. As the MCC developed, the center transformed into “safe havens for ethnic minority student groups,” which have been traditionally ignored and denied access to education (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002). For many students, the MCC is not only an academic support but it has become more like a family support; the director, staff member, and student assistants become a family for those who maybe far from their own families and excluded from the general campus community (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002). What MCCs were intended to be and what they have become is an important point to analyze because within this analysis one can discuss different learning styles of students and the different lifestyles that mediate how students learn and how professors teach. From this place,
history and culture was cultivated and available for the general public; MCCs facilitated students through college and helped them develop a strong identity within a White agenda (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002).

This research will explore MCCs through literature analysis and student perception and create an understanding of how these centers can potentially assist student learning, and serve as a safe place where students can ask for academic support. Through this research, this researcher will: a) identify the instances that lead students to access MCCs in higher education; b) discuss similarities and differences among student perceptions and experiences related to using the MCC; and c) identify the motivating forces that lead administrative bodies to situate a MCC on campus, and to what extent the center corresponds well with the students. This research is also designed to add to the body of research that supports the importance of MCCs on college campuses.

The purpose of this study is to critically analyze the undergraduate experience of students of color within higher education. Part of these study voices student perspectives about campus climate and the effectiveness of MCCs in regards to race issues and student learning. Lastly, the study’s main goal is to identify specific recommendations on how policies and practices can change to improve campus climate and the MCC at CSUS.

**Literature Review**

Educational institutions are primarily inclusive of the ideas and experience of the majority population, which in many cases is the experience of a white student. Brown, Carnoy, Currie, Duster, Oppenheimer, Shultz, and Wellman (2003) concluded that education was constructed for some and not readily available for underrepresented groups of people. The education system was framed through a White power structure, ignoring the barriers and problems that minorities face today (Altbach & Lomotey, 1991). The White power structure in higher education refers to education controlled by the predominantly White middle class (Verdugo, 1995). Verdugo explains that the development of the White power structures is supported by the stratification system; which is primarily used to maintain social order within complex social structures (1995). The ideologies that the stratification system uses are rooted in groups’ interest and forms of control; racial stratification supports the idea of exclusion on the basis of norms, values, and theories, therefore, perpetuating the separation of ethnic minorities in campus decisions. Educational committees controlled and made decisions on curriculum and strategically excluded some students from obtaining full access to education. The educational system has been challenged by many educators and social activist. Most educators have analyze existing paradigms in education through the context social location and critical race theory. It is important to analyze and diversify such paradigms.
Critical Race Theory and Education

Scholars have looked at education through a critical race theory (CRT) perspective in order to fully contest and give suggestions on how education can be an inclusive system for all students. According to Ladson (1999) critical race theory was developed in the mid-1970 by Bell and Freeman who were concerned with the slow progress of equality in the U.S. CRT was influenced by critical legal studies (CLS) that challenged policy and praxis of the U.S. government through a social and cultural context. CRT and CLS is then an attempt to demand the “social transformation,” of social institutions, including education (Ladson, 1999). In addition, applying CRT to the analysis of diversity, higher education, and MCCs, is about applying one’s standpoint in order to diversify paradigms. The diversification of paradigms provides a new view on diversity and higher education for others to explore and apply (Ladson, 1999). In support of Ladson, Tate (1997) states that, “in order to express discontent and begins to dismantle the educational system; one must take on a critical race theory perspective.” Through CRT, one can understand the legal discourse within the historical and contemporary debates of offering equal education access to all people. The problem then was the idea that almost all society looked to create a homogenous society where ethnic minorities did not fit (Knowles & Prewitt, 1969). Part of the problem is the systemic structure in which educational institutions function. Pincus (1994), Knowles and Prewitt (1969), and Cuadraz (1992) all explored the structure of an oppressive educational institution.

Meritocracy and Diversity

Deconstructing the belief of meritocracy diversifies higher education paradigms that many times decide for whom education was constructed. Specifically, raising awareness that higher education, although thought to be neutral and objective is bias and not equally accessible to all students (Knowles & Prewitt, 1969). Operating from the perspective of a meritocracy filters out the ethnic minority students by not recognizing their lifestyles and struggles in relation to student learning (Cuadraz, 1992). In Counseling the Culturally Different, Derald Wing Sue and David Sue (1994) introduce the book by talking about instances where minority students were humiliated and attacked. For example, a “Vietnamese graduate of UCLA was murdered while rollerblading…Two White men were later arrested and confessed to the murder…In the home of the two assailants were found White supremacist paraphernalia…one of the assailants was sentenced to death for the racially motivated murder” (1999, p. 3). This and other similar stories are proof that most campus communities do not know the history of many of the ethnic minority students on campus. In addition, higher education institutions were not serving underrepresented groups equally in the past and currently. There are some services that are offered to some and not readily available for others.
The idea behind meritocracy is “…the belief that American society, and mobility in particular, functions on the basis of individual merit…” (Cuadraz, 1992). Meritocracy was said to stand for equal opportunity and individual mobility, but the Civil Rights Movement contested the notion of equal opportunity in meritocracy. Meritocracy proved to only filter those of working class that included ethnic minority students; it created race and class division among educational institutions not recognizing the importance of racial struggle within educational settings (Pincus, 1994). Traditional educational settings utilize meritocracy to blind others to the racism and class issues within higher education (Yosso, 2002). Within the ideology of meritocracy, histories, experiences, culture and language of every ethnic group get devalued, and as a result such groups are underserved within the educational system (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Higher education continues to blind the campus community about the importance of diversity as part of institutionalized racism, which, in turn, affects the retention of students of color. Institutional racism gives the University’s administration the power to control curriculum, history, and the ethnic minority population (Knowles & Prewitt, 1969). Currently, institutions continue to foster racism and inequality covertly, which impacts institutions’ racial climate and academic success rates.

**Racial Climate and Academic Success**

Research on campus climate enables educational institutions to better understand the lives of minority students and how climate issues affect faculty and students of diverse backgrounds (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Walter, 1998). Retention and graduation rates show that ethnic minorities have a difficult time in college in regards to racial identity and their place in society. The graduation rates at California State University, Sacramento show that over a five-year span, 22% of Hispanics graduated out of 252 students who enter and stay at the university (Office of Institutional Research, Sacramento State, 1986-2005). Both national and local statistics report the way campus issues are affecting minority students; specifically retention and graduation rates are low and have not shown dramatic improvement over the last 10 years.

Eimer and Pike (1997) claim that the integration of the student is pivotal in securing a college degree, however, many educational institutions fail to integrate students into academics and the social sphere. Like Eimer and Pike, Erickson (1987) supports the notion of integration and diversification related to the culture of higher education. His focal point was to help educational institutions understand the importance of having strong communication between the student and the institution, because learning involves going past the level of being culturally competent (Erickson, 1987). The education structure has not changed over 80 years and diversity is not as inclusive in the image of most university campuses (Eimer & Pike, 1997).

Understanding the institutional perspective is critical, however, Hurtado (1994) reminds the reader of the individual perspective within the
institutional context. Hurtado (1994) conducted research articulating the development of self-concept among ethnic minority students at graduate level. Findings showed students’ discontent with the racial climate of their campus and the low interaction among diverse groups. His research also found that student self-concept has direct effect in communicating with other people from different backgrounds. The school settings and structure proves to be one of the leading forces of negative campus climate affecting student learning and self-concept (Hurtado, 1994). Once again, the idea of integration and an understanding about race is important in that it is a mechanism that educational institutions are not utilizing to retain students. Instead, minority students are struggling to find a space where they can belong and develop. Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) suggest that the Latino population has a difficult time adjusting academically as well as socially. The experience and perception of a hostile environment negatively impacts and mediates the degree to which students find a sense of belonging that is required when adjusting academically to the context of higher education. One has to understand that a hostile environment may develop in a diverse and homogenous environment. Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) suggest that the university needs to develop a diverse setting that understands and embraces cultural ties among students to produce a welcoming campus. Research has indicated the importance of enhancing the understanding of diversity on campus in order to fully represent students of color (Hurtado, Milem, Pederson-Clayton, & Walter, 1998). Central to recognizing the role the ethnic minority, one needs to critically analyze the policy, practice, and the use of diversity on a college campus in order to create change that reflects students of color.

Diversity and Higher Education
Most educational institutions that establish MCC student services do so to engage and meaningfully integrate their ethnic minority population into campus life overall. Having programs and people who are dedicated and experienced in multicultural education facilitates student learning on campus. Kirwan (2004) explores philosophies, policies, and programs directly influencing students of color in higher education. The researcher recognized the work of Lee Jones who studied the structure and function of multicultural services and MCCs (Kirwan, 2004). Jones frames an understanding of why multicultural services and centers is a pivotal space in maintaining culture and tradition of ethnic minority students (Kirwan, 2004). Although there is published research on the importance of multiculturalism within higher education, institutions continue to lack direct connections and means to servicing students of color (Pincus & Ehrlich, 1994). Issues of race and class are alive in educational institutions, and examples of racism and poor race relations among students, staff, and faculty are a reason enough to make sure that institutions explore the concept of multiculturalism (Sue, Sue, & Wing, 1999).
To help the structure and function of the university enhance race relations and improve retention of ethnic minorities, a university must engage in dialogue and seek understanding of ethnic minority students (Sue, Sue, & Wing, 1999). Pittman (1994) concludes and supports the findings of other scholars who found that race relations within higher education institutions can be improved using dialogue and lectures in connection with the MCCs.

**Multi-Cultural Centers: Their Purpose and History**

Patton (2004) completed extensive research that deconstructed individual cultural centers and emphasized the importance to the greater community. In support of this research, Hefner (2002) speaks specifically about Black Cultural Centers (BCCs), stating that they continue to hold their ground, even as college campuses become more diverse, because BCCs continue to be crucial in the identity development of people of color. The history of BCCs in the United States is well documented; however, there is a lack of literature about MCCs in general. MCCs are more recent establishments, whose development dates back to 1980s. The development of multicultural and awareness programs eliminates some problems of race relations and increases academic success, yet studies continue to show the unequal representation of multicultural issues on campus (Young, 2002).

Jones, Castellanos, and Cole (2002) examined college student experiences of ethnic minorities in higher education and analyzed student interaction with MCCs. Findings indicate that institutions of higher education have placed students of color into a “minority status” condition where they are socially constructed to be at the bottom (p. 24). Many studies have shown that the establishment of MCCs on college campuses keeps minimizing this condition and educates students about their history and roots. These centers are designed to assist students with academic and social support that the university does not necessarily provide for ethnic minority students (Kirwan, 2004). MCCs and their staffs’ relationships with students are questioned by critics on a regular basis; because many institutions have yet to understand the undergraduate experience of students of color.

For the most part, institutions of higher education continue to exclude ethnic minorities from the benefit of multicultural programs, and continue to make decisions that hurt their student learning outcomes (Levine & Cureton, 1992).

Many of the efforts to maintain MCCs come from students, who share their experiences within an institution that do not reflect their stories and struggles. The focus of this study—the MCC at CSUS—is an example of a student initiated center (Lewis, 1993).

**METHODS**

Data collection involved a total of 40 students: 10 freshman, 10 sophomores, 10 juniors, and 10 seniors who either frequently visited the Sacramento State MCC or who were never informed of the MCC’s existence. Of the
40 participants, 60% came from a Chicana/o, Latino/a, and Hispana/o background; the rest of the participants identified themselves as Native-American, Asian American or Pacific Islander, Caucasian, and African American. All participants are undergraduates from majors, including: Sociology, Government, History, Criminal Justice, Mathematics, and Kinesiology. The students who took the open-ended survey helped the researcher gather attitudes and demographic information about students at Sacramento State. At the same time, the survey responses identified the trends and students’ knowledge of multicultural services on campus. In addition, four students participated in an hour-long interview. The interviewees were given pseudonyms in order to keep their identities confidential. The interview included open-ended questions regarding their: connection to the Sacramento State MCC; undergraduate education experience; and experience with multicultural campus services. The interviews contributed to the research’s goal of establishing a student voice by analyzing student perceptions about higher education and the effectiveness of the MCC.

Research Design
This study is a qualitative study that analyzes the experience of undergraduate minority students at institutions of higher education. Moreover, the study focuses on understanding the connection and effectiveness of MCCs in relation to ethnic minority student learning. The research begins by exploring the culture of education from the perspective of a meritocracy; the literature presented raises awareness of the bias in and inaccessibility to higher education for ethnic minorities’ contemporarily. Second, this researcher delineates between the importance of deconstructing campus climate issues and their effects on underrepresented students’ learning. Third, the literature explains the link between diversity, higher education, and MCCs. Lastly, as a transition to the research findings, this researcher gives a brief history and purpose of MCCs. Finally, data was collected using an open-ended survey of 40 participants. Four other students were asked to participate in a separate hour-long interview expanding on the questions of the survey, as well as others whose purpose was to explore the motivating forces that lead students to use the services of the MCC.

Given the literature on education, diversity, campus climate reports, and MCCs this study begins to ultimately frame or position the reader to consider the student experience in college. The researcher’s goal is to study a particular experience.

University Site
The institution selected for this study was California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State) located in northern California. The selected university is a public, four-year institution with a diverse student population of 23,615 undergraduate students. Within the University there are eight colleges: College of Arts of Letters, College of Business Administration,
College of Continuing Education, College of Education, College of Engineering and Computer Science, College of Health and Human Services, College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics, and College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies. The University offers over 50 majors and minors, many of which have been added or updated in the past three years to meet educational standards. Sacramento State was chosen to highlight that even in a diverse higher education setting, the issues of racial tension are not subdued and issues regarding the MCC are relevant.

The MCC at the Sacramento State, the focal point of this study, was established on December 5, 1990, and developed rapidly as a result of student, faculty, staff, and community interest. In 1989, the Multi-Cultural Task Force made the MCC part of a list of demands that included a diversification of faculty and the need for the University to meet the needs and requests of ethnic minority students; many of these demands were ongoing issues of race and ethnicity. Students took action and demanded that administration stay accountable for dealing with these issues for current and future students. The University gave the task force the MCC as an appeasement from the list of demands they proposed. Students, upset that their demands were not analyzed critically, decided to make the MCC a working center for student and community activism. The center was operated by a director and supported by students who were directly involved with the task force. Over 35 student organizations were housed in the MCC and over 10 were involved in the MCC advisor board. The center organized and developed events that acknowledged the history, culture, and identity of ethnic minority students. In addition, according to this study’s interviewees, the MCC became the “home away from home” on the Sacramento State commuter campus. The MCC was a centralized place to deal with issues of race and ethnicity, as well as provide social and academic support.

The initiation of the MCC was supported by the task force and those who understood the struggles and experiences of ethnic minority students within higher education. However, Sacramento State’s administration did not see the MCC as a priority, in fact, the center operated on its own with no budgetary support. The MCC struggled to be recognized and included based on the academic and student affairs goals and objectives. In order to reach out to students and meet the expectations of students and the community they needed the support of the institution. In 1992 the archives showed the MCC negotiated with administration creating a proposed five-year goal planning; to hold the administration accountable to meeting the needs of the ethnic minority community. This researcher is focus is on racial tensions and its effects on ethnic minority students in a diverse educational setting.

**Procedures**

This research study was designed to capture the particular experiences of students who have experienced frustration, discrimination, and who have been oppressed by the educational system. The researcher recruited the pool
of participants through class and organizational presentations. Most class presentations occurred in sociology, history, math, and ethnic studies courses. Organization presentations were made mostly in cultural organizations, including: Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA), Campus Progressive Alliance (CPA), Coalition for Cultural Opportunities in Leadership and Overall Retention of Students (CCOLORS), and Africans for Re-Education, Innovation, Consciousness and Achievement (AFRICA). Researcher noted that most participants were involved either in a student organization or were frequent visitors to the MCC.

To ensure full participation, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and how it would benefit the Sacramento State campus community. The survey and interview were designed to explore topics such as: student involvement, campus climate, campus services, and recommendation toward undergraduate education, and the students’ connection to the MCC. The quantitative survey asked participants how much they agreed with the way their institution dealt with racism and discrimination. The interview questions were composed of three sections: self-concept, campus climate, and the MCC.

There were no inducements offered for the voluntary participation of students in this study. The interviews were audio recorded and included open-ended questions regarding the participants’ connection to the MCC, undergraduate education experience, and campus services. Participants were informed that their identities would remain confidential. The subjects were asked to sign a consent form and were reminded that they could withdraw at anytime without penalty. After the completion of the survey or interview, participants were encouraged to share questions and concerns related to the study. The researcher transcribed the interviews and tallied the results to identify any trends or experiences that support the literature already.

**RESULTS**

After the analysis of the data, the following three major themes were identified: a) Self-concept within their college experience; b) a climate of exclusion, racism, and lack of trust between minority students and the administration; and c) student perception of the MCC and the reasons why students need a place like the center. Through these key themes, the researcher is able to highlight the stories of ethnic minority students within higher education as well as their experiences with the Sacramento State MCC.

The data collected critically analyzed the undergraduate experience of students of color within higher education. The voices of these students raise the student perspective in order to share campus climate issues and the effectiveness of the Multi-Cultural Center regarding race and ethnicity. In addition, data will identify specific recommendations on how educational practices can change to improve campus climate and the Multi-Cultural Center at California State University, Sacramento.
Self-concept within Their College Experience

Before discussing the MCC in both the survey and the interview, students were asked to share about themselves in regard to college experience. In addition, the students were asked to connect their cultural backgrounds to campus life. The reality of discrimination within the educational settings frames the way these students perceived themselves currently. For example, when the four students who were interviewed were asked how they identified themselves in terms of ethnicity. All four answered firmly that the way they identified themselves had to do with their experience in education and life overall. Joseph stated:

*That fact that I identify as Filipino…has to do with us getting marginalized in this country. I feel as though I have to set myself apart not individually but collectively to be recognized as my own ethnicity to not be marginalized into other categories.*

In the interview, Joseph explains that building a strong identity and having a strong positive perception helped confront situations of discrimination and racism on his campus. When the students were asked if they felt intimidated on campus, all participants shared that, although they had built a strong self, the administration intimidated them because of the power held in administrative positions. Janet, a graduating senior reported the following after being asked if she was intimidated on campus:

*I do and I don’t, I don’t because I am a strong individual and so I don’t get intimidated at all. But I do or did because people like in high power were trying to discriminate against me. And it is very hard because my opinion like now is not as important on this campus as theirs; they kind of have the last say.*

Being discriminated against and marginalized by an educational institution can affect the development of one’s identity. Under such circumstances, educational institutions can position students to feel that they are different from those in administrative positions, placing them in the minority status category (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002). Prior to the discussion about intimidation, the interview participants were asked if they feel that they are part of an underrepresented group; all participants reported feeling that they are part of an underrepresented group, however they all had different reasons as to why. Joseph shared why he believes he is part of an underrepresented group, and also explained to the researcher how his history is not well represented in history books:

*Yes, because there is a lack of exposure of our culture within the media within the history books, a lot of history books lie about the things that occurred and occur in our country. Overall, a lack of information to the American public.*
During the interviews, Janet and Jose stated that those educators who supported them on campus were concentrated in two disciplines: Ethnic Studies and Sociology. Janet, a graduating senior, explained:

“There is a selective few and literally I can name them on my hand those who have been supportive but as far as the whole campus no support. If I was not emotionally strong and would have not met those people who showed support than I would have dropped out a long time ago. But no, the campus as a whole did not do anything for me.

Dolores, another student participant, shared that “...in other disciplines one is not always lucky to identify with a professor because they show no interest and there is a lack of cultural competency.” All interview participants mentioned that the limited support they received has had an impact on the way they view themselves and the way they approach their education.

A Climate of Exclusion, Racism, and a Lack of Trust between Minority Students and Administration

Before discussing the students’ perception of the MCC, the students were engaged in a discussion about the campus climate at CSUS. Many students described their realities of race on campus. Within the survey it was difficult to obtain in depth reasons about why the campus failed to critically assist minority students with issues of race and discrimination. The results of the student survey indicated that over 50% of the students are not satisfied and do not understand the way their campus handles issues of race. In fact, when students were asked if they understood how their campus dealt with issues of racism and discrimination, 55% of the participants surveyed strongly disagreed about understanding how their campus responded to issues of race. The interpretation of the limited survey indicates that the campus is not accessible for these individuals and is not giving adequate support to students that experience racism on campus. Janet, a graduating senior, shared one specific incident where she felt she was discriminated against for being an active student on campus. Janet had worked for a center on campus that will remain anonymous in this study because it is under investigation. During her employment at the center, the student was accused of forging a signature. However, the signature was notarized by the supervisor. Despite the clarifications made by the student, the student still remained in danger of expulsion from school. Janet stated that: “…it is definitely discrimination because of [my] involvement in C-COLORS and then also because I am a Black female.” The interviewee explained that C-COLORS is a coalition of student groups, staff, and faculty who have dedicated themselves to developing research about multicultural centers in order to contribute to the refocusing of the multicultural center at CSUS. During her involvement, there were meetings and peaceful sit-ins in which she spoke out against the administration’s approach in changing the center. The survey results show that thirty-five of the forty students reported feeling somewhat comfortable setting a meeting with administrative bodies to give recommendations. In
addition, almost all students interviewed commented on being able to speak to the administration about their experiences on campus in terms of race and academics. However, during the interview the students explained that, although they felt some comfortable in giving recommendations, one was not able to hold the administration accountable on working together for a solution. The concept of praxis when sharing their student standpoint proves to be important to ethnic minority students. Interviewees were asked if they felt integrated on campus decisions over student services. Janet shared the following:

No, I do not feel integrated. Because it seems as though administration holds their head up high and they think that they know everything so they feel that they can make decisions for us without necessarily consulting students.

The student expressed that recently he had made attempts to give input to the revitalization of the MCC but the administration has long ignored and put aside his recommendations. Later in the interview students were asked if they believed racism still exists and were asked give reasons as to why or why not. Dolores stated that “…racism does exist because it is something that never dies…” Joseph explained:

People still have these preconceived notions of about what different ethnicities act like and look like. They get treated differently based on those preconceived notions and that in itself is racism.

Student number two reports that society develops stereotypes of specific ethnic groups that undermine the rich history of each ethnic group. Interviewee Janet stated that society has moved away from its civil rights history and want to show “sympathy” to those that have made racially motivated comments or acts. The student used Don Imus, a radio talk host who made a racially insensitive comment about the women’s basketball team at the Rutgers University, as an example. After this incident, the interviewee reported that punishment was minimal and the discussion that what was framed around this incident ignored the real message of racism in the U.S.

**Student Perception of the MCC**

The interviewees mentioned that in 2006 the MCC began to be deconstructed and revitalized without the input of students. The interviewees spoke specifically of those students who have been active students of change and have been denied the opportunity to sit on the advisory board and events committee. The MCC is currently struggling and is being operated by Student Affairs, without a director. During the interview, students were asked about their connection the MCC, all students have a strong connection and stated that, if the administration wants to change the MCC, it need to include students in the process in order for the changes to be effective. Janet stated:
...That the MCC should be a centralized place to aware others of racism and share experiences of racism. People who are being discriminated against should know where to go because anything can happen. They could get really scared, not come back (to school) or drop out... and even those who are closed-minded can use this place to learn about the different cultures.

The researcher decided to use the survey to identify student demographics on the involvement, satisfaction, and knowledge of the MCC. Twenty-four of the forty students surveyed are involved on campus. The students surveyed were affiliated with the student government or a student organization. In general, all the students involved in the research highlighted the importance of being active on campus in order to be agents of change. The MCC is a place that facilitated leadership and organizing skills to students who showed interest in questioning and challenging educational settings.

One student interviewee stated that he “…liked the way the MCC collaborated with other departments on campus like the Ethnic Studies department or EOP to coordinate events that help many students from different background.” Janet then shared:

What I am trying to do... what I can make it function the way that it should for other students, because when I leave here I want more people like me graduating... more African American women graduating because they don’t and it is really hard. Education is important.

Students showed a comfort in, a sense of identity, and a feeling of belonging at the MCC, in an environment that claimed to be objective in terms of the needs of ethnic minorities. Until recently, students felt scared to lose the MCC to an administration that is not being inclusive of minority students and their experience. Overall, the students interviewed spoke about the MCC with a lot of passion. They spoke of the role the MCC holds in their undergraduate experience and they gave the researcher insight in the experiences that help them believe an MCC should continue to function and develop for future generations.

**Student Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the researcher was able to identify recommendations for policies and practices that can improve the campus climate as well as the direction of the MCC at Sacramento State. The contemporary experiences of these students are crucial in understating the struggles and barriers they have to overcome in order to be part of the educational system. These agents of change are those who facilitate other minority students the opportunity to have access to higher education. Although students have been denied the opportunity to participate in educational committees and department advisory boards, 35 out of the 40 students surveyed stated that they do feel comfortable and believe it is important to give recommendations on how to better their undergraduate experience. Moreover, the interviewees
were asked to give recommendations to the MCC and to administration. The first question was: What can the center do to become more visible? Dolores, a freshman, explains that the center needs to become “more welcoming to different people and make people a little more comfortable.” Dolores expressed that, due to the student movement of C-COLORS and the demands to be integrated in the revitalization of the center, the administration has made the center a hostile space pushing away students from being active visitors of the MCC. Joseph adds that the “MCC should actively support other clubs like in the past and take on a role on co-sponsoring events that are of substance not just face value.” Each student identifies the MCC as a central place to address issues of race and ethnicity, not only with presenting the problem but finding a possible solution. The interviewees suggested developing monthly forums and events that deal with issues of race and the educational struggles of students of color. The students mentioned that the current interim director of the MCC had moved away from critically examining and sharing the experiences of students and community members, to a more corporate and closed-door policy for students. Moreover, Janet explains that the center has moved from being slightly visible on campus to being erased for those who have been there and for future students. Janet, as well as the other interviewees stated that the center needs to be separate from the Women’s Resource Center in order for both centers to be visible. The space that the MCC currently holds has not expanded since 1990, and has only decreased in size by adding a Java City coffee shop, computer center, and the Women’s Resource Center. These new additions were added by the administration without reflecting on the way it would impact the MCC. Although these places hold value for the university, Janet stated:

*I think the Center needs to build a building where everyone goes, a big building and have rooms for different clubs...computers people can use and a conference room. A big building where it is more visible and people can say I’m going to the Multi-Cultural Center and have a lot of staff not just a director. You need student assistants, you need event coordinators, and you need interns; I mean like everything. It needs to be something, not just a hole in the wall like what it has become.*

The center needs to expand physically and academically to position students as well as the community in a family circle. Within this family circle students shared that it would help their confidence in an environment that is often hostile. The researcher identified that the family circle that the students refer to gives them power to speak out and gives them a sense of belonging in an educational system where the numbers of ethnic minority students are low. Interviewees gave recommendations to the administration at Sacramento State about campus climate, ideas of how to enhance a positive experience on campus, and how the MCC can continue to be revitalized without losing its original charge. All the interviewee expanded on common key points that they thought the administration needed to re-evaluate. In addition, it is
important to highlight that the voice of these students showed their passion and dedication to bringing all communities together in order to have equal access to higher education.

LIMITATIONS

There are a number of limitations in this study due to the way the research was designed. First, there was not sufficient time for this study to capture the voices of all student perspectives of MCCs nationwide. The study needed to be conducted in a longer time frame in order to critically analyze every theme that was raised by the small number of participants. Second, the number of students interviewed is not reflective of minority students on all college campuses. This is a major constraint for the researcher because the researcher wanted to work with a larger population in order to have an extended discussion in terms of the interviews. Most of data collected came from students who were active in the Sacramento State MCC; therefore data does not reflect the general population of CSUS. In addition, this study focused on a single campus, and no comparisons were made with similar campuses.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the study contributed to the body of knowledge about MCCs and presented the importance of integrating student voices within institutions of higher education. This research was then an exploratory study of Multi-Cultural Centers in search of the expanding knowledge over MCCs across the nation. Utilizing a survey of 40 undergraduate students as well as the interview of four students, the researcher was able to address: a) the instances that lead students to access Multi-Cultural centers in higher education; b) discuss similarities and differences among student perceptions and experiences related to using the culture center; and c) note the motivating forces that lead administrative bodies to situate a Multi-Cultural Center on campus, and to what extent the center corresponds well with the students. The researcher found students connected in many ways to the Sacramento State MCC; the students felt a sense of belonging through the services that the MCC offered. However, the students interviewed expressed their discontent with the revitalization process the MCC is undergoing; students that are a large part of the centers activities are being excluded from the process. After the analysis of the data, the following three major themes were identified: a) Self-concept within their college experience; b) a climate of exclusion, racism, and lack of trust between minority students and the administration; and c) student perception of the MCC and the reasons why students need a place like the center. According to these findings, students at Sacramento State do not feel included in the campus’ decisions over the multicultural resources they actively use.

The researcher reviewed the work of several other researchers who have deconstructed the culture of higher education, campus climate, and purpose
as well as history of the MCC. Most researchers supported the notion of integration and a commitment by the university’s administration to enhance the concept of diversity. It is critical that universities commit and integrate the importance of MCCs into the higher education infrastructure (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002). When multicultural resources began to expand, minority students began developing their presence on a college campus. The findings of Patton (2006) support some of the findings at Sacramento State; Patton states that the BCCs and MCCs serve not only an educational purpose, but serves as a home away from home that helps develop a strong identity.

The research suggests the need to keep students in mind when making decisions over resources that shape a positive experience of the minority student. In addition, one can consider the importance of the Sacramento State MCC as well as the thoughts and feelings of some students toward the MCC. Following are some policy considerations from a student perspective or what the role of the student can be in an educational scenario:

- Symposium/lectures/programs that expose the campus community to diverse paradigms in education.
- An advisory board composed of student organizations that will appreciate the values and the concept of diversity.
- Building bridges among the community and campus for academic as well as social support.
- Student voice being included within Student Affairs administration.
- The university’s investment in expanding the MCCs physical space to create visibility and a family circle atmosphere among campus community.

Future studies can focus on the specific policies institution of higher education can modify in order to extend the integration of students and welcome a larger group to the culture of higher education as well as increase the retention of students of color.
REFERENCES


Sue, D., Constantine, G. M. *Strategies for Building Multicultural Competence*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


VENEZUELA AND THE COMMON MARKET OF THE SOUTH: A CASE STUDY OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Ashley T. Martinez
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Susan Heredia

ABSTRACT

This research explores why Venezuela became a full member of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR). It examines three theoretical explanations: the liberal economic, realist and neoliberal institutionalist approaches by utilizing a single case study analysis. The results suggest that an economic explanation alone is insufficient. Instead, the findings support the claim that through MERCOSUR, the Venezuelan government was able to pool the capabilities of the region in order to strengthen its bargaining position in the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations in 2005.

As mankind entered into the twenty-first century, many scholars, students and practitioners of international politics envisioned a world in which international institutions would maintain order and peace among nations. The basic assertion is that under this condition, states are able to focus primarily on economic matters, such as integrating into the global economy through either multilateral regional or global organizations. This assumption implies that economic interests and the “sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures” (Krasner, 1982) of institutions, not power, are and will be the primary motivators of state behavior in this “new world order”.

This study’s goal is to illustrate that the current era of globalization does not represent a clear break from Cold War thinking of international politics that is based on power. Instead, power configurations within the international system continue to shape state behavior. A clear example of power’s salience in contemporary international politics is found in the motivation of states to join and support regional trade agreements (RTA), such as the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR).

To demonstrate how power configurations within the international system continue to shape state behavior, this research focuses on the analysis of Venezuela’s bid to become a full member of the RTA MERCOSUR. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela accomplished this goal on July 4, 2006, when its President Hugo Chavez, along with the presidents from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, officially signed its membership protocol making it the fifth full member of the trade bloc (ABC News, People’s Daily Online). Why did Venezuela become a full member of the RTA MERCOSUR? Why has Venezuela been so eager to leave other RTAs, such as the Andean Community (CAN) and the Group of Three (G-3)? Is
there more to gain economically from a full membership in MERCOSUR? If yes, then why didn’t Venezuela become a full member sooner? Is the appeal of MERCOSUR’s institutionalized structure the primary motivator of Venezuela’s behavior? These are some of the questions that this study will address in order to formulate well-informed explanations of Venezuela’s behavior.

This study focuses on how external factors such as Venezuela’s weak position within the international system, led it to pursue membership in MERCOSUR. The central purpose of this study is to argue that Venezuela pursued full membership in order to combine the capabilities of MERCOSUR to strengthen its bargaining position against the United States, thus increasing its chances to shape its own future. This research explains how this strategy has been motivated by the inability of Venezuela to unilaterally resist one specific United States policy – the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) initiative. The findings suggest that Venezuela’s strategy was most effective during the fourth and final stage of FTAA negotiations because: 1) the Chavez administration found that the original MERCOSUR members Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay shared the goal of at least delaying and reforming the FTAA in the short-term; and 2) the United States’ focus was primarily centered in the Middle East, thus enabling Venezuela and the other MERCOSUR members greater maneuverability. Moreover, this study argues that Venezuela’s pursuit of full membership was motivated by short-term power calculations rather than the possibility of long-term economic gains accrued from MERCOSUR. Recent conflict between MERCOSUR’s members further support the claim that Venezuela’s strong support for MERCOSUR coincided with a greater similarity in goals amongst the five members. Since the demise of the FTAA, support for Venezuela’s membership by itself and by the other members, particularly Brazil, has recently waned as the common goal has diminished.

Nevertheless, Venezuela continues to pursue a wide range of foreign policy goals and the Chavez administration has adopted a wide range of strategies to implement these goals. This study does not address all aspects of Venezuela’s behavior. Instead, it focuses primarily on Venezuela’s efforts to delay the proposed FTAA by combining the capabilities of MERCOSUR in order to strengthen its bargaining position against the United States. Therefore, the first task of this study is to demonstrate that Venezuela’s bid to become a full member of MERCOSUR can be understood in this way. Secondly, this study argues that the success of Venezuela’s strategy is primarily reliant on its ability to develop and demonstrate a coherent goal, delay the implementation of the FTAA; and to demonstrate that this goal is similar to those of the other members of MERCOSUR, particularly the strongest actor: Brazil. Furthermore, the United States’ lack of commitment in directly confronting the FTAA challenge due to its narrow focus on the Middle East, provided a unique window of opportunity that enabled the trade bloc to effectively counter the FTAA during the most intense and final stage of negotiations.
This analytical study is divided into four parts. The first part provides a historical overview of MERCOSUR. The second part examines this study’s main theoretical position, realism, as well as two other alternative explanations, liberal economic theory, and neoliberal institutionalism. The third part offers a defense of the main argument by utilizing qualitative data to illustrate Venezuela’s realist behavior. The fourth part provides conclusions regarding the effectiveness of realist theory in explaining state behavior in the twenty-first century.

**Literature Review**

The study of the “second wave” (Cohn, 2005) of regionalism beginning in the mid-1980s has benefited from a variety of economic and political theories. However, this study focuses only on three approaches: the realist, liberal economic and neoliberal institutionalist theories. The importance of these three paradigms is that they emphasize different factors that explain why states pursue membership in regional trade agreements.

Realism in the twenty-first century has come under fire from academics and students alike. However, the realist approach is helpful in analyzing Venezuela’s behavior in that it illustrates that even in this “new world order”, states are still concerned with their relative power position within the international system. With no peer competitor in sight, the US, as the world’s most powerful state, has the ability to shape the world in its image, whether others like it or not. Realism identifies ways in which weaker states resist US policies and pressure. Liberal economic theory is useful in two ways. First, liberal economic theory is regarded as the primary motivator behind states behavior in the current era of globalization. Secondly, it challenges the realist notion that states are primary actors in international politics. Instead, this approach views non-state actors as instrumental in states joining RTAs. Finally, neoliberal institutionalism, besides being the predominate challenger to realism, views the increase in global and regional institutions as a response to growth of economic interdependence since the 1980s. Because economic negotiations at global multilateral institutions were increasingly complex, states sought to create their own regional institutions to facilitate deeper interdependence. The following discussion of each theory provides the basic tenets of each approach and explanations as to why Venezuela would want to become a full member of MERCOSUR.

**Realism**

This research is greatly influenced by the writings of “classical” and “structural” realism. The study’s main argument assumes that the structure of the international system is the primary determinate of Venezuela’s behavior. This realist approach “depicts international affairs as a struggle for power among self-interested states” (Walt, 1998, p. 31). Within the international system, states are considered to be the primary actors in international politics (Morgenthau, 1960; Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer; 2001). Realists assume that in
an anarchical international system, in which there is no central authority to protect states from one another, states must rely on their own capabilities to ensure their survival (Waltz, 1979; Walt, 1998; Mearsheimer, 2001). Since no state seeks its own demise, realists view states as rational and unitary actors that seek to minimize risks and costs and to maximize benefits (Morgenthau, 1960; Mearsheimer, 2001).

Based on these assumptions, Venezuela’s bid to become a full member of MERCOSUR is understood to be a result of its relative position within the international system and its national power capabilities. In this view, Venezuela is behaving as all states do, they are attempting to increase their power and security in relation to the other states, particularly their stronger rivals, in the international system (Waltz, 1979) by pooling the capabilities of MERCOSUR’s members. Although realists tend to view the anarchical nature of the international system as an inhibitor of cooperation, realists believe that states build alliances in order to enhance their relative power capabilities (Mearsheimer, 2001). For Venezuela, defeating the FTAA or at least delaying its implementation through its membership in the MERCOSUR was an attractive strategy since it lacked the ability to unilaterally counter the United States’ attempt to reconsolidate its economic and ideological hegemony over the Latin American region.

The most effective way for Venezuela to increases its relative bargaining position according to realism is to combine its capabilities with the original MERCOSUR members. Venezuela at first pursued this strategy by signing a series of bilateral agreements with each individual MERCOSUR member. By 2003, mounting international pressure by the United States through the FTAA negotiations threatened not only to reconsolidate American economic hegemony over the region, but threatened to limit the ability of the Chavez administration to maintain these bilateral agreements with its Latin American neighbors. Further complicating Venezuela’s strategy was the fact that it found itself at odds with the sole superpower, the United States, which had consistently and frequently openly voiced its hostility towards the economic and political agenda of the Chavez administration. Waltz (1997) correctly argues, in this case, that states such as Venezuela will perceive or experience “unfair treatment” resulting from the hegemon’s (US) actions (p. 915-6). He argues that in response, states such as Venezuela will pursue regional integration to restore a balance of power by combining capabilities with the end goal of moving towards a bipolar or multipolar system (p. 916). Gilpin, a self-proclaimed realist, writes:

Regional groupings of states have increased their cooperation in order to strengthen their autonomy, increase their bargaining position…as a means to extend national concerns and ambitions (2001, p. 357).

In other words, in a unipolar world in which one superpower has unparallel economic and political-military strength, there are some issues that cannot be dealt with alone. Therefore, weaker states in this system will pursue
membership in RTAs in order to effectively confront challenges to their power in this new era.

**Liberal Economic Theory**
The position taken in this study is tested against two predominate international relations theories: liberal economic theory and neoliberal institutionalism. Proponents of the liberal economic theory focus on whether RTAs are trade-creating or trade-diverting (Bhagwati & Panagariya, 1996; Bhagwati, 1999; Mansfield & Milner, 1999). In this view, regional trade agreements or what Bhagwati & Panagariya (1996) refer to as “preferential trade agreements” stimulate trade among members (trade-creating) while deflecting trade away from non-members (trade-diverting) (Bhagwati, 1999; Mansfield & Milner, 1999). The assumption here is that if trade creation through the opening of markets and the reduction of trade barriers that accompany RTAs such as MERCOSUR are beneficial in improving the welfare of the state and its citizens through the growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), per capita income and in trade, then all barriers to global multilateral trade should be decreased (Gilpin, 2001; Cohn, 2005). A more extreme version of this argument is that “every government lives under the fear of a no-confidence vote from the herd [market]” (Friedman, 1999, p. 62, p. 115). From this perspective, states must pursue global integration at all costs.

The focus on the economic well-being of the state and its citizens is understood as the fundamental motivation for Venezuela’s behavior. Liberal economic theorists also view domestic factors such as appropriate economic policies and not merely the international economic system as the sole root of Venezuela’s pursuit of full membership in MERCOSUR. In this view, Venezuela’s behavior is understood as not only a reaction to external pressure, but as a response to its sociopolitical characteristics. In other words, Venezuela’s bid to become a full member of MERCOSUR is viewed as a result of both internal and external pressures that drive the Venezuelan government towards MERCOSUR.

**Neoliberal Institutionalism**
Another alternative explanation views the creation of MERCOSUR as recognition by Venezuela of the need to facilitate global interdependence through a solid institutional structure. This school of thought argues that states such as Venezuela pursue international institutions such as MERCOSUR “to reduce conflicts of interests and risk by coordinating their behavior” (Keohane, 1982, p. 332-33). The foremost proponent the neoliberal institutionalist school, Keohane (1982; 1984), argues that states seek international institutions in order to create mutual agreements that would be impossible without a coordinating mechanism. More than this, institutions arise out of the need to restrain the most powerful states in the region and international system (Buszynski, 2002).
Why would Venezuela want to coordinate trade through an institutionalized structure? Why not pursue deeper relationships through bilateral agreements? For neoliberal institutionalists, there are two main reasons. First, Keohane (1982; 1984) argues that the primary motivation to create these institutions is to deal with market failures and to reduce the shadow of the future. In an increasingly economically interdependent world, the increase of predictability and regularity of state behavior promotes the maximization of benefits and the reduction of costs (Keohane, 1982; 1984). Second, when states cooperate, there is always a concern that these same states have the propensity to cheat because there is no higher authority to enforce the rules. Thus, in order for Venezuela to achieve the Pareto-optimal outcome or the best collective outcome for itself, cheating by the other MERCOSUR members must be controlled.

Neoliberal institutionalists argue that states such as Venezuela can control deviant behavior (cheating) in two ways. The first is that states may pursue a strategy of tit-for-tat and cooperate on a conditional basis through strategies of reciprocity or that a country benefiting from cooperation will provide roughly equal benefits in return (Axelrod & Keohane, 1993). According to this assumption, Venezuela could have maintained informal bilateral ties. Why did it not continue to do so? Conditional cooperation, such as the bilateral agreements that characterized Venezuela’s relationship with the original four MERCOSUR members, according to this perspective, is complicated in that high verification costs and the regular sanctioning of cheaters usually outweighs the benefits and can discourage further relationships. Therefore, Venezuela would pursue full membership in order to reduce verification costs, punish cheaters and facilitate deeper integration among the five states through institutionalizing reciprocity (Keohane, 1984; Axelrod & Keohane, 1985).

In sum, Venezuela’s behavior according to neoliberal institutionalist theory understands its quest for full membership as a way to reduce verification as well as transaction costs, punish cheaters, facilitate deeper integration and to benefit from the neutral institutionalized setting that MERCOSUR provides.

MERCOSUR’s Historical Antecedents
This section illustrates the evolution of MERCOSUR from its original geopolitical foundations towards its current position as Latin America’s strongest economic and negotiating bloc.

The creation of a common market is generally viewed as a way for states to facilitate closer economic relationships. However, the original motivations behind the creation of MERCOSUR were as political as they were economic. Roett (1999) argues that during the 1970s until at least the mid-1980s, the creators of MERCOSUR, Argentina and Brazil, were “locked in a zero-sum game” over which state would be “the dominant player in the region” (p. 1). Political and economic competition rather than cooperation accurately characterized their often tense relationship. Fortunately for the citizens of
Latin America, the process of redemocratization beginning in the 1980s, replaced military dictatorships in both Argentina and Brazil, which eventually paved the way for greater regional integration.

In 1986, following the debt crisis and start of structural adjustment programs in Latin America, Argentina and Brazil signed a bilateral trade agreement to strengthen economic cooperation and regional integration. The Program for Integration and Economic Cooperation (PICE) was seen as an attempt to increase the planning and consolidation of industrial processes and as a way to improve diplomatic relations through balancing trade among their specific sectors (Manzetti, 1993-94; Pereira, 1999). With the breakdown of the bipolar international system that characterized the period between 1947 and 1989, states in the international system began to solidify their global position by creating and strengthening regional trading blocs. As a response to increasing regionalization in North America, Europe, and East Asia, Argentina and Brazil pursued deeper integration through the 1988 Treaty on Integration, Cooperation, and Development, and the 1990 Act of Buenos Aires (Pereira, 1999; Phillips, 2004). Overall, the increase in bilateral economic cooperation between Argentina and Brazil and throughout Latin America generally reflected the context of the international system (Manzetti, 1993-94).

On March 26, 1991, in Asunción, Paraguay; the presidents of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay agreed to create the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) (Manzetti, 1993-94; Pereira, 1999). The Treaty of Asunción laid out the specifics of the trade agreement in the areas of trade liberalization, the common external tariff, the institutional structure, 24 special protocols protecting sensitive economic sectors, and established the goal of creating a customs union by the end of 1994 (Pereira, 1999; Preusse, 2001; Phillips, 2004). The Protocol de Ouro Preto (Ouro Preto Protocol), signed in December 1994, created a customs union that formally institutionalized political and economic integration amongst the original four members (Pereira, 1999). Compared to past regional integration attempts in Latin America, MERCOSUR proved to be more than a vague promise.

Despite the description of MERCOSUR as an “imperfect” customs union, especially when compared to the European Union, it has facilitated a growth in intra- and extra-MERCOSUR trade. Following the implementation of the customs union, there was a 90% reduction (approximately) of tariffs on trade goods and an 88% reduction on dutiable goods (Preusse, 2001). In 2005, the overall amount of trade within pre-Venezuela MERCOSUR increased at a rate of 13.3% in current dollars (INTAL, 2005). Additionally, overall exports were up 20.8% and imports were up 19.1% over the previous year. In contrast to the average annual growth rate of merely 1.3% between the years 1997 and 2002, total trade has grown by an average annual rate of 22.6% since the end of this period (INTAL, 2005).

More specifically, intrabloc trade between 2003 and 2005 grew by a cumulative average of 27.4%. This finding illustrates the resilience of
MERCOSUR in that, between 1997 and 2002, total trade was cut in half among all members due to the Brazilian and Argentina response to their economic crises in 1999 and 2001, respectively. Similarly, extrabloc trade, although not as dramatic as intrabloc, recorded a favorable 21.1% cumulative growth rate over the 2003-2005 period. All indicators suggest that if there is not another financial crisis or sharp decrease in diplomatic relations, MERCOSUR’s excellent performance is expected to continue. Furthermore, with the recent addition of Venezuela, MERCOSUR has expanded its gross regional product to more than US$1 trillion and now accounts for nearly 75% of the region’s economic activity, as well as 65% of the total Latin American population (The Trumpet, 2006). Moreover, Bolivia and Chile have continued to support MERCOSUR by maintaining their associate member status. On the surface, the answer seems incredibly clear as to why Venezuela pursued full membership given the economic strength of MERCOSUR. However, upon closer inspection, the economic benefits accrued from MERCOSUR membership is less of a concern for Venezuela than the achievement of political goals. Instead, Venezuela’s bid for full membership in MERCOSUR is a result of their inability to unilaterally defeat the United States’ proposed FTAA. In this section, the overall argument that Venezuela became a full member in order to pool the capabilities of MERCOSUR to increase its bargaining position against the US is analyzed by examining the explanations offered by the two alternative theories.

**Methodology**

In order to examine the explanatory power of the three theories, this study utilizes a single case study that draws principally from both primary and secondary data sources. Primary source readings consisted of official statements made by MERCOSUR’s authoritative body, the Venezuelan government and of original documents posted on trade-related websites, such as those of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean (INTAL). Secondary sources included works by foreign policy and international relations experts. The researcher utilized a single case study to analyze the explanatory power of three predominate international relations theories in explaining Venezuela’s decision to become a full member of MERCOSUR.

**Results**

Although the liberal economic theory can explain some state behavior, it is insufficient in explaining Venezuela’s bid to become a full member of MERCOSUR. The purpose of this section is to illustrate the claim made previously by analyzing the relevant qualitative empirical evidence. Despite the “you’re in or out” approach described by globalizations foremost proponents, negotiating multilateral global trade initiatives between states has been difficult. For instance, the troubled and cumbersome negotiating
process within the World Trade Organization (WTO) has made regional multilateral linkages more attractive and advantageous (Cohn, 2005). Bagwell and Staiger (1997) determined that preferential trade agreements (regional trade agreements) are desirable when the global “multilateral system is working poorly” (p. 28). From this perspective, Venezuela's push to become a full member of MERCOSUR may be a result of the stalled multilateral trade negotiations in the WTO and the impressive performance of MERCOSUR. However, the possibility of economic benefits from an increase in regional trade linkages does not fully explain Venezuela's behavior.

As stated previously, Venezuela’s membership in MERCOSUR adds nearly 14% to the region’s GDP. Despite the immediate increase in markets and trade capacity, Venezuela’s impact on the MERCOSUR’s economic and trade profile is moderate at best in two ways. Although Venezuela’s GDP is larger than half the members at US$110.1 million and its per capita GDP is higher than all the other members at US$4,235, the size of its import market is rather small (US$14,688 million) compared to Brazil’s (US$62,782 million) and Argentina’s (US$23,288 million). It is also estimated that nearly 80% of Venezuela’s population is destitute, so in terms of market expansion for the other members, Venezuela does not provide much of an opportunity. Specifically, Brazil provides 7.7% of Venezuela’s total imports while Argentina delivers 1.9%, Paraguay 0.6%, and Uruguay a mere 0.2% (INTAL, 2005). Surprisingly, the majority of Venezuela’s imports come from the United States at 31.8%. On the export side, Venezuela is responsible for less than 1% of the total exports to the four other members. Upon analyzing these statistics, one might assume that Venezuela pursued full membership in order to increase the size of its import market and to facilitate deeper trade linkages through MERCOSUR. Although it is clear that Venezuela has pursued a wide range of economic strategies to facilitate an increase in market size and trade diversification, the degree they will fulfill the government’s objectives is unclear.

For instance, one strategy the Chavez administration has pursued has been to diversify and develop its economy in order to limit its sole dependency on oil exports. As of April 2007, exports of fuels and mining products represented an astounding 88.8% of Venezuela's export total (WTO Country Profiles). Manufactured products represented 86.6% and agricultural products represented 11.0% of Venezuela’s total imports. The government has attempted to economically diversify by following an endogenous or "development from within" path to development (Boudin, Gonzales & Rumbos, 2006, p. 126). One way in which the government has turned theory into practice is through its missions, specifically the Vuelvan Caras mission, whose main purpose is to train and develop Venezuelans to create and participate in cooperatives. The government has focused specifically on agriculture, industry, tourism, infrastructure, services, and other government industries. As of March 31, 2005, a little less than 300,000 Venezuelans had graduated and were participating in these cooperatives (p. 72). If Venezuela is
trying these kinds of strategies, then according to the liberal economic theory, why not pursue full membership in MERCOSUR? Venezuela did become a full member in 2006. As stated previously, MERCOSUR was experiencing outstanding growth, which, on the surface, seemed to have the ability to provided ample opportunity for Venezuela to expand its market size and trade linkages. However, the empirical evidence suggests that Venezuela’s membership is more likely to benefit the other MERCOSUR members than itself.

The Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean (INTAL) performed a product selection exercise to identify trade growth opportunities after Venezuela’s entry into MERCOSUR. A Trade Complementarity Index (TCI) was utilized to determine the existence of trade complementarity among the five MERCOSUR members. In order to calculate trade growth potential, the comparative advantages for the exporting country were compared to the comparative disadvantages for the importing country (INTAL, 2005). The exercise’s main conclusion was that trade growth opportunities favor Venezuela’s MERCOSUR members, rather than Venezuela itself (INTAL, 2005). Table 1 illustrates the opportunities for trade expansion for both Venezuela and the other members.

The limited number of trade growth opportunities stems from Venezuela’s non-comparative advantage in any sector with the exception of energy resources. The statistics presented previously demonstrated that Venezuela’s economy is solely reliant on oil and natural gas exports for income. To the dismay of the Chavez administration, the development of other economic sectors in previous administrations were delayed and even ignored. While this may be the case, the reality is that Venezuela is not in a position to compete against the two economic powerhouses of Latin America: Brazil and Argentina. If Venezuela lacks a comparative advantage in all sectors excluding energy resources, then why would it want full membership in MERCOSUR? Is Venezuela’s membership likely to harm rather than promote future economic growth?

According to several prominent business organizations, particularly in the agricultural and industrial sectors, it argues ‘yes’. From this perspective, Venezuela’s membership will limit if not hinder future growth in these sectors. Noel Álvarez, the president of Venezuela’s National Council for Trade and Services (Consecomercio) stated that “Aside from the economic consequences we will have to face…these announcements (joining MERCOSUR) [were] made without” the business sectors consent (Associated Press, Business News, “Venezuelan Business Leaders Criticize Decision to Leave”). Furthermore, Noel explained to the newspaper El Universal that the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MERCOSUR Members</th>
<th>Number of export opportunities to Venezuela</th>
<th>Number of export opportunities for Venezuela</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: INTAL, 2005
Chavez administration never discussed strategies to overcome the economic “troubles or asymmetries” that business groups understood accompanied Venezuela’s MERCOSUR membership (El Universal, “Venezuela joins Southern Common Market”).

A research associate with The Council on Hemispheric Affairs, Bolduc (2006), examined several reactions by these business groups after Venezuela’s membership protocol had been signed by the original four members. Bolduc notes that Grupo 400+, a claimed representative of “society’s representatives,” the Venezuelan Confederation of Industries, the National Council of the Federation of Trade and Industry Chambers (Fedecámaras), and other agribusiness groups vehemently voiced their opposition to Venezuela’s MERCOSUR membership. Bolduc identified three main complaints of the various business groups. The first two, which were alluded to by Venezuela’s Consecomercio president Noel Álvarez, were that MERCOSUR was negotiated without regard to the potential and, according to their perspective, assured economic harm, and without the consent of the business sectors. The third most common complaint was that the full membership was implemented without an extensive national discussion within the national assembly or among the people. Bolduc writes that “the accusations do beg the important question of whether joining MERCOSUR was undertaken with good economic reason, or only as the next phase of Chavez’s war of ideas with Washington” (Bolduc, 2006). It is important to note that these business organizations were the primary supporters of the 2002 attempted coup on President Chavez and the 2003 economic strike that nearly brought the country into total chaos. Nevertheless, these statements and concerns illustrate that economic interests were not the primary motivator in Venezuela’s pursuit of full membership in MERCOSUR.

In sum, the liberal economic theory is unable to explain Venezuela’s behavior in that: 1) its addition into MERCOSUR does not represent a significant increase in market access for the other four members, which calls into question Venezuela’s expedited membership process; 2) by joining MERCOSUR, Venezuela has very little to gain due to its lack of a comparative advantage in any other sector besides energy; and 3) various business sectors in Venezuela have demonstrated that by competing against the larger and more efficient economies of Argentina and Brazil, it will in the short- and long-term promote harm rather than economic utility. This study does not argue that Venezuela is unconcerned with potential economic gains that are associated with the excellent performance of MERCOSUR. However, this review of the empirical evidence does suggest that Venezuela’s decision to join an economic trade agreement was done for non-economic reasons. If economic interests were not the primary motivator behind Venezuela’s pursuit of full membership, then what was?
A Realist–Based Institutionalist Strategy

Although realism provides a better general framework to understand Venezuela’s bid to become a full member of MERCOSUR, the role of institutions in countering the United States’ power is crucial in understanding Venezuela’s behavior. The findings of this study suggest that Venezuela pursued an institutionalist strategy, based on realist premise and not according to neoliberal institutionalist theory. Venezuela pursued full membership primarily to pool the capabilities of MERCOSUR to strengthen its bargaining position against the US. The main purpose of this strategy was to delay if not defeat the FTAA. The Venezuelan government was able to accomplish its goal by: 1) developing a coherent and similar goal with the other members of MERCOSUR; and 2) by taking advantage of the United States’ concentrated focus on the Middle East. This strategy stems from Venezuela’s relatively weak position that hindered its ability to unilaterally defeat the FTAA. What is the difference between weak and strong states? What determines the relative power capabilities that distinguish states ability to act unilaterally, multilaterally, or even at all?

Table 2. GNIs of MERCOSUR Members and the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MERCOSUR Members &amp; United States</th>
<th>GNI (in millions of US dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>201,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>892,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>8,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>17,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>163,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>13,446,031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Although there is no single measure, one way to measure a states power capability is to measure its aggregate economic output or Gross National Index (GNI). The GNI, according to the World Bank, is the best way to measure a state’s general economic capacity. The GNI basically illustrates a state’s ability to conduct certain actions. Table 2 illustrates that Venezuela’s ability to conduct a wide range of activities is quite limited when compared to the United States or even its regional neighbor Brazil.

The purpose of these statistics is to: 1) illustrate the rather trivial addition Venezuela provides to MERCOSUR; and 2) demonstrate the weak position of Venezuela and its MERCOSUR partners when compared to the United States. Even with their combined capabilities, the ratio of MERCOSUR’s members GNIs is roughly 1/10 that of the United States. Venezuela’s ratio is 1/82 to that of the United States. In terms of bargaining power, Venezuela’s membership is likely to increase its position.

At this point, it is necessary to discuss the inherent advantage of Venezuela’s own unique bargaining chip: oil. The Chavez administration has used oil to increase its influence in Latin America and throughout the world. In 2000, Venezuela, a founding member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), was elected president of the organization. The Chavez
administration quickly imposed quotas that were crucial in not only raising the price of a barrel of oil, but provided the government with the resources to carry out its Bolivarian Revolution as well as strengthen its political influence throughout the region. To a certain extent, Venezuela’s national power capabilities as well as its bargaining position has been increased by the changes it has been able to make within OPEC. However, this exception is not enough to allow Venezuela the ability to unilaterally set the international agenda, let alone defeat a single US proposal. One strategy for achieving the Venezuelan government’s various objectives is to strengthen its bargaining position through its membership in MERCOSUR. The proposed FTAA negotiations between the United States and all of Latin America (with the exception of Cuba) provide an excellent case study to illustrate one strategy of Venezuela’s overall foreign policy.

Case Study: Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)
In the fall of 2005, increasing international pressure by the United States through the Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations threatened not only to consolidate American economic hegemony over the region, but threatened to limit the political influence of Chavez among his Latin American neighbors. As the deadline for the implementation of the FTAA drew nearer, popular media outlets and analysts characterized the trade talks as the ultimate battle between US style market capitalism and Chavez’s goal for twenty-first century socialism. Still, a majority of these analyses forgot to mention that if the FTAA was ratified, the member states of the agreement would not only become even more dependent on the US for their political and economic needs, but it would increase their vulnerabilities and reduce their ability to shape their own futures. The FTAA would accomplish both by exposing weak Latin American industries to the most competitive and efficient American corporations, and by allowing the US to tighten its grip on the maneuverability of each state.

The Venezuelan government and President Chavez in particular, have openly rejected any attempt by the United States to reconsolidate its economic hegemony over the region. This degree of unity within the Venezuelan government is unique in that the current political make-up allows it to behave as a unitary actor. This is an important factor in that various theories, such as the alternative ones presented in this study, argue that state action is determined by the individual, households and firms of a state (Moravcsik, 1997). In contrast to this study’s interpretation, these theories argue that the state “is not an actor but a representative institution” of societal actors (p. 518). While domestic actors are important, their role in determining Venezuela’s foreign policy is extremely limited. Besides a majority of support in Congress, President Chavez has been granted special presidential powers that enable him to pass foreign policy measures without interference from domestic social, economic and political interests. Among these powers, President Chavez has the ability to negotiate free trade agreements such as
MERCOSUR and the FTAA with little input from societal groups. This special power is similar to the fast-track authority that was granted to the current President Bush by the US Congress to negotiate the FTAA with Latin America.

President George W. Bush was not the only president granted fast-track authority to implement the FTAA. The Free Trade of the Americas initiative began with a proposal by President George H.W. Bush to create an Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI) in the mid-1990s. The main goal of the initiative was the elimination of all trade barriers by all countries located within the western hemisphere. The US government first assumed that it would sign individual trade pacts with specific regional blocs and then combine these agreements into one comprehensive free trade area. In 1994, under the Clinton administration, the successful integration of Canada and Mexico into NAFTA led Vice President Al Gore to call for a 1994 summit of the western hemispheric states. At the Miami summit, all 34 countries, with the exception of Cuba, agreed to begin the negotiating process and while in Santiago, Chile in April 1998, agreed that the FTAA would become reality no later than 2005. However, by 2004, negotiations had stalled and the prospects for a hemispheric free trade area were dismal (Cohn, 2005). By the end of the 2005, President Chavez had declared the FTAA “dead and buried” (UPI “Venezuela: Chavez says FTAA is dead”). What enabled President Chavez in his own words, to “bury” the FTAA?

The Chavez administration was able to defeat or at least delay the FTAA in two ways. First, the Venezuelan government developed and transmitted a coherent goal that was similar to the other MERCOSUR members. As previously mentioned Venezuela sought to defeat and “bury” the FTAA. However, the other MERCOSUR members as well as the majority of Latin American states have expressed their interests in establishing a free trade area with the US but under two main conditions. The first is that the US reduce or eliminate its agricultural subsidies that prevents not only Argentina and Brazil from exercising one of their extremely limited comparative advantages, but the rest of Latin America and the developing world. The second request is that the US reduces or eliminates its barriers that prevent developing countries’ exports from coming into its market (Cohn, 2005). Although the concerns and proposals of Paraguay and Uruguay are regularly ignored due to their weak position within MERCOSUR, they both support Argentina and Brazil’s more moderate goal of delaying the FTAA. Despite their support, the most important actor in pursuing at least the short-term delay of the FTAA is Brazil. Table 3 illustrates the position of each state or group.

Brazil, similar to Venezuela, is not interested in solely maintaining regional trade ties. Brazil regularly engages in multilateral trade negotiations with

| Table 3. State Position on the FTAA |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| State          | Position        |
| Venezuela      | Defeat          |
| MERCOSUR       | Delay and Reform|
| United States  | Ratify          |
non-members without the consent of other MERCOSUR members, a direct violation of the trade agreement (Country Studies). Unfortunately for the other members, they really have only two options: 1) follow Brazil in whatever direction it pursues; or 2) leave MERCOSUR and face isolation or extreme competition at the international level. This finding illustrates Brazil’s ability to more or less dictate the terms of MERCOSUR’s external agenda. Although it is Brazil’s plan is to eventually engage in non-discriminatory multilateral trade regardless of region, MERCOSUR, since its inception, had successfully served Brazil as a counter weight to the United States’ attempt to consolidate its economic and political hegemony in the western hemisphere. Smith (2001) argues that “Brazil,…attempting to affirm its position as a subregional hegemon,” utilizes “MERCOSUR…as a powerful instrument for collective bargaining with the European Union and…the United States” (p. 48-50). Furthermore, Brazil’s support for MERCOSUR has been “to accumulate negotiating power for dealing with broader integration schemes in the Americas,” such as the FTAA (p. 51). Similarly, Guedes da Costa (2001) argues that Latin American countries gain “bargaining power” through MERCOSUR (p. 105). This strategy is effective for stronger states such as Brazil as well as weaker ones “which can follow a piggyback strategy” of benefiting from an increased hemispheric presence (p. 105). This researcher found that Venezuela clearly understood its predicament in the international system. In particular, the Venezuelan government understood that as a weak state, it could not defeat a proposal by the strongest state in the world (the US) alone. In order for the Venezuelan government to successfully resist the FTAA, they would need to combine its capabilities with the most powerful state in Latin America: Brazil. Venezuela found that they shared the goal with Brazil of at least indefinitely delaying and reforming the trade agreement. This strategy is not solely reflective of Venezuela’s views, as the rest of Latin America generally views Brazil as the region’s leader. Harris and Azzi (2006) write that Brazil has taken on this leadership role and “in certain circumstances [Brazil] has been able to alleviate some of the external pressures placed by the US upon the region’s weaker states” (p. 106). So, as the fourth and final stage of the FTAA negotiations began in 2002, Venezuela sought to strengthen its ties with Brazil.

The Chavez administration, although strongly opposed to the FTAA, clearly recognized it had little power to influence the implementation of the initiative unilaterally. President Chavez described his government’s position in an interview with Marta Hanecker (2005) when he was quoted as saying, “one week after my [first] election I was in Brasilia and I said: ‘Venezuela wants to integrate with MERCOSUR’” (p. 127). In November 2003, President Chavez said “We are going to lead a battle” with Brazil at the upcoming FTAA negotiations (AP, “Venezuela refuses to accept free trade”). Within MERCOSUR, Brazil was also gearing up for the final stage of negotiations. The title of an article in Time Magazine correctly characterized the FTAA negotiations as “A David-vs.-Goliath trade battle” in which Brazil (David)
would face off against the US (Goliath) (Time, “Lula’s Next Big Fight”). However, Latin American states were not the only ones gearing up for the upcoming battle. Robert Zoellick, then the US trade representative, in response to Brazil’s growing opposition to the FTAA, threatened that if Brazil did not support the FTAA, it would “be reduced to exporting to Antarctica” (Rohter, 2003).

Institutionalist Strategy
In the final year of negotiations in 2005, MERCOSUR took a strong stance against the FTAA. A year before, in 2004, Venezuela had become an associate member of MERCOSUR. Venezuela’s associate member status enabled it to benefit from preferential trade treatment but without the ability to directly influence MERCOSUR’s external agenda. However, its associate status enabled Venezuela to demonstrate its similarity of goals with MERCOSUR’s full members.

In a unipolar world where one state obtains primacy in political-military and economic terms, there is little that weak states can do unilaterally against this great power. Weaker states such as Venezuela have found that in an increasingly institutionalized world, one way to counter US hegemony is through institutions. Through such institutions, Venezuela can benefit from the combined political and economic forces of the MERCOSUR and other blocs that seek to limit US power. A central premise of realism is that when one state maintains an extreme unbalance of power in its favor, it will be viewed as the ultimate threat in the international society. Walt (2005) in his book *Taming American Power*, outlines several strategies that states use to respond to unbalanced power in the international system. He argues that one way states attempt to right the balance is through “combining their capabilities with others” (2005, p. 120). Chavez illustrated this realist position on several occasions. He stated, “The twenty-first century should be multipolar, and we all ought to push for the development of such a world. So long live a united Asia, a united Africa, a united Europe” (Rohter, 2000). As the FTAA deadline drew nearer, President Chavez’ calls for a “multipolar” world became more frequent. In August 2005, President Chavez in a meeting with Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinezhad, proclaimed “We are after a multipolar rather than a unipolar world” (BBC, “Iranian and Venezuelan presidents”). In a meeting to create preferential oil agreements with thirteen Caribbean countries, President Chavez said that “the new plan is part of a vision of a “multipolar” world no longer controlled by U.S. imperialism” (Associate Press, “Chavez oil deal in Caribbean”). Again, in October 2005, President Chavez along with French President Jacques Chirac shared their
vision for a multipolar world (BBC, “French president, PM “show support”). However, this does not imply that Venezuela was willing to combine capabilities with anyone. Instead, Venezuela has carefully chosen which countries to ally with not only due to its relative power capabilities, but also according to its affinity with the US.

In April 2006, Venezuela officially withdrew all ties from the regional trade bloc, the Andean Community (CAN). This trade agreement included Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru as its members. President Chavez stated publicly that the withdrawal was a response to other member countries (specifically Colombia and Peru) entry into free trade agreements with the US. Nearly seven months later, Venezuela’s foreign ministry announced the government’s withdrawal from the Group of Three (G-3) trade bloc with Colombia and Mexico. The official reason given by President Chavez was a result of the decision to focus “on the integration of MERCOSUR” (Associated Press, “Venezuela formalizes withdrawal from G-3”). However, upon closer examination, the decision to choose one institution over another emphasizes the realism that underlies Venezuela’s foreign policy. More specifically, the Venezuelan government has sought to strengthen its potential allies while weakening the allies of the US, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, which did not share a similar goal of Venezuela. In other words, these states favored the implementation of the FTAA rather than its demise. More than this, the bargaining position of these two trading blocs is tremendously weaker than MERCOSUR’s. Table 4 illustrates the combined GNIs of each trade bloc and the US.

Table 4. Combined GNIs of Trade Blocs (without Venezuela) and US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade Blocs &amp; United States</th>
<th>GNI (in millions of US dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>256,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-3</td>
<td>903,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MERCOSUR</td>
<td>1,120,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>13,446,031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank, World Development Data Indicators database

Although the Group of Three’s combined GNI is close to that of MERCOSUR’s, its strongest member, Mexico, is the United States’ closest Latin American ally. For Venezuela, the original MERCOSUR members not only openly declared their similarity in goals but provided a better opportunity for Venezuela to complete its goal of defeating the FTAA.

In February 2005, Paraguayan Foreign Minister Leila Rachid noted that the members of MERCOSUR were negotiating a FTAA with every country except the US (BBC, “MERCOSUR negotiating on FTAA”). Along a similar tone, in April 2005, Brazilian President Lula da Silva remarked that the FTAA had been “taken off [Brazil’s] agenda (Associated Press, “Brazil’s Silva: Americas free trade zone “off the agenda” for South America’s largest economy). In November 2005, President Chavez had declared the FTAA
“dead and buried” (UPI “Venezuela: Chavez says FTAA is dead”). In a desperate response, Mexico, the United States’ main ally in negotiating the FTAA, floated the idea of a hemispheric trade agreement minus dissenting countries, such as Venezuela. However, by December 2005, the United States had lost interest in negotiating the FTAA. President George W. Bush admitted a month earlier, in November 2005, that the FTAA had “stalled” (AP, “Bush admits creation of free trade”). In other words, Venezuela along with the other members of MERCOSUR had defeated a proposal by the strongest state in the international system.

US Preoccupation in the Middle East
The second way the Venezuelan government was able to “defeat” the FTAA was due to the United States focus on the Middle East. Although it has been argued that the US has never really been interested in Latin America as a whole (Grandin, 2007), the current Bush administration maintains a particular interests in Venezuela’s internal and external affairs. President George W. Bush acknowledged this by pledging to “look south, not as an afterthought, but as a fundamental commitment of my presidency” (p. 211). However, the horrendous events of September 11, 2001, changed all of that. By 2003, the United States government was tied down in two wars, and by 2004 lacked the effort to confront or deal with the various challenges that arose from several Latin American states opposition to their unilateral strategy to invade Iraq. Although the US did not pursue a full fledged fight for the FTAA, it did resort to polarizing Latin America’s opposition. David Cloud (2005) in a New York Times article described a visit by Donald Rumsfeld in Latin America as a “throwback feel of a mission during the Cold War” (Cloud, 2005). The reporter also recorded what the US government saw as the main security threat in Latin America: “leftist insurgencies and Communist infiltration.” The two states that constituted a preeminent threat to the United States interests were Venezuela, and of course Cuba. How are these statements perceived by the Venezuelan government? What would we expect from a state that has been labeled in the same category as Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Libya, North Korea, and Sudan?

As President Chavez and the four other member presidents celebrated the entrance of Venezuela into the MERCOSUR in the capital city of Caracas, each president expressed his optimism, dreams, hopes and fears of the future. President Chavez discussed the importance of MERCOSUR in the twenty-first century, stating:

*If we apply free trade between Brazil and Uruguay (or Paraguay or Venezuela), the small Uruguay will disappear...We are talking about fair trade...That’s why we don’t want to go to the FTAA (Free Trade of the Americas) (Fox, 2006, p. 1).*

As President Chavez stated, MERCOSUR was effective in challenging the United States’ economic superiority. However, Venezuela’s pursuit of full
membership in MERCOSUR is only one strategy of the government’s overall foreign policy. It can be argued that the Venezuelan government, according to the open hostility of the US government, is convinced that the US is intent on regime change. There is evidence that illustrates US support for the attempted military coup against Chavez in April 2002 (Golinger, 2006). As a result, the battle against the US is perceived by the Chavez administration as one for survival. This is evident in the Chavez government’s ties not only with potential global powers, but with all governments that are opposed to the US ideology. Chavez has supported Iran, Libya, and, the archenemy of the United States: Cuba. Chavez attempts to label this occurrence as purely a result of interstate competition, but in general it reflects a commitment by President Chavez to create a world that enables his government greater flexibility to create its own future.

Security Concerns
Another strategy the Venezuelan government employed is illustrated in its response to the threat of US-style globalization and its covert support for the demise of the Chavez administration. Venezuela has sought to modernize and increase the size of its military forces to deal with these threats. At the end of 2004, Chavez visited Russia and announced a deal to purchase over 100,000 rifles, and by November 2005 the Venezuelan government had received 30,000 of them along with three helicopters (Associate Press “Venezuela to Receive 30,000”). Then in February 2005, Venezuela announced a deal with the Brazilian government to buy Tucano patrol aircrafts (Latin America Weekly Report “Brazil-US: Reacting to Veto on Aircraft Sales”). The invasion of Iraq by the US signified that Venezuelan’s archenemy was willing to use military force in order to defeat states on the growing ‘axis of evil’ list (Cопly News Service, “Too many countries qualify for Axis of Evil slot”). However, the increase in military purchases may not solely be a response to faraway threats. Venezuela’s neighbor, Colombia, is the third largest recipient of US military aid (Canadian Business and Current Affairs, “America’s other war”). Recently, the US government approved US$55 million to be released to the Colombian government to fight terrorist elements within its country (Agence France Presse, “US frees 55 million dollars”). In the realist view, Venezuela’s motivation to become a full member of MERCOSUR is shaped by the international, not domestic, structures of the international system.

Limitations
Time constraint was the primary limitation of this study, which was limited to a single rather than a multiple case-study. One drawback was the inability to generalize Venezuela’s motivation to regionally integrate to other cases of regional integration. Additionally, the researcher’s limited fluency in Spanish and Portuguese resulted in cumbersome and time-consuming translation
methods of several key official documents and other relevant reading materials.

CONCLUSION

As the Cold War came to an end, there were several cheers for the apparently diminished relevancy of traditional power politics as a guide for future interaction among states. The demise of the Soviet Union, it was argued, would bring forth peace and prosperity due to a reduction in global violence that accompanied the two superpowers competition. Fukuyama (2006) famously stated that with the end of the Cold War, the world was witnessing “the end of history” in which “the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (p. 16). Present George H. W. Bush, the first person in all of human history with the ability to truly be a world leader with the capabilities to shape the globe in its image, envisioned a “new world order” in which liberal idealism rather than realism would determine the future. The developments that occurred during his administration in Latin America generally seemed to have verified these assumptions. By the early 1990s, nearly all of the Central and South America governments were democratically elected and their economies closely followed the free market neoliberal economic policy prescriptions. In Venezuela, democracy had reigned uninterrupted for nearly 40 years and the “invisible hand” was clearly the director of the economy.

If the trends in the early 1990s were enough to call for a new world order and represented the demise of realism, the turn of the century, it is assumed, clearly marked the death of traditional power politics thinking. Walt (1998) correctly identified the sentiment among international relations scholars as he describes that “the end of the Cold War led a few writers to declare that realism was destined for the academic scrapheap” (p. 35). Similarly, Legro and Moravcsik (1999) in the title of their article asked, “Is Anybody Still a Realist?” The central argument of this study, Venezuela sought to strengthen its bargaining position against the United States by combining the capabilities of MERCOSUR, demonstrates that states still act within a realist framework. This study illustrated that while those who share different interpretations of international politics can help explain some state behavior, however, they cannot stand alone. The same can be said for realist theory as this study borrows heavily to support the study’s main argument from its primary challenger: neoliberal institutionalism. Nevertheless, the realist theory provides a better context in which to understand Venezuela’s behavior in the international system.
REFERENCES


Inter Press Service (2007, February 27). *MERCONSUR: Brazil has reassuring words for its ’little brother’*. Retrieved April 30, 2007 from Lexis-Nexis.


Richards, Donald G. “Dependent Development and Regional Integration: A Critical Examination of the Southern Cone Common Market.” Latin American Perspectives, 26, no. 6 (November, 1997).


Exploring the Standpoint of Chicana Professors’ Influence, Their Teachings, Research and Community Involvement: The Search for Chicana Empowerment in Academia

Maribel Rosendo-Servin
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Manuel Barajas

Abstract

This study explores how the unique social location of three self-identified Chicana professors at a state university shapes their personal, community and academic development. Specifically the study focuses on how their standpoint influences their teachings, research, family, and community involvement. This study aims to inform sociological theory on how Chicana identity is constructed in a context of intersecting social hierarchies and unequal power relations. Chicana professors’ lived experiences were analyzed to understand how they empower themselves, their students, and their community.

The Chicana perspective is based on the standpoint of epistemology, highlighting the significance of the lived experiences of Chicana women in relation to gender, race, class and sexuality. Generally, academic scholarship reflects a white male and upper/middle-class point of view that informs sociological theories. Dorothy Smith observes:

The first difficulty is how sociology is thought—its methods, conceptual schemes, and theories has been based on and built up with the male social universe, even when women have participated in its doing...There is thus a disjunction between how women experience the world and the concepts and theoretical schemes by which society’s self-consciousness is inscribed (2004, p. 237).

From this perspective, sociological knowledge then represents the world of white males, and their perception of the universe. According to Harding (2004), “Standpoint theories argue for “starting off thought” from the lives of marginalized peoples; beginning in those determinate, objective locations in any social order generates illuminating and critical questions that do not arise in thought that begins from dominant group lives.” A Chicana standpoint, thus, begins from the marginalized experiences based on gender, race, and class. It deconstructs essentialist and stereotypical scholarship on women of color. As part of analyzing the Chicana standpoint, this research on the Chicana professors’ experience and their contributions to academia considers their family background, teaching methods in the classroom, and community praxis.

There are few Chicana professors, let alone writers on the Chicana experience. Less than 1% of all full-time faculty teaching in higher education...
are Latinas: only 0.4% of full professors are Latina; 0.7% are associate professors; and 1.3% are assistant professors, (Department of Education, 1999; Segura, 2003). In 2004 the number of full-time Latina professors increased by 2.5%, yet this increase was significantly low compared to other major ethnic groups (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Segura argues that, “Although few in number, their intellectual work broadens and informs interdisciplinary scholarship and is making inroads into the discourse of mainstream disciplines as well” (2003, p. 29). These few Chicana professors make an important contribution to academia, and expand theoretical insights into the existing research on ethnic communities, particularly Chicana/o communities.

As part of the theoretical points of analysis, this research examines the concept of community praxis among the Chicana professors, particularly with their engagements with family, university, and the larger community. Praxis is important to Chicana scholarship because it examines how Chicanas’ first-hand experience with oppression, encourages Chicanas to be active for social change and justice within their families, communities, and work. Praxis is defined as theory put into practice. For example, Sandoval (1999) says, “The passion for my subject comes not just from a respect and scholarly interest in this body of work, but from my lived experience as a Chicana.” Chicana professors have unique experiences that shape their discourse and praxis at a given social location that is unique from that of any white male professor. Community praxis has been a form of empowerment to Chicana faculty who face themselves in “structural environments that contain subtle discrimination” (Segura, 2003). Chicana professors encounter many challenges in academia that are an important part of their experiences, such as the valuation of their research/teaching, compensation, and promotions. Segura (2003) indicates that the mobility of Chicana professors to higher positions is low within academic institutions.

In this study, the researcher examines how the standpoint of Chicana professors influences their teachings, research, and community, and how their self-identity or awareness of social location, is used for self-empowerment within their academic settings.

**Literature Review**

The Chicana standpoint informs this exploratory research study that centers on the experiences of Chicanas and their relationship to their families, schools, and careers. Hurtado (1998) states “A central project for many Chicana Feminists has been to document the history of Chicanas and to debunk the stereotypes that portrayed them as non-agents in political struggles.” This researcher reviewed scholarly literature on how standpoint is shaped by background, what is unique to the Chicana standpoint, and how theory can be informed by the Chicana experience.
Chicana Professors’ Standpoint: Chicana Identity

This study defines Chicana as an identity chosen by women who decide to connect their critical knowledge with political activism, thus praxis. The term Latina in this study will be used to classify women who prefer that term and who may be of Latin American origin.

Chicana identity was developed over a series of experience in the women’s lives. There is no specific definition of a Chicana; in fact there are many ways women define Chicana because of the diversity among them (Huratdo, 2003, p. 3). Mirandé (1985) states that social scientists fail to recognize that “‘Chicano’ is a word self-consciously selected by many persons as symbolic of positive identification with a unique cultural heritage” (Mirandé, 1985, p. 2). In this study, the term “Chicana” is used as a conscious identification.

Standpoint

Smith’s theory of the standpoint advanced a critique of traditional sciences and offers methodological approach that can expand objective knowledge by including and privileging the experiences of the marginalized (Gardner, 2004). Smith notes that sociology has been based on the thoughts of only men and has neglected experiences of women, but can be made more objective by placing the knowledge of women at the center of discourse (Gardner, 2004). Smith also notes that the existing bodies of knowledge of women’s experiences are based on the perspectives of male writers/researchers. Women-centered sociology can offer a more direct understanding of women’s experiences, rather than studying the theories of what male sociologists perceive to be women’s experiences.

In relation to the Chicana community, Mirandé (1985) argues that “Chicano sociology can serve as a corrective for many misconceptions and erroneous characterizations which have been perpetrated by the sociology of Mexican-Americans” (p. 4). Expanding the standpoint analysis, Chicana scholars have challenged the dominant views on women of color, and it has critiqued the masculinist and racist scholarship (Hurtado, 2003). The Chicana standpoint not only places gender at the center of analysis, but race and class as well. Hence, Chicanas’ direct experiences with race, class, and gender inform their intersectional analysis. The social location of the Chicana professors in this study has a direct connection to empowerment and disempowerment in the academic setting. Zavella (1991) articulates this connection well: “These aspects of social location—class, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual preference—all are indications of social inequality and reflect power relations in which Chicanas are often relatively powerless” (p. 205). In Segura’s study (2003, p. 3), Chicana faculty reported on where they placed themselves socially (heterosexual, lesbian, married without children, married with children, and single parent), and discussed pressures based on the intersections of gender, class, and race. Their self-consciousness of where they stand in the social hierarchy often reflected their political commitments to overcoming these interrelated barriers. In the experiences of this group,
Hernandez and Morales (1999), observed that, “…Latinas experience dissuasion and discrimination throughout their educational experience, affecting their career paths.” Thus, the intersection of race, class, and gender creates a unique Chicana experience and perspective, and understanding how Chicana professors overcome entrenched social barriers to become successful professors can offer valuable insights and expand the body of knowledge on this group.

The Academic Setting and the Chicana Professors’ Standpoint

Hernandez and Morales (1999) state that, “culture and gender are two particularly important variables influencing career development” for Latinas working in faculty positions. They observe that the university continues to be a traditionally “male club” established and run by men (Hernandez & Morales, 1999). The Latina in academia is faced with the fact that the reward system is strongly biased toward the conduct and tasks traditionally established by men, not by women. Moreover, Segura (2003) documents that a segmented labor culture relegates women of color into occupationally segregated, lower paying, lower-status administrative support, clerical, and service occupations. Furthermore, women faculty members spend more time on student advising and in office hours than white male colleagues do (Segura 2003, p. 39). The division of labor for many women of color blocks their access to resources, social valorization, and mobility.

The presence of Chicanas/Latinas in academia has slowly increased compared to Chicanos/Latinos (males) (Gonzalez, Jovel, & Stoner, 2004). Latina faculty increased to 2.5% in 2004, from 1% in 1999. As of 1999 Latinas have obtained more bachelors and masters degrees compared to other women of color. However, they have not proceeded to higher education without significant challenges and sacrifices (Gonzalez, Jovel, & Stoner, 2004). For instance, Chicanas are “otherized”, within their departments based on their differences with the white male colleagues. Segura (2003, p. 4) elaborates, “Chicana otherness is intensified in those instances when they are engaged in building an alternative institutional apparatus within the university hierarchy (e.g. Chicana/o studies, ethnic studies, women’s studies, or cultural studies).”

Sandoval (1999) documented her experience in graduate school, and why she chose the topic of Chicana studies for her dissertation. Sandoval’s experiences relates to the Chicana professors’ in this study because her professors who were women of color professors helped empowered her as she finished her graduate school education. Based on her experiences, Sandoval explores the daily resistance Chicanas go through in academia, such as presenting non-mainstream literature in their departments, like she has during her academic career. Sandoval states that the academic setting can become challenging because it does not represent the communities that the majority of Chicanas come from. Sandoval’s self-conception, as she describes it, has been shaped by a series of events, including her graduate department’s
devaluation of her Chicana perspective in her work, family needs and crises, and the lack of mentors or faculty in her department. Sandoval’s (1999) daily resistance and survival in the aforementioned areas shaped her academic experiences and informed her scholarly research. Sandoval’s reported experience can help other women of color in similar positions navigate through oppressive academic structures by preparing them for challenges and providing them with strategies for survival, such as building student/faculty of color support groups.

Chicanas’ Scholarly Research
Chicana professors often have a hard time publishing their work because of their demanding workload mentioned previously (Segura, 2003). Segura further argues that Chicana faculty have a higher risk of not being promoted or being promoted to tenure slowly due to their workload and not publishing research as frequently as other tenure-seeking faculty members. Some of the responsibilities professors have to balance include their availability to students, sitting on committees, and teaching. Segura further states that “…they (Chicana faculty) tend to be tapped far more often than the more numerous White male faculty for committee assignments” (p. 38). These factors affect the Chicana professors’ ability to focus on and publish research. Furthermore, departments operating under mainstream or traditional parameters have specific theoretical hierarchies and empirical methodologies, and Chicana professors engage in a struggle for legitimacy for their work that may not use these traditional theories and methodologies (Segura, 2003). Having a strong sense of self based on a Chicanas standpoint enables these professors to withstand pressures that may come from having a different perspective.

Not only does the Chicana standpoint empower faculty, but also expands universal knowledge by offering critical insights about hegemonic perspectives that have been normalized for too long, and blame the victims of institutional discrimination (Elenes, Gonzalez, Bernal, & Villenas, 2001). An example of this is when Chicana/Latina scholars provides a critique of a male-centered, patriarchal, and heterosexist family structure found within the Chicana family (Gonzalez, Jovel, & Stoner, 2004). She offers a better understanding about how cultural knowledge contributes to the educational success of students, which results from the Chicana professor bringing to her teachings/research a new perspective (Elenes, Gonzalez, Bernal, & Villenas, 2001). Adding to the scholarly literature enables other Chicanas to share their perspectives as they construct their knowledge of their own cultural identities (Elenes, Gonzalez, Bernal, & Villenas, 2001). In addition, scholarly research from the Chicana standpoint helps create a sense of belonging for Chicana students, and is connected to their sense of praxis.

Community and Chicana Standpoint
Although family can be interpreted in a number a ways due to the diversity within the Chicana/o community, it has an important contribution to the
identity of a Chicana professor. Hurtado (2003) found that growing up as a female in a Chicana family was important to the experiences of the Chicana women in her study. According to Pesquera (2000), working women expressed a conflict between their family and work. The conflict existed in the expectation of the Chicana mother/wife in traditional familial roles that the society and culture has implemented. Hurtado (2003) also found this tension among Chicana professors who sought to balance their work and family priorities. According to Pesquera, “(Chicanas) contextualize their employment within the context of familial responsibility…Thus, employment can be constructed as an avenue for familial and personal satisfaction and as an important source of identity” (2000, p. 165). These findings support the idea that Chicana professors’ social location shapes and negotiates family as a sense of support and empowerment within the academic setting.

As part of the Chicana experience, having to negotiate family, cultural discourse and a profession comes with challenges throughout their academic experience. For Chicanas, living in “two worlds” is a challenge. One of the challenges Chicanas/Latinas face is going away to college, which means moving out of the home without being married (Gonzalez, Jovel, & Stoner, 2004). Living between the Chicano community and US mainstream culture leads to a redefining of culture (Elenes, Gonzalez, Bernal, & Villenas, 2001). What the Chicana experiences in the home has a relation to the discourse in her teaching, research, and as a student, academic success.

Aguilar, MacGillivray, and Walker (2003), found that culture is integral to analyzing “discourses”. These researchers believe that there is a constant negotiation of home and school culture when teaching, making it important to analyze the experiences of the home culture because it relates to how teachers perceive themselves and incorporate it to their school culture. The authors identify the following three findings in their exploratory research of Latinas’ experiences as teachers and their negotiation with home discourses: 1) conflicts between school and home messages; 2) discourses surrounding those tensions; and 3) Latina’s strategic responses to the challenges of the academic institution. One respondent in a study of Latinas identified the conflict between familial gender expectations and the demands of schoolwork. Other respondents felt that their familial obligations came before their teaching obligations. Based on their family background, place, and time, and other contextual factors, the negotiation of school and home was different for each respondent. Relating to the discourse of the teachers, the Latinas’ experiences while in college led them to constantly seek out other Latinas/os with similar goals and shared cultural backgrounds because building community helped them feel more comfortable in unfamiliar institutions, and gave them the confidence to ask for help in other areas. From this experience, the Latina professors indicate the importance of their own role as Latina professors (Aguilar, MacGillivary, & Walker, 2003). The strategies these women used were based on their gender and ethnicity and contributed to developing more critical awareness of ways that discourses

and structural inequities are mutually constitutive (Aguilar, MacGillivary, & Walker, 2003). As shown in the existing literature, examining a person’s social location helps understand how identity is formed, especially through home and school experiences. Chicana professors who fully understand their social location and who are at the intersection of oppression (based on race, class, and gender) are more likely to pursue praxis in their environment.

**University**

In the university setting, a form of activism for Chicana professors may be seen in their advocacy for students of color, and for faculty issues in relation to race and inequalities, through student counseling, and being advisors for student cultural groups (Hernandez, & Morales, 1999). Hernandez and Moralez’s (1999) study reported that one of their Chicana professor respondents felt a responsibility to advocate for the Chicana/o students on her campus based on her position as a faculty member. Other respondents indicated that their career decisions were based on their experiences and self-conception. They chose to be professors and work with students who are going through similar experiences (Hernandez & Moralez, 1999). These findings show that it is important for Chicana professors to connect their knowledge production with a form of activism that includes community involvement.

**Community at Large**

An important aspect of the Chicana professor standpoint is community involvement, which is essential for social change, based on direct experience as a marginalized group. One form of community involvement is art work presented to the community that depicts the experiences of Chicanas, such as the work of Yolanda M. Lopez (Hurtado, 2003; De la Torre, & Pesquera, 1993). Chicana art is not recognized by the dominant culture’s art work when it is presented to the community at large so it, is a form of activism in its depiction of experiences that are normally not shared in the arts.

Another form of activism is Chicana feminism in social groups, which helps restores the history and culture of the Chicanas. It is an important community involvement that allows Chicanas to speak out on political issues and rally in demonstrations among Chicanas/os, such as in the Chicano Movement (De la Torre & Pesquera, 1993). One of the professors Segura (2003) interviewed gives an example of praxis and her career: “… We, a few of us were able to get a few policies done regarding immigrant kids’ rights to education. We worked with INS, actually protested, but subsequently, worked out some negotiating differences there” (p. 39). Community involvement for the Chicana has a direct connection to the marginalized, which may also have a connection to the Chicana professors’ area of study. The inspiration for Chicana professors’ community involvement, according to Segura (2003), stems from their past and present oppressive experiences. Thus, their community involvement is related to social change.
METHODOLOGY
This exploratory study employs primarily in depth, open-ended interviews, informal interviews and observations. This researcher employed purposive sampling and selected three state university professors who identify themselves as Chicana. Only three Chicana professors were selected because of the study’s time constraints. Using a qualitative study method was appropriate for this study because the researcher was interested in understanding Chicana identity formation as a process and in a social context, rather than viewing identities as fixed and with predictable behaviors. The researcher wanted to explore whether Chicana professors had similar social experiences as women of color, and what specific experiences determined their Chicana identity and academic behavior in the areas of teaching, research, and community service. Hence, the central focus is the Chicana professors’ standpoint. This study’s conceptual framework suggests that social location—race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality, and other social constructs—relates to a sense of responsibility for making a difference in one’s personal life and community.

RESULTS
This researcher interviewed three Chicana assistant professors at a state university, and ensured confidentiality by using pseudonyms for each participant: Martha, Alma, and Laura. Each was the first to obtain a Ph.D. in their families. Professors Martha and Alma are first generation born in the US. Professor Laura is third generation (her parents were born in the US). All three professors indicated that their parents received little or no education, but that they placed a high value on education. The interviews emphasized the participants’ standpoint, focusing on their identity in relation to family, their academic profession, and their community service. The general guiding questions used in this study examine how their social location (race, class, and gender) affect these areas their lives, create unique challenges for them, and provide them with unique insights and commitments for social change in personal and community empowerment.

Identity and Standpoint
The researcher explored the Chicana professors’ level of awareness of their unique social location at the University. Professors Martha and Alma self-identify in terms of ethnicity as Chicana, and Professor Laura self-identifies as Chicana/Latina. These professors identify themselves with a conscious understanding of what it entails to be Chicana or Latina. They chose these self-selected identities during their college years. However, they each adjust their identities based on the context of the situation and understanding of those who they are speaking to, including their parents, other relatives, or anyone else who may have little understanding of the term “Chicana”. The most important finding, in terms of how they identified themselves, is based on their personal experiences.
**Professor Martha**
Professor Martha self-identifies as Chicana and defines Chicana as a political self-imposed term noting that “there is no one way of being a Chicana.” Thus Chicana, for her, means a way of being, thinking, and appreciating who you are. When it comes to identifying herself regionally to other people she identifies herself as Mexicana. How she identifies herself is based on her personal experiences, in particular her taking of Chicana/o courses with Chicana professors. She indicates that her Chicana professors influenced and shaped her in a positive and different ways. She describes the professor from her first Chicana/o course: “There is this thing about being Chicana that she captures very well, she inserts herself, instead of being invited…” This particular professor, being the first Chicana professor, Professor Martha encountered, helped her understand what being Chicana meant for her, stating, “I started understanding what it meant to be Chicana, you are not apologetic for who you are, and you have a very public way of displaying your values and what you believed.” She gained a sense of being proud for who she is as a Chicana in this society. She believes that there are deeper experiences, such as her experience in grade school that are also part of the reason why she self-identifies as Chicana.

**Professor Alma**
Professor Alma self-identifies herself as a Chicana from El Salvador and Peru. She gave a detailed explanation about why she identified as a Chicana, suggesting that, to her, it is beyond feeling and thinking but a way of being. She indicates El Salvador and Peru to deconstruct the notion that only Mexicanas/os are Chicanas/os. Professor Alma’s, whose identification as Chicana is based on her political and personal beliefs, states: “When I say to you I am a Chicana, it recognizes who I am, my indigenous background here in this continent, my spirituality and also my political beliefs as to what I stand for, which is the liberation and self determination of our community.” Her identity is also grounded in her personal experiences. Professor Alma specifically indicates the experience of grade school where she was told not to speak Spanish, the constant struggle to get the classes she needed in high school, and the stereotypes constantly placed on her in and out of school. These experiences led her to believe that to succeed was to assimilate. Going back to Peru was the point in her life that helped Professor Alma understand her identity, who she was, and what she needed to do. She no longer called herself “American”, but Salvadoreña and Peruana. It was not until she took her first Chicana/o college course with a Chicana professor that she identified as Chicana. Professor Alma defines what being Chicana means to her:
It is a whole way of being, it is a whole way of looking at the world, it is not separated with who you are as a person or your spirituality, it is your politics and your spirit is one, it intertwines. So how I position myself, how I am with you, how I am with students, how I am with other faculty, what I say, how I say it, what I support what I don't support, how we raise our daughter, who I married, the politics I am involved with, what I write, comes from the frame of the foundation of who I am and the principals of who I am as a Chicana, there is no stepping outside, there is no waverung.

Professor Laura
Professor Laura, who identifies herself as a Chicana/Latina, reveals how labels change over time. In her case, she dropped the Chicana identity. She indicates that she self-identified “Mexican American” in high school, “Chicana” in college, and presently Latina. Like Professor Alma, Professor Laura associated the term Chicana with a political meaning and activism around issues of social justice and empowerment. She situates the Chicana perspective during that time the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Coming from a farm-working background, she identified with civil and labor rights struggles that directly affected her parents and family. From these past experiences, her identity was informed by social inequalities, recognizing the racialized historical trends of who were the “haves and the have nots”. However, now more removed from the margins that shaped her Chicana identity, she prefers the term “Latina,” because it is more widely used and has less activist political meanings involved.

The three professors significantly expressed a relationship between their experiences and how they choose to identify themselves with each indicating that their identification with the term “Chicana” did not happen until college, and/or their exposure to a Chicana professor and Chicana/o course. In line with standpoint, direct experience seemingly offered these professors a heightened level of awareness of social injustices and thus informed their identities. For Professor Laura, as she shifted away from her more direct working class marginality, her political identification also shifted. This example supports the idea that identities are not rigid and fixed, but change as material conditions change. However, although some status marginalities are overcome (in this case, income), others remain ever present and continue to inform the politics of empowerment in the Chicana experience.

Academic Setting and the Chicana Standpoint
The Chicana professors in this study reported that being a Chicana professor is difficult, due to sexism, internal racism, and the way the institution is set up. The three professors chose their areas of expertise based on their personal experiences and beliefs. Their teachings are informed by their experiences, and are used to provide a different framework to students. They reported feeling the pressure from the university to participate in many committee meetings. Professor Martha indicates that this is the same situation
for all professors who are women of color, especially single professors. She indicates that her colleagues think she has more time because she does not have children.

Although there is pressure from the university to serve on many committees, she feels that it is wiser to balance your involvement. For her, this is where balance and priorities are of importance, and have a relation to the time left to spend with family.

Professor Laura observed that sexism exists in her department, although the department is diverse and there are more female than males. Professors Martha and Alma also reported that gender was an issue. Professor Laura expressed that, in her experience, she began to have a harder time when she spoke out in meetings then when she did not. She felt that some colleagues did not expect this behavior of her, although she feels that she has the right to give her opinions. Professor Martha shares about an experience in a department meeting where she was the only female professor present; she felt that, in order for her male colleagues to listen to her, she had to mimic their behavior. Even with these experiences, each professor noted that every department has its issues, and that overall they feel supported by their departments due to its diversity in faculty and related struggles.

Teaching
Professor Alma stated that: “What I do is who I am.” When she chose to be an educator and pursue her doctorate, it was grounded on issues of social justice and empowerment of minorities. All the literature she chooses for her courses is based on experiences she relates to personally but that are absent or marginalized within the larger university context. Much of her work and teachings are grounded on social justice. Her goal is to expose students to different perspectives. She also includes her personal experiences when she teaches because most of the readings she uses relate to race and how it relates to class, etc. Although her students are encouraged to be open about the readings, they do not necessarily have to agree with them.

Some challenges Professor Alma has experienced include the feeling that she has to work harder when she goes into the classroom to be perceived as a legitimate scholar. She feels that when she goes into the classroom, for many of her students, she is the first Chicana professor they have ever had, and they assume she is not legitimate. She indicates that she needs to work doubly hard because students may have doubts about her knowledge base and preparation. Professor Alma states that students sometimes have the impression that because they have a woman of color as a professor, the class is going to be easy. With the number of courses she teaches, she reports feeling frustrated when she is not able to help students with issues and problems they face on the campus, in particular Chicana/o students. Furthermore, from helping students and being politically involved, Professor Alma reports feeling disappointed that many of other faculty members are not politically involved, saying that it is not enough to expose their
politics in their classroom, especially as Chicanas/os. She thinks they have a responsibility to the students and to their off- and on- campus communities to use their scholarly expertise to improve the quality of life for all.

Professor Laura chose her area of academic expertise based on her personal experiences, reporting that when she teaches she includes personal experiences as a form of reference for her students. It provides a different perspective from the dominant perspective. She has received comments from students who think that her way of teaching is biased, but she feels that she is not biased because she is simply sharing her personal experiences. She has balanced her professional responsibilities to meet the needs of students by limiting her involvement inside and outside the university. By mentoring Latina students, Professor Laura feels a sense of empowerment to continue teaching her courses.

RESEARCH
Overall, each of the professors reported feeling that their research was supported by their department because of their diversity. However, they do feel that in the context of the university, their research may not be valued the same as the hard sciences are. Professor Alma stated that, for example, the university expects professors to conduct research, but does not provide funding support. She further states that it is sometimes hard to conduct research with all the other expectations the university has of professors, and other involvements they may have, including family.

The Professors and Family
The way each professor identifies what family means to them is quite different, yet similar in that they define their families on the basis of their personal experiences with their extended family. Professor Martha is single, and has a strong connection to her nuclear family. Professor Alma is married, has a child, and also holds a connection to her extended family. Professor Laura is married, with no children. Although, there is a sense of support that these professors receive from family, they also feel a tension between their profession and family life. Due to the responsibilities placed on the professors by their university and other involvements, they all expressed the importance of having a balance of priorities and being able to say “no” to commitments that can overwork them.

The three professors each reported feeling that their families were supportive of them during their pursuit of a Ph.D., and now while working as professors. For example, Professor Martha shared that her parents have always fostered learning. Her parents express their support in various gestures such as cooking for her when they visit her, bringing groceries for her so that she can focus on her work, and filling up her gas tank without telling her. Professor Alma expressed that her husband has been very supportive by helping her by negotiate work as parents, and working things out around her work schedule. Professor Laura stated that “you need to be with someone
who is willing to understand what you do as a professor, and be supportive.” She believes that, in her marriage, there is a partnership that entails understanding and support for both of their careers.

A tension that was commonly reported by each of the three Chicana professors is that they felt a tension with time. They all expressed feeling a constant tension with balancing their time between family and time for work. Two of the professors, Professor Martha, and Laura, indicated the need to separate work from family. Professor Martha observed that there needs to be a healthy expectation for oneself when it comes to work because it consumes time. She makes time to be with her family by working long hours on campus, while on weekends, if there is no need for school work, she does not receive emails or work on correcting papers. Professor Martha states:

If you don’t ever ask that of yourself then you are really allowing other people to define that success for you and so it is important to recognize here are the requirements and the ‘here is what it is important to me in terms of being a family member, a friend, and you are constantly negotiating, there is no right or wrong way… and so I really understand that making time for family is the only way you are going to have a family…

Professor Laura, reported that, due to the responsibilities of being a professor, you need to be with (if married or together) someone who is willing to understand the responsibilities of your career. She shared her experiences from her first marriage, indicating that they had a hard time because her then husband expected her to fulfill traditional gender roles, like staying at home, quitting her job, and working in his business. She felt she was supportive of him but did not receive the same support in return. Professor Laura emphasizes the importance of being with someone who is willing to deconstruct traditional roles, and shares similar values as her own, adding:

As a professional, educated Chicana/Latinas, I think it is more important that we have partners that are secure in themselves to be with a strong educated, out spoken Chicana/Latina woman.

Professor Laura believes that the conflict she had in her first marriage was between meeting the expectations of traditional roles and work. She and her former husband did not have similar values, and she felt she was not supported. In her second marriage, she finds herself deconstructing the socialized gender roles she grew up with. Professor Laura reported that her second husband helps her understand that there are things that she does unconsciously related to gender roles; for example, her feeling of the responsibility toward meeting the needs of her husband in the household. Evidently, her direct experience with gender inequities informed her pursuit of personal empowerment and her choice of a partner with a more egalitarian gender ideology.
Professor Alma defines her work as her teaching, work in the community, and other involvements. She also feels the conflict of family and work. The conflict comes with her being involved in many things that can consume most of her time and keep her from being with her family. However, she identifies with her work as part of her self-conception, stating:

…it is hard for me to separate, because my work is my politics and my politics is my work, and my politics is who I am, and who I am is my politics. It is hard for me because, even my politics goes into my house because it is who we are.

She reports that her husband does more of the domestic work than she does, due to her busy schedule. Part of being a family member and working around work schedules requires conscious negotiation, free from a gendered division of labor. She shares that her and her husband’s extended family feel that she needs to be more traditional in her role within her family, but she feels that they do not really know what her nuclear family really looks like. Her mother-in-law is very traditional in the sense that the men are not to step into the kitchen. Thus, she serves her husband food when she is with her mother-in-law out of respect for her; but the understanding between Alma and her husband is clear, and it does not threaten who she is. She states that in these cases, it is important to deconstruct what is happening for her daughter so that she does not get the impression that women serve men. She integrates her identity, career, work, political view, and family as part of what she does, and who she is.

These Chicana professor’s experiences reveal how, while the family serves as a supportive unit and refuge from work, it also reproduces inequities along gender lines that they all contest and seek to change. While they appear to assert power in this familial sphere, their work setting presents a more challenging hierarchical structure that is less malleable and more rigid to change.

Professors’ Community Involvement Praxis

Professor Martha defines community involvement as “converge and diverge” the opportunity to understand theory and practice. Her community involvement comes from her participation in a program that serves parents and high school students. Her active involvement as a professor is instilled from her father’s emphasis on services, whose saying is: “Si no sirves para servir, no sirves para vivir.” (Translation: “If you are not meant to serve, then you are not meant to live.”) Her family has played a significant role in her involvement in her community. Moreover, she relates her current community involvement to that of her mother’s involvement with Professor Martha’s elementary school during parent meetings. Professor Martha’s community involvement is connected to her area of expertise; moreover, her expressed need to be involved is more importantly connected to social change. However, she reports having learned that there has to be a limit.
to her community involvement as a way to reconcile it with the competing commitments with her career as a professor. She feels that if she is involved in too many things at once, she will not be able to put her complete effort in everything, and will lead to “burning out.”

Professor Alma sees community involvement as a long-term and consistent commitment. She states that is how one can create “structural systemic change”. It is very important for her to be involved as a professor, because she would not like to be seen as a professor who only taught and was not involved. She relates this to the roles of Chicanas/os in academia, saying that they have responsibility because there are so few of them. She recognizes that this is her own opinion and that other colleagues would disagree with her, but she feels involvement is a responsibility of professors. Her own involvements include: working with a parent program to create change; with the students on her campus, she is an advisor to a student organization, and supported the students in protests and strategized with them. Although the University and her department require professors to perform community service, it is not the reason why she gets involved, yet she feels that she has to identify her involvement to the university. Her commitment to the community and her profession are interrelated. Her different social locations are interrelated to her involvement; they are all part of who she is, as she indicated previously when talking about her identity.

Professor Laura believes that community involvement starts on the campus and extends outside. She was involved in a bilingual program for several months that made her realize that there is a lot to do in the community. Then she got involved in an outside organization to continue organizing for the betterment of the people. Community involvement for her ties everything together, like teaching, students, career, and community, together. She observed that there are few professors who are willing to commit and get involved in the community. For her having time available was a conflict between her career and her commitment to community involvement. Mentoring students is the social location that she gets the most satisfaction out of. She likes the aspect of helping Latina students with her personal experiences.

LIMITATIONS

This study examined the standpoint of Chicana professors at a state university about their self-identity and how it shapes their teaching, research, family, and community service. One limitation of the study was that there are few Chicana professors employed at the state university selected for this study; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all Chicana professors. Because this research relied solely on in depth interviews, the interpretation of the findings relied primarily on the self-reports from Chicana scholars. Other research methodologies may have revealed other relevant facts that are difficult to obtain through face-to-face interviews. Nonetheless, the
three participating Chicana professors offer a perspective that sheds light on how their Chicana standpoint is interrelated to their academic, family, and community experiences, as well as their sense of empowerment.

**Conclusion**

The interviews of the Chicana professors conducted for this study illustrate how their changing social locations are expressed in their profession. It is evident that the experiences that led these Chicanas/Latinas to identify themselves the way they do, has a close connection to the way they teach, the way they identify their responsibilities as professors, how they negotiate with family, and their feelings of responsibility for being involved in their community. Their experiences represent the intersection of race, gender, and class as part of their struggle in an academic institution. Understanding the unique experiences of these Chicana professors can offer an insight to the limitations and opportunities within our present academic spaces for women of color with working class backgrounds. These Chicanas’ presence insert into the university setting a unique experience and commitment to knowledge production and social activism.

Furthermore, praxis—the interest in connecting knowledge with action—is evident for these professors, and offers them, their students, and communities a sense of empowerment. They believe in applying their knowledge to practice. These professors find their support towards praxis through their families. The negotiation that happens in relation to their families and careers is based on their beliefs and personal experiences. Supporting the findings of the literature, they express the sense of conflict between family and career. They identified available time and the amount of work being a professor entails, as conflicting with family; however, they recognize that the workload is part of their chosen careers, but that the struggles within the institution are socially constructed. The professors believe that compromise, negotiation, and partnership are needed to balance priorities and find support as Chicana professors. The choice and experience of Chicana professors’ careers are similar to those of the professors in Segura’s (2003) research, which concludes by identifying multiple reasons why the Chicana participants chose to be professors, including:

...To challenge hegemonic discourse in their respective disciplines, articulate the needs of their diverse communities mindful of the danger of false representation, serve as role models for members of historically disenfranchised groups, and to contest racially gendered limitations imposed on their communities (21).

Segura’s conclusion applies to the Chicana professors interviewed for this study. It is evident that their roles as professors are more than just a job; it is an opportunity to create social change. This perspective is particularly true for professors who remain connected to the marginalized communities they come from, which is especially difficult to do as Chicana faculty experience
changes in their own social location. Their experiences as professors, and the way they negotiate academia is evidence that praxis is important for them as Chicanas.

Understanding the standpoint of Chicana professors is important for Chicana students. The research they conduct and the way they teach, provides students with a different perspective through lived experiences. The reported experiences of Chicana as professors are important because it provides a sense of empowerment and survival for students, especially Chicana students who want to be professors.

Finally, with the low percentage of Chicana professors working at the university-level pose the following question for future research: Why is there a significantly low number of Chicana professors in comparison to other women of color? For future studies, this researcher would also consider examining the conflict, support, and relationship between family and being a professor. Future research could also explore the oppressive hierarchies for the university at all levels for women of color from working class backgrounds.
REFERENCE


NAME-BRAND SNEAKERS: SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF ADOLESCENT CONSUMPTION
Courtney Smith
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Mridula Udayagiri

ABSTRACT
Relatively little is known about how commodity consumption amongst African-Americans affirms issues of social organization within society. Moreover, the lack of primary documentation on the attitudes of African-American (A-A) commodity consumers contributes to the distorting image of A-A adolescents who actively engage in name-brand sneaker consumption; consequently maintaining the stigma of A-A adolescents being ‘addicted to brands’ (Chin, 2001). This qualitative study sought to employ the attitudes of African-Americans from an urban/metropolitan high school in dialogue on the subject of commodity consumption; while addressing the concepts of structure and agency with respect to name-brand sneaker consumption. Additionally, this study integrated three theoretical frameworks that were used to assess the participants’ engagement as consumers of name-brand sneakers. Through a focus group and analysis of surveys, it was discovered that amongst the African-American adolescent population, sneaker consumption imparted a means of attaining a higher socio-economic status, while concurrently providing an outlet for ‘acting’ as agents within the constraints of a constructed social structure.

This study develops a practical method of analyzing several issues within commodity consumption, specifically among African-American adolescents. Prior to an empirical application of several theoretical frameworks, the researcher assessed the role of sneaker production as it predates sneaker consumption. Labor-intensive production of name-brand footwear is almost exclusively located in Asia (Vanderbilt, 1998), and has become the formula for efficient, profitable production in name-brand sneaker factories. Moreover, the production of such footwear is controlled by the demand for commodified products in the global economy. Southeast Asian manufacturing facilities owned by popular athletic footwear companies generate between $830 million and $5 billion a year from sneaker consumption (Vanderbilt, 1998). The researcher asks, What are the characteristics that determine the role of African-American consumers within the name-brand sneaker industry? The manner in which athletic name-brand footwear is consumed is a process that is directly associated with the social satisfaction of the consumer (Stabile, 2000). In this study, the researcher investigated the attitudes of adolescents towards name-brand sneaker consumption and production in order to determine how their perceived socioeconomic status affected by their consumption. Miller (2002) suggests that the consumption practices of young African-Americans present a central understanding of the act of consumption itself. While an analysis of consumption is vital in determining how and to whom a product is marketed Chin (2001), whose argument will be discussed further into this study.
explicates that (commodity) consumption is significant because it provides an understanding of the socially constructed society in which economically disadvantaged children are a part of.

**Rationale**

The interest in clothing as a commodity has been investigated in previous studies, such as in Swain’s (2002) investigation of the relationship between identity and clothing in the southeast of England. In an effort to explore the attitudes of English junior high students towards name-brand fashion, Swain discovers that “[their] appearance was a central part of how they (Westmoor Abbey pupils) defined themselves, and clothing seemed to signify self-worth” (Swain, 2002). The current study aims to pursue similar questions about the consumption practices of high school students in northern California. Specifically, the researcher investigated the social significance of the consumption of name-brand sneakers amongst African-American high school students, from an urban/metropolitan high school in Northern California who were between the ages of 15 and 18.

**Literature Review**

Production and consumption are inherently allied and “where there is subsistence production, there will be subsistence consumption” (Corrigan, 1997). This concept is particularly true of global production and consumption. Stabile (2000) suggests that “Production produces not only the object but also the manner of consumption, not only objectively but also subjectively”. Stabile’s statement leads to a widely deliberated topic: the nature of production and consumption within the footwear industry. Many studies (Schilling, 1996; Carty, 2000; Koggard, 1998) have examined the issue of global exploitation and production in the footwear industry, particularly in Southeast Asian sweatshops. Vanderbilt (1998) suggests that “…shoe production has become a perfect fit for developing nations…” such as Asia. An athletic shoe made by Nike is “designed in the United States; uses synthetic rubber made from petroleum from Saudi Arabia; is sewn in Indonesia; is transported on a ship registered in Singapore, which is run by a Korean management firm using Filipino sailors; and is marketed in Japan and the United States” (Anderson & Taylor, 2005). One nation that has been the object of much debate concerning the exploitation of industry workers is Indonesia. Within Indonesian factories, workers build a tolerance for harsh working conditions, consisting of 60-65 hours of work each week for a little over $10 (Frederick, 1998).

One particular area that has been considered within only a fraction of studies concerning global exploitation studies is the relevance of the consumption of name-brand footwear amongst African-American adolescents. The concept of global exploitation played a significant role within this study, in that it generated the discussion amongst the participants. The intentions of this
study were two-fold: 1) It investigated whether a compelling proportion of adolescents have little or no knowledge of the global production process of the sneakers that they consume; thus feeding into the multifaceted cycle of globalization; and 2) It explored the social implications behind the consumption of name-brand sneakers amongst African-American adolescents. Although globalization was discussed throughout the present study, it was not the prime focus; rather it stimulated the discourse within this investigation, particularly during the survey and interview segments.

The Role of Social Structures
The role of social structures (or the socially constructed orders in society) was central to this study. Structuralists have suggested that social structures have the capacity to elucidate human behavior (Risman, 2004). More specifically, the concept of structure encompasses the idea that the social forces that exist within society dictate the role that an individual is expected to adopt. Individuals operating within structures are referred to as social actors, or agents of social change. Risman (2004) suggests that the association between actors and social structures is that actors purposely seek to increase their “self-perceived well-being” under the constraints of social structures. Therein provides the foundation for discerning the role of commodities, more specifically, name-brand sneakers in the lives of A-A youth. Like clothing, name-brand footwear functions as a symbol (Beaudoin & Lachance, 2006). Johnson (1989) augments Beaudoin and Lachance’s (2006) argument when he suggests that symbols influence consumer choices in such a way that an “object is symbolically harmonious to the buyers’ goals, feelings, and self-definitions”. Obtaining social acceptance through the consumption of a commodity, such as a sneaker, fashions a false perception of the consumer. Adolescents are socialized to conform to clothing patterns as a part of their social interaction (Beaudoin & Lachance, 2006) with the expectation of being rewarded through how their well-being is perceived by themselves and others. Furthermore, the understanding of social structures provides a platform for understanding consumer culture.

The Culture of the Consumer
One of the essential properties of consumer practices is that “we purchase the meanings of objects rather than the objects themselves” (Corrigan, 1997). This concept is referred to as the culturalization of merchandise. Other researchers, including Hollowman (1996) and Swain (2002) have investigated this facet of cultural sociology and consumption, thus providing a platform in which studies such as this can be introduced. In her study on dress-related behavioral problems in public schools, Holloman (1996) notes that reports of dress-related behavioral problems imply that “the phenomenon occurs mainly among low-income youth of certain ethnic minority groups, most notably African-American and Latinos, who represent large numbers of the youth in public schools” (268). Swain's study looked at the relationship between school children and name-brand clothing. He proposed that “a relaxed
enforcement of school uniform created a space for pupils to use clothing as a means of gaining recognition, of generating common bonds, and of sharing interests and intimacy within the peer group of cultures” (Swain, 2002), thus reinforcing Corrigan’s (1997) previous statement pertaining to the meaning of objects. Douglas and Isherwood agree that people consume goods in order to maintain their social relationships (Corrigan, 1997). Using the theories of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, Swain (2002) illustrated the correlation between the consumption and wearing of name-brand clothing and “pupil culture and networks” as he frequently referred to them in his study. He defined Pupil Cultures as “a way of life or shared guidelines” (Swain, 2002). Both studies (Holloman, 1996; Swain, 2002) were critical in evaluating the social significance of the consumption amongst adolescents, because they acknowledged that the consumption of name-brand clothing and footwear is a cultural as well as a social phenomenon.

African-American youth “constitute an important part of the multibillion-dollar youth consumer market, especially with regard to specific products such as athletic shoes” (Hollowman, 1996). This can be attributed to the fact that, in a social context, “clothes are an important part of teenage culture” (Bernard, 1961). While it is important to take into account the reality that all teens are not partakers in the teenage culture (Bernard, 1961), there is a significant number of adolescents who contribute to consumer culture. More specifically, due to the influence of television and advertisements, youth are more likely to participate in conspicuous consumption and materialism (Lee & Brown, 1995). Conspicuous consumption, the manner by which wealth and status are measured, is characterized by “…unproductive consumption of goods; suited to larger, more developed societies of strangers; and middle- and lower-class strategy” (Corrigan, 1997). A second factor that perpetuates teenage consumer culture, particularly the subsistence of conspicuous consumption and materialism amongst adolescents, is that during adolescence it is common for youth to begin to value their appearance more than before (Holloman 1996). Schwartz (1963) suggests that “some black youth, especially those from impoverished backgrounds, may embrace certain kinds of clothing because they represent possessions that they can readily obtain and control” (Holloman, 1996).

Sneakers and African-Americans
Among some of the most popular footwear companies in the world is Nike Inc., which controls almost half of the retail sneaker market (Vanderbilt, 1998). In 1996, Nike, the world’s largest athletic shoe company, generated sales of $5,008,000,000 (Vanderbilt, 1998). With the support of spokespersons such as Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods, the company has developed into an international industry. Nike’s popularity amongst African-American consumers could be attributed to African-American endorsers and spokespersons such as Jordan and Woods. Lee and Browne (1995) suggest that “African-Americans in general react favorably to advertisements and
products that use African-American endorsers. Aaron Cooper’s, an art-school graduate working for Nike Inc., states that:

> When we go to the playground, and we just dump the shoes out it’s unbelievable. The kids go nuts. That’s when you realize the importance of Nike...Nike is the number one thing in their life [or lives]” (Vanderbilt, 1998).

The term *broing* is industry terminology that refers to visiting a ’hood (neighborhood) and suggesting a product to its residents; and implies that Nike, amongst other sneaker companies, continues to leave an impression on African-American adolescents within urban and metropolitan communities.

In order to interpret the social practices of a population of people, it has been suggested that several variables should be examined. Among them include self-efficacy. Within the framework of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Boardman & Robert, 2000). In investigating the impact of individual’s neighborhood socioeconomic status (SES) in relationship to self-efficacy, Boardman and Robert (2000) noted that in past studies, Socioeconomic status (SES) on an individual level has been related to self-efficacy. This relationship gives meaning to the manner in which people operate as agents within social structures.

**Status Attainment**

According to Corrigan (1997), goods play a key role in defining and redefining one’s social status. Hollowman (1996) affirms that “some impoverished black youth may desire or select clothing that communicates middle or upper class wealth and status.” In 2001, nearly 3.5 million black teens under the age of 18 were living in families where the income was under the poverty level (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Despite the reality that a considerable amount of African-American youth experience poverty, studies suggest that this group challenges their economic/social status by purchasing name-brand commodities. Sexton (1972) also acknowledged the implications of African-American name-brand consumption by suggesting “a need for higher status” (Johnson, 1989). Lamont and Molnar (2001) also noted in a study on African-American consumption and identity that “marketing specialists believe that blacks use consumption to signify and acquire equality, respect, acceptance and status.” This concept has endured over time. In past studies, theorists have discovered that within the African-American community, the desirability to wear fashionable clothing and partake in conspicuous consumption is strong because it reflects the means by which one can achieve a high socioeconomic status (Alexis, 1970). Although a considerable number of theorists propose that status is of paramount importance in terms of shoe consumption, Chin (2001) discovered that this trend tends to vary. In a study on African-American inner-city children
in Newhallville, Connecticut, Chin (2001) tracked the consumer habits of several African-American children. She discovered that the children’s desire to consume brands, fashion, and items that communicate status “does not exist at a constant level and exerts a fluctuating force in children’s consciousness”. Social perception was also significant when examining the function of consumption in the lives of African-American adolescents.

In accordance to the role of status as it relates to name-brand sneakers, self-efficacy has also been considered as an influencing variable in determining the influences of commodity consumption. Within the framework of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Boardman & Robert, 2000). In investigating the impact of individual’s neighborhood socioeconomic status (SES) in relationship to self-efficacy, Boardman and Robert (2000) noted that in past studies, Socio-economic status (SES) on an individual level has been related to self-efficacy. This relationship gives meaning to the manner in which people operate as agents within social structures.

The Qualities of a Commodity
In his theory of the Fetishism of Commodities, Karl Marx (1867) states that “A commodity is a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men’s labour appears to them as an objective character” (Garner, 2000). The fetishism of commodities implies that through the products of human labor, human beings are brought into relations with each other” (Corrigan, 1997). Within Marx’s paradigm, a commodity is characterized by two major factors: its exchange value and its use value. Without both use value and exchange value, a commodity can not exist (Brewer, 1984). Hornberg (1992) suggests that “in order to rethink ‘production’ in any profound sense, we must start by reintroducing the distinction between use value and exchange value. He explains that exchange value can be used interchangeably with the notion of price; and use value “should be judged in relation to the metabolic needs of some kind of structure” (Hornborg, 1992). Additionally, exchange value acquires its value from market valuation and when excessive emphasis is placed on market valuation, it leads to Marx’s Fetishism of Commodities. Brewer (1984) proposes that all commodities are characterized by and possess use value. Similar to Hornborg’s explanation of value, Hodges implies that “the value of a commodity is distinct both from its usefulness to consumers and from the so-called equivalent given for it in trade, its trade value” (Hodges, 1965). Both theorists determined that, in terms of defining the value of a commodity, such as a sneaker, a distinction between use value and exchange value must be determined. Furthermore, Hodges explicates that Marx’s theory is designed to illustrate that the exploitation of the laborer is the effect of continually applying the idea of value, “[rather the] social expression of the human labor expended in production…in classical political economy” (Hodges, 1965). This supposition, when applied to the conditions
of the laborers of Nike Inc., constructs an understanding of the exploitative labor practices in nations such as Indonesia. The actual effort laborers put into producing sneakers is a measure of value. While determining the costs, in terms of labor, that distinguishes commodities from other manufactured products, there is something that is experienced at the level of meaning by the consumers that must be explored as well.

**Culture and Consumption**
The second theoretical framework that the researcher used to navigate this study was developed by Grant McCracken, whose analysis of consumption considers the concept of *displaced meaning*. McCracken’s notion explores the role of objects in relationship to social realities and ideals. More specifically, his analysis examines goods as representations of the desired conditions of a lifestyle that an individual cannot obtain provided his/her current social standing (McCracken, 1990). It is suggested that within the experience of transferring meaning, the individual transports his/her ideals to a “distant cultural domain [where] ideals are made to seem practicable realities” (McCracken, 1990). Additionally, Corrigan’s (1997) interpretation of McCracken’s theory of *displaced meaning* advances that “objects represent bridges to meaning that cannot be attained easily in the here and now [thus] one can take a concrete step by purchasing an object that finds a place in the ideal lifestyle.” Individuals buy “high involvement goods (a car, a watch, an article of clothing)…to take possession of a small concrete part of the style of life to which they aspire. These bridges serve as proof of the existence of this style of life and even as proof of the individual’s ability to lay claim to it” (McCracken, 1990). Ultimately, the individualistic pursuit of displaced meaning influences the desire to violate the standard limitations on income and making the exceptional purchase (McCracken, 1990). Figure 1 illustrates McCracken’s theory.

**Cultural Capital**
A final theoretical framework was used to explain class and consumption. French theorist Pierre Bourdieu, an internationally renowned French scholar, has made numerous contributions to the study of class relations, including cultural capital. Bourdieu (1984) states, “Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make.” *Cultural Capital* is defined as “high status cultural signals used in cultural and social selection” (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). People appropriate themselves as a culture through their taste, which is not based on the influence of individual desire; yet through
a “mediated preference”, class distinctions and economic structures of a society are produced (Dolby, 2000). Lamont and Lareau’s (1988) study speaks well to Dolby’s work (2000) in terms of the function of cultural capital as an assessment of the process through which social stratification systems are maintained. Swain (2002) proposes that Bourdieu “views taste and fashion as an important form of capital which can be used … to gain advancement in the social hierarchy.” Similar to Swain’s proposal, Lamont and Lareau (1988) assert that cultural capital functions as a resource for investment, and ultimately can be converted in order to amplify one’s upward mobility. Contrary to Bourdieu’s view, Lamont and Lareau (1988) imply that Bourdieu’s major concern is “with the institutionalized structure of unequally valued signals.” In the self-contained society of a high school, it is probable that name-brand sneakers provide a means to upward mobility. Bourdieu (1984) believed that, “the working classes make a realistic or, functionalist use of clothing… looking for substance and function rather than form, they seek ‘value for money’.”

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study analyzed the implications of the consumption of name-brand footwear amongst African-American adolescents. The study proposed a list of questions that were designed to explore the likelihood of the subjects to consume footwear on the basis that they will achieve higher social status and increase their concept of self value. In order not to influence the subjectiveness of their responses, the subjects were not provided with any prior information concerning the production of name-brand footwear. Questions were prompted in the following areas:

1. Purchase of name-brand sneakers
2. Status that is attributed as a result of wearing name-brand sneakers
3. Familiarity with the production process of name-brand sneakers
4. Knowledge of the production of sneakers and its influence on consumption
5. Dollar amount spent on a pair of name-brand sneakers
6. Confidence associated with consuming name-brand shoes
7. Role of the name-brand sneaker in social life

The researcher used the responses from these questions to analyze several selected scholarly works and theories. These bodies of work provided the basis for an analysis of the participants’ responses. The researcher intended to reveal the significant correlation between the appropriated literature and conjectures, and the subjects’ responses in the current study.

METHODOLOGY

This study was completed by analyzing selected social theories in respect to the consumers of commodities in a metropolitan/urban community. The
researcher retrieved the needed information from online databases, including Sociological Abstracts, EBSCO HOST, & JSTOR, as well as related text. Additionally, the researcher applied a qualitative mode of inquiry that placed specific emphasis on the following variables: status, social perception, and value. This study required the participation of a large number of African-American adolescents; therefore the researcher sought an organization whose demographics reflected the needs of the researcher’s intended purpose. After selecting an organization to work with, the researcher contacted the advisor, who allowed the researcher to spend a month attending the organization’s weekly meetings.

Participants: The Black Student Union (BSU)
This study was conducted at a northern metropolitan/urban California high school campus. During the 2006/2007 academic school term, the ethnic demographics of the student population at the school involved in the current study were as follows: African-American, 25.0%; Hispanic/Latino, 27.4%; White (not Hispanic), 16.5%; Asian, 8.5%; Pacific Islander, 1.5%; Filipino, 6.1%; and American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.8% (California Department of Education).

The study’s participants were all members of the high school’s Black Student Union (BSU), a student-run club on the campus, which, at the time of the study, was in its 10th year as an active club. According to the president of the BSU, the purpose of the club is to “provide mutual support amongst each other (the students), explore and share knowledge of other cultures, and provide information concerning leaders in the world.”

Data Instruments
The researcher gathered data using a ten-question survey that was administered to 13 African-American male and female adolescents between the ages of 15 and 18. The survey was designed to attain the participants’ attitudes concerning the consumption of name-brand footwear, and, their activity as consumers of name-brand clothing. The central objective of this survey was to interpret the perspectives of high school students in such a way that the researcher could distinguish the roles of social structures in their lives as individual actors, or agents.

Results
Over the course of two months, the researcher worked with a Black Student Union (BSU) associated with a northern California High School. While the majority (seventy-seven percent) of the participants identified themselves as African-American/Black; eight percent of the participants identified themselves as Mexican, and the other fifteen percent categorized themselves as Other/Mixed. For the purpose of the current study, the researcher collected data from only the African-American participants. The participants, whose ages ranged from 15-18 years of age were surveyed only once. The
surveys revealed that ninety percent of the participants purchased name-brand sneakers. When asked if they believed that the shoes that they wore played a significant role in their social lives, seventy percent responded ‘yes’. Thirty-percent of the participants believed that they were more confident and attained a higher status when they wore or were the owners of name-brand sneakers.

The BSU members participated in an interview that used an unstructured method, in which the following three questions were discussed simultaneously amongst the entire group:

1. Do you wear name-brand sneakers? If so what is your motivation to purchase/own/wear name-brand sneakers? If not, why?
2. Do you feel that wearing name-brand sneakers contributes to your value?
3. If you wear name-brand sneakers, do you feel that the sneakers you wear are reasonably priced? Are they worth what you pay for them?

The participants’ responses varied significantly. An overwhelming majority was in favor of wearing name-brand shoes and acknowledged that: “They’re cute and it [wearing the shoes] is a popular thing.”

When the researcher asked the group why they wear the name-brand footwear the following responses were made:

- It is that serious, you gotta’ have the J’s [Jordans].
- The people that do [wear the shoes] are more respected or whatever.

In an attempt to communicate the importance of wearing name-brand sneakers as a high school student, one of the participants stated that his or her peers responded to their name-brand footwear in the following way “Look! She’s got the new Js”. The group mentioned multiple times that wearing the name-brand footwear suggested that they were in “the in crowd”.

The researcher also inquired about the participants’ feelings concerning the correlation between name-brand sneakers and individual value. A common response to the question posed was “no”. The participants elaborated in the following ways:

- I don’t have to purchase them just because everyone else is wearing them.
- I don’t think something materialistic should classify you.
- When they [friends/family] see me, they look at me like I’m rich.
- It’s a status thing.
- If you see name brand sneakers on T.V. and you get them, it gives you status.
- It shows that you have money.
Finally, the participants were asked if they believed that the shoes that they purchased were reasonably priced. The following responses were documented:

- *I’ll buy a pair [of sneakers] for seventy bucks or so, and then you go over to China and the shoe is made for seven dollars.*
- *I’m paying so much money and they’re really only worth seven dollars.*
- *Shoes are not reasonably priced at all…sometimes I break down and buy them…you’re paying for a name…you’re paying for that status.*

Other participants stated that:

- *I don’t have money, but I still have Jordans.*
- *I know a lot of people who live in 1-2 bedroom apartments who has all the Jordans.*

The responses from the participants suggested their consciousness of the social structures within which they are operating as social agents. While the students were aware that they were being exploited through their consumption, they acknowledge that they consumed the name-brand sneakers in return for higher status.

**DISCUSSION**

The current study was designed to communicate the social implications amongst consumers of name-brand sneakers. The researcher reported that ninety percent of the participants classified themselves as consumers of name-brand sneakers, thus indicating an overall high demand for the product. Seventy percent of the participants revealed that the name-brand sneakers that they wore were important in terms of their social life. Based on the considerably high response from the questions addressed to the participants, the researcher was able to support this finding with Corrigan’s (1997) literature, which suggested that social relationships are maintained through the consumption of goods.

While only thirty percent of the participants showed favorable qualities when asked questions related to their views on status attainment, the focus group revealed even more favorable qualities towards the researcher’s status-related questions. These findings supported the works of Sexton (1972), and Lamont and Molnar (2001), who suggested that African-Americans fulfill their desire for a higher socio-economic status through consumption. Chin’s (2001) implications concerning status attainment were also supported in this study. She proposed that adolescents’ desires for name-brands fluctuate, rather than existing at a constant level. The participants revealed that their demand for status items depended on the trend at a particular time. Moreover, the findings in this study supported the general presumption that social structures are key to understanding commodity consumption, specifically among adolescents.
LIMITATIONS

While the method that was used in this study can be applied to assess the implications of name-brand consumption amongst adolescents, its findings are limited because it does not determine the attitudes of all African-American adolescents; thus the researcher could not generalize the findings in this study. A further constraint was the limited amount of time available to complete the study. While the researcher’s initial objective was to survey adolescents from multiple urban communities throughout northern California, it was discovered that the amount of time that would be allotted for the study would not be sufficient to amass concise and detailed data; therefore this method was deferred until the study could be conducted over an extended period of time. An additional constraint was the range of students who were surveyed and interviewed. While it is the intention of the researcher to further investigate the implications of sneaker consumption amongst additional ethnic groups, the researcher limited the responses to a pool of participants whom identified themselves as African-American adolescents. Future studies might also integrate the experiences of adolescents from various cultural and economic backgrounds in order to determine if the distinguishing characteristics among the African-American consumers were considerably unique to this population.

Lastly, this study was not all-encompassing of the participant’s sources of income, consequently limiting the researcher from developing a more comprehensive analysis of the student’s consumer behavior.

CONCLUSION

Within this study, the researcher sought to expose the function of social structures through the consumption of sneakers that are classified as name-brand. The results of this study revealed a positive correlation between adolescent African-American consumers and their purchase of name-brand sneakers; ultimately suggesting that the structure of the urban/metropolitan community in which they belonged influenced the manner in which they consumed. Furthermore, a majority of the participants acknowledged that name-brand sneaker consumption as a social practice among adolescents in which the consumer sought a higher status as a reward.
REFERENCES


Towards a Thermodynamics of Imperialism, 27, 1-18.


PSAs: A Means for Influencing College-Aged Young Adults

Tiffany M. Smith
Faculty Mentor: Professor Timothy L. Howard

Abstract

The over-consumption of alcohol by college-aged adults continues to be a societal problem. This study analyzed the effect of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) designed to counteract alcohol advertisements on the behavior of college-aged consumers of alcohol. The researcher conducted a review of the literature as a means of discussing the issue. The aim of this research was to find the most effective means for discouraging alcohol over-consumption, specifically binge drinking, in college-aged adults, and for encouraging the responsible use of alcohol. The researcher examined media elements in relation to two theoretical frameworks as a means of conducting the research. This research contributes to continuing research efforts that recognize the need for PSAs to produce effective behavioral changes among young adult audiences.

The alcohol industry has reached billions of consumers—many of them college-aged adults—with the assistance of advertising corporations. It is of crucial importance that social marketing groups also employ advertising techniques through public service announcements (PSAs) to counteract the messages conveyed by alcohol advertisements. These pro-health campaigns, however, often face an uphill battle, since sporting and music events that attract large numbers of young adults are often sponsored by alcoholic-beverage companies (Andsager, Austin, & Pinkleton, 2001; Wagenaar, Toomey, & Lenk, 2004). The previous information has allowed this researcher to, thus, present the question of how has alcohol-related public service announcements (PSAs) have been effective in inciting a behavioral change among college-aged young adult consumers of alcohol?

Rationale

According to Andsager, Austin, and Pinkleton (2001), prosocial advertising, commonly referred to as PSAs, have made great strides in public health. The aim of many alcohol-related PSA campaigns has been to minimize or eliminate the consumption of alcohol by college-aged adults. Previous research indicates that marketing and advertising strategies are necessary if “student exposure to information about alcohol and methods of reducing risky behavior” is to be effective (Palmer, Kilmer, & Larimer, 2006).

This paper focuses on adults aged 18-24, and employs elements of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983) to assess the effectiveness of alcohol-related PSAs directed toward this age group. This group was selected because studies have shown that it is the one most likely to engage in excessive use of alcohol. Adults aged 18-24 have the
dubious honor of surpassing the 12-16 and the 26-50 + age groups in binge drinking and heavy drinking (Mitchell, 1999). Research indicates that “heavy drinking and related problems are pervasive among people in their early twenties regardless of whether they attend college” (NIAAA, 2006).

Research suggests that by influencing components such as “price, availability, and drinking context” (Holder, 2004), the opportunity for effective behavior guidance is possible. Though PSAs are the focus of this paper, it is not the goal of the researcher to denounce non-PSA strategies for behavioral change. Theory has suggested that media campaigns, in fact, are most effective when employing several strategies simultaneously (Holder, 2004). The researcher has isolated PSAs from other persuasive efforts in order to examine the impact of PSAs on this population.

**Literature Review**

Relying on results from studies conducted by Dawson et al. (2004), Johnston et al. (2005) and Wechsler et al. (2002), Martens, Ferrier, & Cimini (2006), state that 40-45% of college students engaged in “heavy episodic” drinking within a two-week period. *Heavy episodic drinking* is defined as “the consumption of five or more drinks in a row on at least one occasion within a typical two-week period” (Treise, Wolberg, & Otnes, 1999). The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) specifies the consumption amount as five or more drinks for males and four or more drinks for females. Such drinking increases an individual’s blood alcohol concentration (BAC), expressed as a percentage (National Institutes of Health).

In the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey of 2001, statistics revealed that binge drinking was the highest among the 18-24 year-old age group, reaching 48.3%, a 13% difference from the 25-34 year-old age group. Results from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reveal that young adults show the highest prevalence of “problem drinking” (Monti, Tevyaw & Borsari, 2004).

Not only is this group drinking excessively, but its drinking has been related to risky behavior. These risks include unplanned sexual activity and, for young adult students, a decline in academic performance (Treise, Wolburg, & Otnes, 1999; Wagenar, Toomey, & Lenk, 2004). The 1998 and 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse of 18- to 24-year-olds revealed high occurrences of driving under the influence of alcohol (Hingson, Heeren, Winter, & Wechsler, 2005). This public health crisis among young adults is an issue Keller and Block (1997) deemed a “national priority.” Behavioral trends such as these reflect the desire of social marketing groups to influence young adults through PSAs, with a special emphasis on drunk-driving PSAs.
The Motivation behind Drinking

The pattern of alcohol over-consumption among college-aged adults is driven by numerous factors, including friends, stress, perceived drinking norms, emotional pain, and drinking behavior prior to entering college (if applicable). Research conducted by Chen, Paschall, & Grube (2006) demonstrated that the type of alcoholic beverage consumed can also play a crucial role in the decision to consume alcohol to excess.

The belief that alcohol abuse is a rite of passage is suggested by Crawford and Novak (2006). According to these researchers at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, and Treis, Wolburg, and Ottes at the University of Tennessee (1999), students believe heavy alcohol consumption is an essential element of the college experience.

The 2006 study conducted by Crawford and Novak confirm that young adults are driven by the belief of entitlement to not just consume alcoholic beverages, but to consume them to excess. In addition to this behavior being considered an entitlement, it enhances and fulfills the social element within the lives of young adults.

Extending the discussion of beliefs held by college-aged adults about drinking, a recent study conducted by Shim and Maggs (2005) offers various conclusions regarding motives behind young adult binge drinking behavior. Results from a survey and focus group discussion of 669 college student participants between the ages of 18 and 22 allowed the researchers to identify the following three beliefs that binge drinkers possess:

1. College students’ beliefs about alcohol consumption lean more towards the idea that alcohol consumption enhances their social interactions (Shim & Maggs, 2005) as “positive psychological consequences” and lean away from the idea of the belief that heavy alcohol consumption will affect their mental and physical health (negative psychological consequences).

2. A positive correlation was found between binge drinker’s beliefs about financial consequences and alcohol consumption, suggesting that students who practice binge drinking behavior view alcohol consumption as a “cost effective activity.”

3. Results from this study suggest that binge drinking young adults tend to be on the fence about the safety of binge drinking.

Unlike Crawford and Novak, Agostinelli and Grube (2002) suggest that a primary cause of alcohol over-consumption among young adults is alcohol advertisements: “It is especially important to counter the potential effects of advertising on young people because these age groups are more susceptible to those effects.” These advertisements, Agostinelli and Grube further suggest, shape young adults’ decisions to consume alcoholic beverages. Both Crawford and Novak’s and Agostinelli and Grube’s arguments are
well-formulated; however, this researcher has placed emphasis on the latter argument as the driving force behind the current discussion.

According to Ford (2006), professor of marketing and international business at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, young adults are often the prey caught between competing alcohol marketers. Increasing competition within the alcohol market is a driving force behind targeting young adults. Responses from subjects from a private Midwestern university participating in a study conducted by Parker (1998) demonstrated the manner in which advertising companies use beverage names as an incentive to drink. In this study, the subjects recalled drinks they were exposed to such as “The Hammer,” “The Snakebite,” and “The Hand grenade,” all of which connote “danger, mystery, and intrigue” — concepts relating to risk that are especially appealing to young adults.

Social Marketing
Social marketing groups have attempted to counteract the efforts of alcohol advertisers, and to educate consumers about the risks of excessive alcohol consumption. Kotler, Roberto, and Lee (2002) define social marketing as “the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behavior for the benefit of individuals, groups, or societies as a whole.” Whereas commercial-sector marketing sells products, social marketing “sells behavior change.”

In their book *Handbook of Marketing and Society*, Bloom and Gundlach (2001) state that social marketing is sometimes misunderstood as “an alternative to individual behavior change strategies”; however, they suggest that social marketing is rather the tool responsible for an increase in “specific behaviors among target audiences.” Gomberg, Schneider, and DeJong (2001) state that these campaigns “advance social causes,” specifically suggesting alcohol as one of the more important causes.

The Public Service Announcement (PSA)
PSAs are an important tool of social marketing and are essential to public health (Roznowski & Eckert, 2006; Andsager, Austin, & Pinkleton, 2001). Many of the messages supporting the responsible use of alcoholic beverages are the work of PSAs (Treise, Wolburg, & Ottes, 1999). This public health tool takes the form of radio and television announcements, billboards, Internet sources, and newspaper and magazine advertisements (Ad Council, 2006). The strategies used in PSAs can vary from emotional appeals to celebrity endorsements. According to Andsager, Austin, and Pinkleton (2001), studies conducted by Austin and Johnson (1997a, 1997b), Hafstead et al. (1996) and Monahan (1995) suggest that the most successful prosocial ads “portray models and target behavior as being desirable.”

PSAs are distinguished from commercial advertisements in several ways. First, although they do not rely completely on donations for ads, PSAs rely heavily on non-profit/donated funding (Murry, Stam, & Lastovicka, 1996).
Secondly, the organizations responsible for the production and distribution of PSAs can compete with commercial marketing advertisements in terms of the sources of funding are concerned, because of the funding they receive from news media outlets. Unlike commercial marketing advertisements, the news media do not charge for airing PSAs (Guth & Marsh, 2007). This factor, however, does not specifically suggest better placement, as will be discussed later in this paper. Third, unlike commercial advertisements, PSAs tend to promote societal gain over financial gain. Yet, PSAs and commercial ads share one common goal: “Both groups share the incentive to reach similar audiences viewing similar media vehicles” (Bernthal, Rose, & Kaufman, 2006). The idea of both social and commercial marketing groups sharing similar audiences is interesting and has often counted against social marketing groups due to the issue of placement for these groups. For the purpose of this research, placement refers to the space (timeslot/location) the ad will occupy.

Behavioral Change
Changing drinking behavior amongst college-aged adults is a significant undertaking of prosocial groups (Agostinelli & Grube, 2002). Young adults however, are less likely to be receptive to health-related behavioral changes than other age groups are (Lee & Bichard, 2006). Studies have shown that commercial advertisements bring about more of a behavioral change in young adults than do prosocial advertisements (Austin, Pinkleton, & Fujioka, 1999). In addition, methods used to change behavior may vary. Osterhus (1997) argued that behavior is “influenced by normative forces.” In addition, Osterhus asserts that both economic and social influences are key in producing a change in behavior.

The following discussion focuses on the theoretical frameworks devised to explain behavior and the factors that influence behavioral change. Because “dual-process theories have been most widely embraced” as models of persuasion (Meyers-Levy & Malaviya, 1999), this researcher has adopted the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983) to view PSAs directed at college-aged consumers of alcohol. The researcher has also provided an explanation of a non-dual processing model, the Health Belief Model (Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker, 1988), to expand on the discussion of persuasion and behavior change. This model is used widely by health promotion organizations.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)
A theoretical framework commonly applied to both advertising and risk communication efforts is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983; Rucker & Petty, 2006). As a dual-processing theory of persuasion, ELM provides an integrative framework to understand attitude change (Petty, Heesacker, & Hughes, 1997). Although this framework has been recognized as focusing on attitude change and
persuasion, Petty and Wegener (1999) suggest that it can be applied to any judgment.

As described in the work of Agostinelli and Grube (2002), the ELM offers two routes by which the targeted audience is persuaded by PSAs to alter attitudes and behaviors: the central and the peripheral routes. These routes differ in that the central route “views attitude change as resulting from a person’s diligent consideration of information that s/he feels is central to the true merits of a particular attitudinal position,” while the peripheral route is based on positive and negative cues of an advertisement as perceived by the audience (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). The central route of persuasion relies heavily on the receiver’s determination of the pros and cons of a message. In this instance, the audience views the information that they receive as “central to the true merits of a particular attitudinal position.”

These two routes are dependent upon the motivation of the recipient to process the messages being sent as well as the ability of the recipient to process the message (Henningse, 2003). Rucker and Petty (2006) suggest that an audience’s lack of motivation means that it will be persuaded through peripheral cues. These two routes of persuasion differ in terms of the effect they have on the receiver of the message presented. The central route of persuasion results in a lengthy, possibly permanent, attitudinal change, whereas the peripheral route of persuasion tends to bring about a short-term attitudinal change. For this reason, the central route of persuasion is often the preferred route.

In addition to motivation and knowledge, research conducted by Petty, Wells, and Brock (1996) suggests that “message repetitions” and “the amount of distraction in the environment” also play a role in shaping an individual’s perception of a message (Rucker & Petty, 2006). Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann (1983) note that the relevance of a message to an audience and the involvement of the audience are significant variables that contribute to the effectiveness of a message. The ELM looks specifically at general media messages, however, for the purpose of the present study, this researcher will apply this model to PSAs.

The Health Belief Model (HBM)
The second model this researcher examined was the Health Belief Model (Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker, 1988). Similar to the ELM, this model is a predictor of behavior, with a specific emphasis on health behavior. The HBM (Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker, 1988) is used to “determine the likelihood of performing preventative health practices” (Ah, Ebert, Ngamviroj, Park, & Kang, 2004). Bloom and Gundlach (2001) recognize HBM as a theory used widely across the span of public health designers. This model follows four characteristics: susceptibility, severity, benefits, and barriers. Perceived susceptibility represents how likely someone perceives the likelihood of something happening to them. Perceived severity examines the seriousness of a situation and the consequences that one perceives the
situation to have. *Perceived benefits*, naturally, represent the advantages that will come about if the individual takes a certain action. Finally, the *perceived barrier* element examines what the costs are of taking a certain health-related action. Of related importance to the HBM model is the concept of *self-efficacy*. *Self-efficacy* is the suggestion that an individual is fully capable of recognizing that they have the ability to change (Bloom & Gundlach, 2001). A study conducted by Ah et al. (2004), suggests that those who seek a change in health practices are heavily influenced by the severity of perceived threat.

**Risk**

As stated previously, young adults tend to dedicate little time to considering their own mortality. Similarly, risk in general has proven to be of little concern to college-aged adults. Treise, Wolburg, and Ottes (1999) discovered from reports conducted by The Institute for Health Policy (1993), that “18- to 25-year-olds are the least likely of any age group to believe that heavy alcohol use is risky.”

Excessive alcohol consumption among this age group has been linked to unplanned sexual activity, cognitive impairment, and a decline in academic performance (Treise, Wolburg, & Ottes, 1999; Wagenar, Toomey, & Lenk, 2004; Gomberg, Schneider & DeJong, 2001). However, the behavior that has garnered the most attention is drunk driving. The 1998 and 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, which queried 18- to 24-year-olds, revealed high occurrences of driving under the influence of alcohol (Hingson, Heeren, Winter, & Wechsler, 2005). Social marketing groups have focused their PSAs on attempting to persuade young adults to drink responsibly and refraining from driving after consuming alcohol, as well as to opt for abstaining from alcohol.

**Social Norms**

A well-known marketing instrument/concept under the umbrella of social marketing and utilized heavily by college campuses nationwide is that of *social norms marketing*. This marketing tool is unique in that it attempts to alter behavior by reconstructing one’s perception of the normal practices of social situations (Bernthal, Rose, & Kaufman, 2006). Researchers have had their share of success with this marketing technique. In a study conducted by Gomberg, Schneider, & DeJong (2001) in which undergraduates at the University of Mississippi were exposed to a campaign entitled Just The Facts (JTF), researchers found that the “campaign also coincided with a decrease in…self-reported alcohol consumption” by modifying the manner in which students viewed social norms. The researchers were not completely convinced, however, that the JTF campaign was the sole factor in predicting a change in their drinking behavior. What may have been significant in this study and what the researchers listed as their limitation was that there were no direct questions asking participants if they recalled seeing the ad. The researchers made the argument that the change in alcohol-related behavior of the young adult participants may not have been a direct result of the
campaigning; however, there were no suggestions made as to what may have stirred this change. Therefore, this study leaves us with little understanding of the actual factors that may be attributed to this behavioral change. Still, the social norms approach is extremely significant to the social marketing industry considering how often college-aged adults tend to underestimate the drinking norms of their peers.

**Methodology**

This researcher collected more than 25 articles from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). The articles were limited to the English language. Several books obtained from the California State University Public Library also were used to conduct this research, including textbooks and general informational texts.

The researcher also utilized statistical data from the American College Health Association (ACHA) and the National College Health Assessment (NCHA). Finally, the methodological process consisted of analyses of two theoretical frameworks: The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion and Health Belief Model.

**Results**

In analyzing PSAs as a mass medium, the idea of paid and non-paid advertising are significant factors. Researchers have reached a common consensus regarding this idea: “…well-funded campaigns can afford to buy prime media time” (Randolph & Viswanath, 2004; Murry, Stam, & Lastovicka, 1996). However, the inquiry at hand is not in regards to the amount of funds that campaign planners can put towards a project, but whether well-funded campaigns differ from average-funded campaigns in effectiveness. The response to this question has been ‘yes’ for several researchers. The poor production quality of PSAs, which is directly related to funding, has been noted as a possible obstacle for reaching young adults. Andsager, Austin, & Pinkleton (2001) suggest that “if more funds are allocated to increase the production value of PSAs… the characteristics of persuasive messages themselves will be more important.”

A primary suggestion of Bernthal, Rose, and Kaufman (2006) is that enhancing the production value of PSAs would position them to compete more effectively with commercial marketing. This suggestion is based on the fact that PSAs share similar audiences with commercial marketing groups; therefore, they are often forced to target the same environments in which college-aged young adults tend to congregate (Bernthal et al., 2006). For that reason, social marketing groups must enhance the production quality of their PSAs in order to ensure an effective ad.

In contrast, a study conducted by Murry, Stam, and Lastovicka (1996), that collected survey responses from an 18- to 24-year-old male audience exposed
to a series of drunk-driving PSAs suggested that funding is not crucial to PSA effectiveness. According to the researchers, “the pre- to post-survey-based measures of young male self-reported drinking behavior showed no statistically significant differences between the paid and donated media site.” It is further suggested by these researchers that drunk-driving PSAs can be effective in reaching a young adult population regardless of the amount of funds supporting the ad.

Timing
PSAs are often hindered by the times in which their ads can be aired or displayed. Relying on work done by Hatch (2001), Roznowski and Eckert (2006) reveal that “43% of all donated PSA time is between midnight and 6 a.m.” — a time frame in which few viewers are exposed to this information. Although 9% of these advertisements are presented to viewers between the 8-11 p.m. time frame, which offers more viewers and potential target audiences, this 34% difference suggests that only a minute audience—and not the targeted audience—is being reached.

Audience Interest
A third struggle for PSAs targeting young adults has been the audience’s lack of interest in the message presented. Andsager, Austin, and Pinkleton (2001) note in the work of Grube (1993) and that of Grube and Wallack (1994) that negative responses to prosocial alcohol advertisements were reported. Specifically, terms such as “boring” represented the common response of the young-adult targeted audiences, suggesting that the message was not communicated effectively. In the media world in which these two groups cohabitate, competition is inevitable. Although the products/services being marketed by these groups differ, their target audiences remain consistent. This consistency develops into a struggle between the two entities to persuade young adult audiences to take on the suggested behavior by each group. Often the appeals of commercial advertisements overpower the messages of alcohol-related PSAs, which says a lot for the factor of competition between the groups. The lack of interest in the message from this audience coupled with their minimal consideration of risk and their mortality demonstrates a definite struggle of PSA developers in reaching targeted audiences.

Favorable Qualities of PSA Messages
Relying on research conducted by DeJong and Atkin (1995), Treise, Wolburg, and Otnes (1999) noted that communicating effective messages to young people in their teens and twenties is a complex task. The information presented below focuses on the criteria that appear to be significant in appealing to young adult audiences.

Realism
A study conducted by Andsager, Austin, and Pinkleton (2001) suggests that college-aged adults respond to portrayals of behavior they desire to adopt.
The researchers additionally found that the degree to which young adults can be persuaded is dependent upon perceived realism. In referring to realism, the researcher defines the term as how realistic an ad is and appears to be to an audience. For example, Andsager, Austin, and Pinkleton (2001) compared young adult responses to commercial ads and PSAs. The researchers concluded that young adults are aware of how commercial ads tend to step outside the boundaries of reality and appeal to fantasy worlds in order to grasp the attention of audiences. For example, a commercial ad viewed by the group displayed dogs ruling humans with beer. The participants recognized the level of exaggeration that commercial ads tend to display and acknowledged that PSAs present more components within the ads that are more likely to occur in the real world.

Austin, Pinkleton, and Fujioka (1999) similarly found realism to be a significant appeal of alcohol-related PSAs. The majority of the 246 college students surveyed in their study rated realism as one of the more important criteria.

Responses from a 2001 study comparing commercial ads and PSAs revealed that, although young adults perceived a quality of realism in the PSAs, the commercial alcohol ads were “more enjoyable than PSAs” (Andsager, Austin, & Pinkleton, 2001). Observations from participants offering this response included one that the people within the commercial ads were “better looking” and the ads looked “more expensive”. In taking an approaching based upon the Elaborated Likelihood Model and applying it to this study, the young adults in this study sought peripheral influences from the PSAs as they recognized within the commercial advertisements. The researchers, additionally, did not recognize an attitude or behavior change within the participants.

**Threat**

Threat is defined as “an expression of intention to inflict evil, injury, or damage” (Merriam Webster Online, 2007). The presence of threat within PSAs is a suggested appeal in targeting young adult audiences. In a study conducted by Outwin (1987), 143 students, ranging in age from 18-24 years attending a large college in northeastern Massachusetts, participated in a study in which anti-drunk driving PSAs were viewed. Results suggested that the threat appeal was an effective technique. Outwin (1987) concluded that little to no threat was ineffective; and that moderate threat proved to be the most effective predictor of motivational, attitudinal, and cognitive responses of young adult audiences.

As has been previously suggested by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983), cognitive effort and motivation are both contributors to the processing of a message through the central route of persuasion. It has been suggested also that if the young adults within this study experienced high elaboration (cognitive effort) as well as motivation, they would seek behavior change through the central route. In using the term
elaboration, the researcher is referring to how much an audience thinks about a message. High elaboration refers to excessive thinking of a specific message being presented, whereas low elaboration refers to very minimal thoughts in regards to the message being presented. This factor suggests that threats, especially moderate threats, are one of the best appeals used for influencing young adults. DeJong and Atkin (1995) also propose that prosocial advertising should, in attempting to reach young adult audiences, present threat as an appeal. They suggest that “social consequences” of the decision to drink and drive are more appropriate than “life-threatening consequences.” For example, a social consequence for a young adult may be embarrassing yourself in a bar because you decide to sing karaoke while drunk, as was represented in a radio ad the researcher viewed entitled “Gobbledy Gook.” Social consequences such as these present the possibility of not being socially accepted by your peers. According to Wolburg (2001), rejection by their peers is often a risk that college-aged adults are often not willing to take. In fact, this group prefers risky drinking over the risk of social rejection. An example of life-threatening consequence is the suggestion that a death may occur as a result of drunk driving.

In dealing with the use of threat in PSAs, a Lee and Bichard (2006) study suggests that the threat presented may invoke rebellion among young adult audiences. Their study notes that rebellious college students tend to be more sensitive to threatening messages. Lee and Bichard suggest that messages “be careful not to trigger rebellious college students’ defense mechanism.” An example of an ideal message for prosocial groups is provided by the researchers. These researchers suggest that messages focusing on threat to a significant other rather than directly to the rebellious students is an effective technique.

Fear
Fear has been recognized as one of the most common health communication strategies and the “most common tactic for PSAs” (Treise, Wolburg, & Otnes, 1999; Slater, 1999; Hastings, Stead, & Webb, 2004). Fear appeals tie in closely with threat appeals. Relying on research conducted by Donovan and Henley and LaTour and Rotfeld both from 1997, Hastings, Stead, and Webb (2004) identified threat as the stimulus and fear as the response. In using the term stimulus, the researchers suggest that threat is the agent responsible for inciting fear. Fear, thus, is the response that audiences have towards the moderation of threat presented in an advertisement. The authors’ overall argument is that marketers should be wary of fear messages because of the many questions that are still in need of answers. For example, they suggest that fear messages must be tested in environments outside of the laboratory setting, which would allow for a more natural response from audiences. In their multi-argument article Fear Appeals in Marketing: Strategic and Ethical Reasons For Cancer, Hastings et al. presents concerns such as the measurement of effectiveness of long-term studies, fear as forcing an audience to change
behavior, and responses from the audience that counterargue the message presented, or what the authors describe as “maladaptive responses.”

The effectiveness of instilling fear in young adults has been vigorously debated. It has been suggested that young adults tend to spend little time contemplating their mortality, and as such, PSAs that tie a fear of death to drunk drinking do not tend to resonate well with young adults (Keller & Block, 1996; Hastings, Stead, & Webb, 2004).

Keller and Block (1996) examined fear appeals in relation to the level of fear and elaboration of the audience, or the effort that an audience puts forth to process a message. Despite the concerns regarding fear appeals; however, these researchers suggested that the level of fear shares a positive relationship with the ability of the audience to elaborate on a given message. In a study of 97 college students at a large eastern university, researchers analyzed the relationship they believed to exist between levels of fear and message effectiveness. They concluded that low fear appeals with the absence of other types of intervention, such as a self-reference, in which a message is intended to help the individual versus references to others at risk, tend to be unsuccessful in bringing about the desired behavioral change. They further suggested a positive relationship between the level of fear arousal and the preference to elaborate. In contrast, high fear appeal tends to navigate the audience to elaborate on the problem and not on a solution. Therefore, Keller and Block (1996) suggest that an “intervention” is necessary in order for the audience to analyze the message from a solution-driven perspective, which would open them to a change in behavior. The researchers place an emphasis on an intervention in the message being presented regardless of whether the appeal is a low or high appeal. This factor suggests an explanation in the difference in results of fear appeal effectiveness from study to study. Table 1 shows a representation of the relationship(s) between fear appeals and message elaboration as suggested by Keller and Block.

The discussion of elaboration ties directly to the Elaborated Likelihood Model framework in that it depends on motivation and processing as a means of effectively receiving a message. The findings of studies on fear vary greatly, and a plethora of researchers have agreed that more studies are needed beneficial in order to conclude the effectiveness of this appeal (Andsager, Austin, & Pinkleton, 2001, Hastings, Stead, & Webb, 2004, Keller & Block 1996).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Fear, Intervention, and Message Elaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sexual Appeals in PSAs
We have all heard it: sex sells. Sexual appeals are commonly used in commercial advertising for selling products and services. These appeals are known to be presented through verbal communication, images, or even both in some cases (Reichert, Heckler & Jackson, 2001). Sexual appeals however, are not limited strictly to the commercial ad industry. These appeals have been known to be featured in PSAs (Reichert, Heckler, & Jackson, 2001). The question of why or how such an appeal is used in a prosocial health-related marketing industry, such as preventative alcohol-related advertisements, is one deserving attention. A response to this curiosity has been taken on by researchers Reichert, Heckler, and Jackson (2001). In a 1987 study reviewed by the aforementioned researchers, Belch, Belch and Villarreal (1987) suggest that components of sexual appeals tend to be useful because they grasp the attention of the audience, are arousing, and are memorable. In this study, designed to examine the effectiveness of sexual appeals in PSAs, Reichert, Heckler, and Jackson (2001) developed conclusions after conducting a content analysis and reviewing surveys completed by undergraduate business, communications, and journalism students. This study confirmed that persuasion using sexual appeal messages exist beyond that of commercial marketing content. The researchers concluded that PSAs containing sexual appeals can be processed without distraction from the primary message being relayed in the ad. However, the processing of these messages by the college-aged adults was more likely to be processed through the peripheral route, which, according to the Elaboration Likelihood Model, would allow for minimal elaboration of the actual message. The researchers also found a negative correlation between sexual appeals and the effect on how the young adults elaborated on the content of the message. Reichert, Heckler, and Jackson (2001) note the use of alcohol-related PSAs by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) organization being displayed in public restrooms and bars, specifically the ad of an attractive woman. Although the researchers did not recognize the success rates of sexual ads such as these, the idea that they are used for purposes other than sexually-related purposes suggests that new ideas are being created to incite a change. This finding opens the door for future studies to examine the reaction(s) and potential behavior change of young adult audiences in relation to sexually-driven PSAs.

The Role of the Source
As previously mentioned, the Elaborated Likelihood Model is constructed of two routes of persuasion: the central and peripheral. When an individual is influenced through the peripheral route, the source of the message plays a significant role in the target’s decision to alter or not alter his or her behavior. DeJong and Atkin (1995) confirm the heavy presence of celebrity-endorsed advertisements. Slater (1999), citing the work of Alperstein (1991) and Basil (1996), suggested that, generally speaking, advertisements using the presence of celebrities induce behavior change; however, the celebrity must be matched to the audience in order for the message to be effectively received.
In short, young adults will comfortably receive a presenter with whom they can relate (Slater, 1999). For example, young adults persuaded through the peripheral route of persuasion of the ELM are more likely to be persuaded by credible sources, such as their peers, or celebrity sources such as music entertainers or sports figures.

**DISCUSSION**

As stated previously within the paper, it was the intent of the researcher to analyze what has been considered to be the most effective means for discouraging the over-consumption of alcohol amongst college-aged young adult audiences. The information resulting from the review of literature has provided several pathways for discussion.

It is imperative to acknowledge the minimal contemplation that young adults tend to have regarding risk. Behavior such as binge drinking does in fact have its consequences however, societal norms on college campuses and other environments in which young adults congregate suggest otherwise. Certain drinking behaviors become normalized within these groups. Following the structure of the Health Belief Model (Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker, 1988), effective alcohol-related PSAs may entice young adults to question the seriousness of the situation; weigh the consequences of drinking responsibly and not drinking responsibly; examine the likelihood of actually taking this action: “is this action realistic?” and if so, “can it change my behavior?” Recalling that realism within PSAs tend to resonate well with college-aged young adult audiences makes this appeal significant (Andsager, Austin, & Pinkleton, 2001).

Addressing the struggle of audience interest may require PSA developers to demonstrate how young adults may benefit from choosing not to binge drink or drink to excess. Ultimately, the confidence one has in his or her ability to take on a certain health-related action can determine his or her potential to make the decision. Making the consequences of risky drinking behavior fully noticeable may affect such self-efficacy. The presence of threat within PSAs then becomes important, specifically moderate threat approaches. Threat however, would be incomplete without its counterpart, fear, which can ultimately be responsible for bringing the audience to elaborate on the message presented.

Andsager et al. (2001) concluded that some alcohol-related PSAs are not “meeting college-aged audience’s needs for personal relevance.” Personal relevance is important in a world of multiple audiences. It is a necessity for college-aged young adults to be aware of actual drinking norms instead of the drinking behaviors they perceive to be customary. Enhancing the personal relevance of alcohol-related PSA messages for young adult audiences may be dependent upon using relevant icons, such as peers or young entertainers whom young adults can relate to. Yet, caution must be taken when using the peripheral route as a means of persuasion. If a
temporary behavior change is the ultimate achievement, this route may be appropriate; otherwise, taking a central approach may be more appropriate in the case of altering drinking behavior among this population, which offers a greater opportunity for a long-lasting or permanent change in behavior.

LIMITATIONS

There were three major limitations to this study. First, the limited time span prohibited the researcher from conducting a more concentrated review of literature. Secondly, the absence of human subjects did not allow the researcher to gather data that either supported or countered the use of PSAs. Thus, the researcher depended on statistical evidence and data from secondary sources. The researcher came across many articles representative of alcohol prevention in relation to PSA efforts, many of which specifically target youth and adolescents instead of the young adult age group the researcher sought to review. This factor limited the number of case studies that the researcher reviewed.

CONCLUSION

The use of persuasion in both the pro social marketing and commercial marketing industries is without a doubt vitally important to these industries. Behavior change, as confirmed by the studies discussed in this paper, is far from a simple task. Prosocial marketing groups still face a challenge as they attempt to reach the most at-risk, alcohol-consuming audience: college-aged adults. The researcher has examined alcohol-related PSAs, a driving force in the prosocial marketing industry.

Behavior change models such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983) and the Health Belief Model (Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker, 1988) are two of the many persuasion theories available for discussion of PSAs. Relying on the concepts of central processing, peripheral processing, and threat to health, these models fall comfortably in place with alcohol-related PSAs. The researcher’s findings regarding the relationship between the ELM and the appeals of threat and fear suggest a significant relationship between these appeals and the central route of persuasion.

Few studies have investigated binge drinking in this specific audience. It is suggested by the researcher that more studies be conducted on this age group. Future researchers can analyze the specific behavior changes that take place among college-aged adults, focusing on variables that determine whether the changes are immediate, short-term, or long-term.

Future studies investigating this issue can also analyze the effects of alcohol-related PSAs in relation to the behavior change amongst young adult male and female consumers. It has been suggested that males have higher rates of binge-drinking than women. Therefore, a study investigating and comparing
the affect of prosocial advertisements on these two groups is suggested. Similarly, it has also been suggested that young adult black populations tend to binge drink less than young adult white populations do. How do alcohol-related PSAs affect these two groups? Are they more effective in inciting a behavioral change with one group more than another? A future study could provide responses for these questions.

Finally, future studies may benefit from reviewing the use of sexual appeals in PSAs targeted toward young adult consumers of alcohol. Few studies currently exist in this area of study. Therefore, future research focusing on this subject matter may escort PSA developers down a road that has been tread by few alcohol-prevention marketers.
REFERENCES


Osterhus, L. T. (1997) Pro-social consumer influence strategies: When and


