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TESTING SOME TRUISMS ABOUT POVERTY IN OKLAHOMA

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Abstract

Four truisms about poverty are often heard in Oklahoma: Dependency causes poverty, education solves poverty, discrimination is no longer a problem, and a rising economic tide floats all boats. This paper uses publicly available sources – such as the U.S. Census – to test these truisms in Oklahoma. From 1999 and 2006 it was found that poverty increased in the face of decreased public assistance, that poverty increased in the face of increased education levels, that higher rates of poverty level wages were paid to minorities and women than to white men, that poverty level wages were a part of the labor market and that poverty rises and falls as the proportion of jobs that pay poverty level wages rises and falls. Moreover, real wages fell as per capita gross domestic product rose. After a close examination of various industrial sectors and of recent cross national studies, it was concluded that a rising floor under the labor market is more effective at reducing poverty than a rising general tide of economic growth.

INTRODUCTION

Depending on where one lives and on what media one consumes, one can hear various truisms about poverty and its causes. In my state of Oklahoma, I often hear that assistance to poor people causes them to be dependent and thereby traps them in poverty. A truism that one hears from educators is that education can decrease poverty. Another truism heard is that discrimination does not really happen anymore and therefore has no affect on poverty. I also hear from both conservatives and liberals that a rising tide – meaning economic growth in general – raises all boats, which is another statement of the trickle-down theory of economic growth.

One can find studies that debunk these truisms. For example, Iceland

(2003) found that, while poverty decreased in real terms as the gross domestic product increased prior to 1973, the poverty rate marginally increased in a recession and marginally decreased during growth after 1973. Beginning in the late 1970s, Bluestone (1995) found that inequality in wages actually increased after recoveries from recessions. The factors that Iceland and Bluestone found associated with the change in how the labor market affects poverty after the 1970s have been reported in Oklahoma (Maril 2000; Cooke 2001) and include deindustrialization, the growth of the service sector, globalization, the large cohorts of the baby boom, the growth of women in the labor market, the decline of unionization, and the flight of education and jobs from the central cities to the suburbs. Yet, one still finds truisms used in public

discourse based on the performance of the economy before 1973. The purpose of this study is to look at these truisms one more time in the state of Oklahoma.

Truism 1: Welfare causes poverty by causing dependency

One side of the welfare reform debate in the 1990s (Cooke 1998) claimed that welfare causes poverty by encouraging people to stay on the dole and thereby remain poor. One still hears this truism today in arguments against extending unemployment benefits in the face of ten percent unemployment (Noah and York 2010). To test this truism, the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) statistics from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services were combined with information about families from the 2000 Census and the 2006 American Community Survey. In 2000, there were 927,703 families in Oklahoma with children under 18. Eleven percent of these families were poor and thereby could qualify for welfare/TANF. If one uses the December 2000 TANF case report as an indicator of the number of families on TANF, almost one out of five families that were poor with children under 18 were on TANF. By December 2007 – using the 2006 American Community survey to estimate the number of poor families – just over 1 out of 10 families that were poor with children under 18 were on TANF. With a drop of TANF participation by eligible families of almost half, one would expect the poverty rate to drop if dependency caused poverty. Instead, the poverty rate rose to 13 percent for families with children under 18. This does not

support the truism that dependency causes poverty.

Truism 2: Raising education levels reduces poverty

The relationship between education, the labor market, and poverty can be seen in the *Oklahoma Employment Outlook 2014*. In projecting the labor market from 2004 to 2014, the authors projected the educational credentials required for the labor market during this time period (Carpenter et al. 2006:16). About 59 percent of the jobs expected to be created during this period can be done with a high school education or less. Given current poverty rates by education and the study's expected distribution of educational requirements for added employment over the next ten-year period, one could expect that there will be a poverty rate of about 19 percent among those in the jobs created. Thirty-one percent of the jobs projected to be created in Oklahoma between 2004 and 2014 will only require "short-term on-the-job training." The good news is that this type of job requires very few skills, can be learned with a short demonstration of duties, and assures that there will be some jobs for high school dropouts. The bad news is that this type of job lends itself to poverty rate wages, high turnover, and part-time employment.

Finally, according to the U.S. Census, the percent of Oklahomans 25 years of age and older that had more than a high school education marginally increased from 49.2 percent in 1999 to 51.2 percent in 2006. Over the same time period, the poverty rate increased from 13 percent to 16 percent. Contrary to

education advocates, the nature of jobs created by the economy tends to affect educational levels required rather than increasing education levels causing good jobs to be created.

Truism 3: Discrimination is not really a problem anymore. Thus, it can have no effect on poverty.

Poverty level wages¹ are a part of the labor market. For workers from 25 to 61 years of age², about 1 in 10 were paid a poverty wage rate for a household of three in mining, in transportation, communications, and public utilities, and in wholesale trade. About 1 in 11 was paid at a poverty wage rate in public administration. These were the industrial sectors that had the lowest proportion of jobs that paid at the poverty level or lower. With respect to sex and race among these industries, women are 74 percent less likely to receive a poverty wage rate than men in mining and about equally likely to receive a poverty wage rate as men in wholesale trade. Minorities are 42 percent more likely to receive a poverty wage rate than whites in mining but only 8 percent more likely in wholesale trade. Women are 35 percent more likely to receive a poverty wage rate than men in public administration and 96 percent more likely in transportation, communications, and public utilities. Minorities are 64 percent more likely to receive a poverty wage rate than whites in public administration but are about equally likely to receive a poverty wage rate as whites in transportation, communications, and public utilities. Women composed 18 percent of workers in mining, 22

percent in wholesale trade, 27 percent in transportation, communications, and public utilities, and 44 percent in public administration. Minorities composed 15 percent of workers in mining, 12 percent in wholesale trade, 14 percent in transportation, communications, and public utilities, and 22 percent in public administration. The two industries that proportionally contained more women also were more likely to pay women poverty rate wages. Similarly, the two industries that proportionally contained more minorities were more likely to pay minorities poverty rate wages.

About 1 worker in 7 was paid at a poverty wage rate in manufacturing and in finance, insurance, and real estate. Women were 28 percent more likely to receive a poverty wage rate in finance, insurance, and real estate, which was the industry with next to the highest concentration of women workers at 65 percent. Minorities were 77 percent more likely to receive a poverty wage rate in finance, insurance, and real estate. They composed 14 percent of workers in the 25 to 61 age range in the industry. Twenty-six percent of workers in manufacturing were women, who were 142 percent more likely to receive a poverty wage rate than men. Twenty percent of workers were minorities. They were 78 percent more likely to be paid a poverty wage rate than whites.

About 1 in 5 workers were paid at a poverty rate in construction. Women only make up 10 percent of construction workers and are 17 percent less likely than men to receive a poverty wage rate. Minorities make up 18 percent of

construction workers and are 47 percent more likely than whites to receive a poverty wage rate. About 1 in 4 was paid at a poverty rate in services. Women were 12 percent more likely to receive a poverty wage rate in services, which was the industry with the highest concentration of women workers at 67 percent. Minorities make up 19 percent of service workers and are 63 percent more likely than whites to receive a poverty wage rate. And about 1 in 3 was paid at a poverty rate in retail sales and in agriculture. Women were 80 percent more likely to receive a poverty wage rate in retail sales and made up 52 percent of workers in the industry. Minorities were 63 percent more likely than whites to receive a poverty wage rate in retail sales and composed of 17 percent workers. In agriculture, women were 22 percent more likely to receive a poverty wage rate and comprised 22 percent of workers. Minorities were 76 percent more likely than whites to receive a poverty wage rate and composed 14 percent of workers.

Overall in 2006, 19.4 percent or about 1 in 5 jobs paid at a poverty rate for a household of three. This is proportional to the household poverty rate for the state of 16 percent. Overall, women made up 47 percent of wage earners in the 25 to 61 year age range. They were 47 percent more likely to receive a poverty wage rate than men. Minorities composed 19 percent of wage earners in the 25 to 61 year olds age range. They were 57 percent more likely to receive a poverty wage rate than whites.

We are about 40 years beyond the passage of the federal legislation

that made discrimination illegal. We have had enough time to have the age cohorts who lived under segregation pass through the work force. Should we still see such discrepancies in outcomes if discrimination were not a factor in hiring and promotion? Obviously, since women and minorities are the most likely to receive a poverty wage, simply stopping discrimination should decrease the poverty rate in Oklahoma.

Truism 4: A rising tide raises all boats

Since most of us live by earning a wage, the most likely cause of poverty is the labor market itself. To test this in Oklahoma, look at the proportion of poverty level jobs in the labor market and the poverty rate in a neighboring state, Kansas, and at an earlier point in time for Oklahoma—the 2000 Census, which actually reports labor and earnings information for 1999. In the 2006 Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Kansas had a household poverty rate of 12.3 percent. Almost 1 in 7 jobs in Kansas or 14.8 percent paid a poverty rate wage for a household of three for 25 to 61 year olds in the labor force. From the discussion above, 19.4 percent, about 1 in 5 jobs, paid a poverty rate wage in Oklahoma in 2006, that had a 16 percent household poverty rate. In the 2000 census, 14.7 percent of households were poor and 15.8 percent, about 1 in 6 jobs paid a poverty rate wage in Oklahoma. There is an association between the proportion of jobs that pay a poverty rate and the household poverty rate across time and geography.

As noted, Iceland (2003) found that after 1973, the poverty rate marginally increased in a recession and marginally decreased during growth. Since the proportion of poverty level jobs and poverty both increased in Oklahoma between 1999 and 2006, one would expect that the tide was falling. In fact, the gross domestic product for the state increased by 38 percent between 1999 and 2006 as the population increased by 4 percent. Here one has a case in which the tide was rising while poverty increased.

What would one expect if wages rose at the same rate as the growth in the state's gross domestic product? Using Iceland's (2003) method of calculating poverty rates under different assumptions to estimate what would have happened to the poverty rate in Oklahoma if wages would have changed at the same rate as the per capita gross domestic product for the state. The hourly wage rate for each worker from 25 to 61 years of age in the 2000 census was increased by the change in per capita gross domestic product for Oklahoma between 1999 and 2006, taking inflation into account. If the change in per capita gross domestic product during this period had affected all workers equally, one would expect an 11.1 percent or about 1 in 10 poverty wage rate. Instead, one finds a poverty wage rate in 2006 of about 1 in 5.

Looking at specific industrial sectors, the actual poverty wage rate was less than the expected poverty wage rate from the per capita gross domestic product increase only in wholesale trade. The actual poverty wage rate was somewhat higher

than expected in transportation, communications, and public utilities (poverty wage rate of 1 out of 12 workers expected, 1 out of 10 actual), agriculture (1 out of 4 expected, 1 out of 3 actual), and mining (1 out of 14 expected, 1 out of 10 actual). It was higher than expected in finance, insurance, and real estate (1 out of 12 expected, 1 out of 7 actual), services (1 out of 7 expected, 1 out of 4 actual), construction (1 out of 10 expected, 1 out of 5 actual), public administration (1 out of 20 expected, 1 out of 10 actual), and manufacturing (1 out of 17 expected, 1 out of 7 actual). It was significantly higher in retail sales (1 out of 16 expected, 1 out of 3 actual). Clearly, the increase in gross domestic product does not positively affect workers in all industrial sectors.

Using the same method from Iceland (2003), one can look at the effect of the rising gross domestic product on each quartile of the income distribution for the state. To do this, the wage distribution expected in 2006, based on the assumption that all wages in 1999 increased at the rate of change of the per capita gross domestic product, adjusted for inflation, were compared to the actual wage distribution in 2006 for each income quartile. On average, actual wages were 88 percent of what would be expected from increases in the per capita gross domestic product. This means that an increasing proportion of gross domestic product is returning to capital instead of labor. Beginning with the lowest quartile, actual wages were 81 percent of expected wages for the lowest quartile, 85 percent for the second

quartile, 87 percent for the third quartile, and 91 percent for the top quartile. Thus, more of the growth of the gross domestic product is going to higher income quartiles rather than to lower income quartiles as well as more of the gross domestic product going to capital.

To understand this distribution of poverty wages by industry, it is instructive to look at wage level, wage distribution, and the use of part-time or temporary workers. Using the population of employed persons from 25 to 62 years of age in 2006, the four sectors with the highest proportion of poverty wage jobs had the lowest average hourly wage rate for full-time workers, ranging from \$11.85/hr. to \$17.32/hr. The four sectors with the lowest proportion of poverty wage jobs had the highest average hourly wage rate for full-time workers, ranging from \$19.90/hr. to \$26.06/hr. Retail sales also had the widest standard deviation of wages as a proportion of the average wage rate for full-time retail sales workers, 0.97. A wide standard deviation indicates that there are more jobs that pay further below and above the average for the industry than usual. The narrowest standard deviation of wages as a proportion of the average wage rate for full-time workers was for transportation, communications, and public utilities, 0.57. A narrow standard deviation indicates that the pay for most jobs bunch more closely to the average. Services had the widest standard deviation of wages as a proportion of the average wage rate for part-time workers, 6.48. The narrowest for part-time workers was 1.22 for workers in public administration. Services, retail sales,

and construction industries used the largest proportion of part-time or temporary workers, ranging from 28 percent to 36 percent. The four industrial sectors with the lowest proportion of poverty rate wages used the smallest proportion of part-time or temporary workers, ranging from 14 percent to 18 percent. These three factors with a strategy of using part-time workers as a method for holding down wage demands from full-time workers.

To get another picture of the relationship between the increase in gross domestic product (the rising tide) and the incomes of workers (the boats), Table 1 was constructed based on the Bureau of Economic Analysis' "Gross average hourly wages⁵ for the industrial sector and for three occupational clusters in each industrial sector⁶ in 1999 dollars, and the percent of part-time workers – working less than 35 hours per week or less than 50 weeks per year – for the three occupational clusters in each industrial sector. This is a direct refutation of the truism that a rising tide raises all boats.

To look at what factors cause some boats to rise and others to sink in terms of wages, consider Botwinick's (1993) work on social inequality. He found three major sources of wage inequality. First, differences in earnings between and within industries set different limits to the wages of workers. Second, the disparate efforts of workers to increase their wages will affect wage differences. Finally, the ever-present reserve army of labor will set limits to wage variation. These three factors can be seen at work in Table 1.

As one looks at Table 1, industrial sectors with high rates of growth in real market value of gross domestic product were those with higher rates of growth of average wages. Both mining and wholesale trade experienced significant increases in the real market value of productivity between 1999 and 2000. The real market value of productivity for mining increased 197 percent and for wholesale trade increased 134 percent. While the average hourly value of real wages fell during this time period for almost all other industrial sectors, the real value of wages increased 18 percent for mining and 42 percent for wholesale trade. Thus, higher wages can be paid to workers in industrial sectors that have higher rates of real market value growth.

As an aside, one often hears management admonish workers to work harder to increase productivity as a means of potentially increasing wages. Ironically, real productivity actually decreased for mining by 20 percent between 1999 and 2006. The reason for the increase in real market value of productivity for mining was an increase in the price of gasoline from 1 to 2 dollars per gallon in 1999 to 3 to 4 dollars per gallon in 2006. The increased return on an hour worked was rooted in market conditions for the product. The increase in the real market value of productivity for wholesale trade appears to reside in an increase in real productivity. Chained productivity per hour of work increased for wholesale trade by 194 percent. However, the total hours worked in wholesale trade decreased by 60 percent between 1999 and 2006. The proportion of part-time workers was

cut in half over that time period. Without a detailed history of the wholesale trade sector, it is impossible to tell the story of this sector. But clearly, either less productive enterprises left the state, went out of business, or some found means of seriously increasing productivity, such as computerization and automation that resulted in more output with less labor. The real market value of productivity for all other industrial sectors was either stagnant or declining. With respect to the stagnant sectors, the real market value of productivity increased for finance, insurance, and real estate by 1 percent and decreased for services by four percent and for construction by 6 percent. Real wages decreased for finance, insurance, and real estate by one percent, for services by 1 percent, and for construction by 11 percent.

The sectors that experienced a decline in the real market value of productivity present a mixed picture with respect to wages. Retail sales behave as expected from Botwinick's study. The real market value of productivity declined by 25 percent; real wages declined by 30 percent. The behavior of the manufacturing sector and the transportation, communications, and public utility sector are a bit aberrant with respect to the observation that growth of productivity sets the limits to the growth of wages. While the real market value of productivity for manufacturing decreased by 21 percent, real wages only decreased by 6 percent. As the real market value of productivity for the transportation, communications, and public utility sector declined by 61 percent real wages actually increased

by 6 percent.

One can use Botwinick's (1993) observation that disparate efforts of workers to increase their wages will affect wage differences to account for the rising wages in the transportation, communications, and public utilities sector. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that transportation, communications, and public utilities

are the private sector with the highest percent of employees represented by unions (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009b). Moreover, if one examines the databases for stories from the *Tulsa World* and the *Daily Oklahoman* for the last 10 years, almost all of the stories that involve unions are about the transportation, communications, and public utilities

Table 1. Comparison of Gross Domestic Product per Hour Worked, Average Wages, and Percent Part-time Employment for Nonagricultural, Private Sectors for Oklahoma for 1999 and 2006

Variables	Year	Industrial Sector			
		Wholesale	Retail	FIRE ^a	Services
GDP per hour, chained in 2000 dollars	1999	14.39	25.89	69.18	17.26
	2006	42.32	28.85	73.50	19.14
GDP in 1999 dollars adjusted by CPI ^c	1999	13.99	25.96	66.91	16.58
	2006	32.78	19.39	67.57	15.98
<i>Average hourly wage in 1999 dollars</i>					
For industry	1999	12.22	16.81	16.73	14.13
	2000	17.33	11.74	16.52	14.02
For managers & professionals	1999	18.11	20.79	21.09	18.40
	2000	20.32	22.30	21.07	19.05
For technical, sales, and admin. support	1999	11.83	15.14	15.20	9.67
	2000	21.39	11.08	13.58	9.69
For production, repair, operators, labors, etc.	1999	11.23	16.16	13.47	11.52
	2000	11.05	9.80	13.30	10.88
<i>Percent part-time positions:</i>					
For managers and professionals	1999	28.0%	20.0%	19.0%	40.0%
	2000	17.0%	40.0%	14.0%	37.0%
For technical, sales, and admin. support	1999	51.0%	32.0%	36.0%	58.0%
	2000	20.0%	49.0%	34.0%	54.0%
For production, repair, operators, labors, etc.	1999	43.0%	24.0%	24.0%	42.0%
	2000	28.0%	48.0%	47.0%	44.0%

^a Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate

^c Consumer Price Index

Table 1 (continued). Comparison of Gross Domestic Product per Hour Worked, Average Wages, and Percent Part-time Employment for Nonagricultural, Private Sectors for Oklahoma for 1999 and 2006

Variables	Year	TCPU ^b	Industrial Sector		
			Mining	Construction	Manufacturing
GDP per hour, chained in 2000 dollars	1999	72.96	89.74	18.48	30.33
	2006	41.34	72.15	14.20	34.41
GDP in 1999 dollars adjusted by CPI ^c	1999	74.24	54.00	17.34	30.91
	2006	28.84	160.13	16.30	24.34
<i>Average hourly wage in 1999 dollars</i>					
For industry	1999	15.68	17.76	14.05	15.87
	2000	16.63	21.03	12.49	14.89
For managers & professionals	1999	23.69	26.84	21.72	23.91
	2000	20.60	35.19	20.59	24.73
For technical, sales, and admin. support	1999	17.25	15.38	13.87	15.52
	2000	14.57	16.23	13.21	15.00
For production, repair, operators, labors, etc.	1999	11.66	13.98	13.00	13.89
	2000	16.07	18.66	11.07	12.36
<i>Percent part-time positions:</i>					
For managers and professionals	1999	21.0%	20.0%	18.0%	11.0%
	2000	16.0%	16.0%	15.0%	13.0%
For technical, sales, and admin. support	1999	23.0%	21.0%	38.0%	23.0%
	2000	31.0%	23.0%	48.0%	20.0%
For production, repair, operators, labors, etc	1999	25.0%	27.0%	36.0%	23.0%
	2000	22.0%	25.0%	33.0%	25.0%

^b Transportation, Communications, and Public Utilities

^c Consumer Price Index

sector. Concerted actions by unions along with the regulated nature of utilities could easily account for upward pressure on real wages in the face of a decline in the real market value of productivity. Additionally, it should be noted that the gross domestic product for transportation,

communications, and public utilities actually increased by 15 percent. Thus, there may have been room in budgets to cover wages in the face of declining real market value of productivity. Moreover, the transportation communications, and public utilities sector has the narrowest

difference between the top and bottom of the salary range as measured by the standard deviation of wages divided by the average wage. So, wages to management and non-represented workers could be depressed to cover wage increases to represented workers.

The relative small loss of real hourly wages for manufacturing workers in the face of the significant loss of real market value of product probably cannot be accounted for without further study. One should note that the real productivity for manufacturing rose between 1999 and 2000 at the second highest rate behind wholesale trade. Whether this increase can be attributed to increased automation, more successful management or organization, increased productivity of workers, or some other factor, it likely indicates that the specific skills used by manufacturing workers in new systems, skills, or methods of work would make them more difficult to replace in the local labor market. It is also likely that manufacturers that rely on cheap labor move their operations to low wage countries, such as China. Anecdotally, a former neighbor, an engineer, shared that the small company for whom he works moved its manufacturing to China. I assume that, if my neighbor's small company that manufactures trolling motors for fishing boats can move its manufacturing to China, such a strategy is available to most manufacturers that choose to use low wages for its competitive advantage. Otherwise, increasing productivity rather than begging ones workers seems to be the strategy in manufacturing to remain in Oklahoma.

Botwinick's (1993) last finding was

that the ever-present reserve army of labor will set limits to wage variation. The effect of the "ever-present reserve army" can be best seen in the retail sales sector. As one would expect from Botwinick's first finding that the growth in earnings limits growth in wages, the decline of the real market value of productivity in retail sales lead to a proportional decline in real wages. One of the ways that the retail sales sector dealt with its situation was to double part-time employment for all occupations. This strategy has obvious benefits for management and owners in the retail sales sector with part-time employees who are flexibly scheduled, casually employed, receive the lowest of wages, and receive no additional benefits. One of the effects of increasing part-time employment is to increase the reserve army of workers. Note from the Consumer Expenditure Survey (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009a) that households making less than \$34,685 spend more than they make. This means that they have additional pressure to earn. So, multiple jobs or multiple workers in the household are required to maintain the household over the long term. With a rise in low-paying, part-time jobs, more workers must work more than one job in order to try to maintain a standard of living. Thus, the effect of increasing part-time, low wage work in the labor market is to increase the reserve army of workers by increasing the number of jobs than any one worker must work.

CONCLUSION

In the Russell Sage Foundation study of low-wage work in Europe and the United States (Gautié and

Schmitt 2010), the authors found that the proportion of low-wage work, and therefore work that pays poverty level wages, does not correlate with per capita Gross Domestic Product, Gross Domestic Product Growth, the growth in the hourly productivity of labor, or demographic factors such as the growth of women in the labor market. In other words, as with this study, they found that the rising tide does not assure that all boats will rise.

The factor their study found that reduced low-wage work, the thereby poverty, was a rising floor. They found that the rising floor took several forms. In some cases, strong bargaining power of workers affected multiple sectors through various mechanisms to spread the agreement. In Oklahoma, this is most clearly seen in the Transportation, Communication, and Public Utilities sector. In other cases, a strong minimum wage provided a rising floor. While some would argue that a strong minimum wage would possibly decrease employment, Bluestone (1995) found that higher minimum wages only lead to very modest losses of low income jobs that are more than offset by overall higher wages in the labor market. In yet other cases, strong income support provided a rising floor. For example, in countries that had strong income support for the unemployed, wages were forced to be higher than the income support level. While not discussed in the Russell Sage Foundation study, the elimination of the two-tier wage system involving racial and sexual discrimination would help to set a floor to wages.

One practice that Iceland (2003) and Ridgeway (2006) found that enable discrimination to continue is the failure to assess and use actual skills required and demonstrate for hiring, remuneration, and promotion decisions. In the absence of good, objective systems to assess skills required and demonstrated, they both found that employers default to stereotypes that privilege white males to make decisions.

The findings on Oklahoma in this study along with the findings of the study sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation on the United States and Europe turn the truisms about poverty upside down. Tax breaks and incentives thrown at businesses without a strong floor of worker benefits and rights simply result in more profits for businesses and higher wages for management. They do little to lower the poverty rate for the population. Having a generous welfare/unemployment system does not create dependency; it gives workers an alternative to low wages and thereby puts a solid floor on the labor market by forcing employers to pay more to entice workers into the labor market.

Endnotes

¹The poverty wage rate for this study is a wage rate paid to a worker who works 40 hours per week and 52 weeks per year that would still leave the worker and her or his household in poverty if she or he were the only income earner in a household of three. In the 2006 American Community Survey, the average size of a household in Oklahoma was 2.5, and the average size of a family was just over three.

²The values reported for variables were calculated from the Public Use Microdata Sample for Oklahoma from the U. S. Census Bureau's 2000 Census for values identified as 1999 and from the U. S. Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey for values identified as 2006. Given the wide variability in employment of persons under 25 and of persons 62 and older, the calculations were based only on adults 25 to 61 years of age.

³Gross domestic product values for Oklahoma were drawn from "Gross Domestic Product by State and Industry" (Bureau of Economic Analysis 2009). Real gross domestic product per hour was calculated by dividing gross domestic product values by industry chained to the year 2000 by the number of hours worked in that industry as calculated from the Public Use Microdata Sample for Oklahoma from the 2000 U.S. Census for 1999 and from the 2006 American Community Survey for 2006. Multiplying various amounts of products in an industrial sector by the cost of those products for a reference year, which is 2000 in this case, create a chained value (Bureau of Economic Analysis 2008). The idea is to create a dollar amount that reflects changes in mixes and amounts of products produced in an industrial sector while neutralizing the effect of changes in market prices and inflation.

⁴Using the same databases as identified in Note 3 above, the market value of gross domestic product per hour worked for an industrial sector was calculated by dividing the

nominal market value of the gross domestic product for the industrial sector, adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, by the number of hours worked in that industry. The adjustment by the Consumer Price Index was done to make values in 1999 comparable with values in 2006. Values are expressed in 1999 dollars.

⁵Hours worked in an industrial sector were estimated from census sources cited in Note 3.

⁶Average wages reported by industrial sector and, in Table 1, by occupational cluster within an industry were estimated from census sources cited in Note 3. Once again, the wages are reported in 1999 dollars, and the Consumer Price Index was used to make values in 1999 comparable with values in 2006.

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**PRODUCER ATTITUDES TOWARD AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY:
A FIVE STATE STUDY**

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Abstract

Agricultural producers from Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin were surveyed on their views toward agricultural biotechnology and their farming practices. The most divergent attitudes were North Dakota and South Dakota. Respondents from these two states differed on their attitudes toward crop preference, the regulation of genetically modified (GM) crops through moratoria, and their views toward GM crops and other genetically modified organisms (GMOs) as a positive scientific advancement.

INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements in agriculture have changed the face of the industry. Some of the most significant technological advancements in agriculture involve the development of crop and seed technologies. These technologies promise to bring many benefits, such as improved crop quality, greater overall yields, and resistance to chemicals, drought, and infestation. The adoption of these advancements, are viewed as a necessity by many conventional producers of agriculture in order to compete on a global scale. This article describes the results of a mail-out questionnaire that surveyed agricultural producers on their attitudes toward agricultural biotechnology and the planting of GM crops¹ with an overview of the topic of agricultural biotechnology and the controversy surrounding it, by address-

ing the views of those groups who support biotechnology as well as those groups who are opposed to biotechnology and its practices. In the subsequent sections, the mail-out questionnaire used to collect the survey data will be described. The study's sampling and data collection techniques will be discussed and the responses to selected survey items will be analyzed.

After summarizing the results for the survey items, a separate but related section will attempt to account for state-based differences in opinions toward agricultural biotechnology and the

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proposed benefits of planting GM summarizing the results for the survey items, a separate but related section will attempt to account for state-based differences in opinions toward agricultural biotechnology and the proposed benefits of planting GM crops, through the use of a six-item ranking index. Finally, a discussion of the state of agricultural biotechnology is presented along with concerns pertaining to the many challenges posed by biotechnology for agriculture and for the producers of agricultural products.

Support for GM Crops

Genetically modified crops, one of the chief products of agricultural biotechnology, became fully commercialized in 1996 (James 2005; Fernandez-Cornejo and Caswell 2006). Since their introduction to crop agriculture, a total of 25 countries have planted GM crops. In 2009, American producers dedicated over 158 million acres to the planting of GM crops, an amount accounting for 48 percent of all GM crops planted globally (James 2009).

These new crop varieties are viewed by many conventional producers as a technological advancement that has many potential benefits for farmers. Some of the proposed benefits include an increase in the nutritional value in food, improvements in the health of humans and animals, and the protection of the environment through reducing the use of insecticides and herbicides (USDA-Economic Research Service 2005). Some economic benefits include an increase in profits and the possibility of making farms less expensive to manage (Hillyer 1999). Further, biotechnology has been defended as a

possible solution to world hunger and world food security in that it may help to promote sustainable small-farm agriculture in developing countries (Serageldin 1999).

Agricultural producers in the states of Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, have been among the quickest to adopt the practices of agricultural biotechnology through the planting of GM crops (Fernandez-Cornejo and Caswell 2006). For example, these five states accounted for more than 37 percent of the GM soybeans grown in the United States in 2004. Four of these states (all except North Dakota) accounted for over 45 percent of the GM corn grown in 2004 (National Agricultural Statistics Service 2004). More recent data show that on average 88 percent of corn and 93 percent of soybean acres planted in these states were sown with some type of GM crop variety. These numbers are both greater than the national average of 85 percent and 91 percent, respectively (National Agricultural Statistics Service 2009). These states are also among the strongest supporters for the research, development, and application of GM products (Pew Initiative of Food and Biotechnology 2004).

Opposition Toward GM Crops

Opposition toward GM crops stems from the criticism facing biotechnology and genetic engineering in general. Some opposition is based on consumer concerns surrounding the moral issues and the safety concerns this emerging technology raises. Early research on consumer opinion and opposition toward genetic engineering conducted by Hoban, Woodrum, and Czaja (1992) investi-

gated the factors that contributed to this opposition. The study found that consumer opposition toward the practices of genetic engineering was based heavily on moral grounds and the idea that consumers tend to steer clear from products they consider to be potentially unsafe or "unnatural" (Hoban et al. 1992:477). The same research by Hoban et al. (1992) stressed the importance of recognizing the role that a lack of awareness can play in influencing the public's attitude toward new technologies and practices. More recent research supports this argument. For example, McCluskey and Swinnen (2004: 1230) argue that this lack of public awareness and knowledge is a result of inadequate and biased information from the mass media, which has resulted in "consumers being poorly informed." Further, they criticized the media for failing to be objective or neutral when highlighting the risks of biotechnology.

Other research has shown that opposition and skepticism toward biotechnology and products that contain GM material varies by geographic location and country-to-country. Perhaps the most notable opposition toward GM food products comes from the European Union and Japan. Much of the opposition and concern stems from the emphasis European and Japanese consumers place on food safety (Kalaitzandonakes 2000). The inability to segregate foods containing GM material from those that do not is also a major concern for international consumers (Taylor, Tick, and Sherman 2004). The strength of European opposition toward the marketing of foods containing GM materials became apparent after a de

facto moratorium was placed on such products by the European Union in the late 1990s (Rodemeyer 2002).

Finally, one of the sharpest criticisms of GM crops is their potential to perpetuate the inequality that exists between agricultural producers from developed countries and those from less developed countries (Altieri and Rosset 1999; Traxler 1999). The cost of research necessary to develop GM crop varieties puts less developed countries at a distinct disadvantage. This disadvantage has led to concern over the possibility that producers from less developed countries will find it increasingly difficult to compete in international markets and their populations will not be able to enjoy the proposed benefits of GM crops, most specifically the possibility of increased food security (Serageldin 1999).

Future Concerns

International opposition toward the use of GM material in food products is a serious concern to agricultural producers in the United States. Both Japan and Europe are large importers of agricultural products from the United States. The European Union and the United States also comprise the largest bilateral trade relationship in the world (Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology 2005). With the likelihood of more food products containing GM materials being introduced, international acceptance and access to international markets is vital for the economic success of GM crops (Taylor et al. 2004). Given the controversy surrounding GM products and their increased adoption, research on attitudes and values pertaining to these products seems especially relevant.

DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected through questionnaires seeking information from agricultural producers on a number of issues related to the planting of GM crops and their attitudes toward agricultural biotechnology. Specifically, producers were surveyed on their orientation to farming, their crop preference, and their opinions on issues dealing with agricultural biotechnology, its practices, its proposed benefits, and its regulation.

Using procedures described by Dillman (2000), the same questionnaire was sent to two different samples of respondents. First, the questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 2,550 farmers from the states of Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The same questionnaire was then sent to a random sample of Certified Organic Farmers from the same five states ($n=194$)².

Of the 2,550 questionnaires that were sent to the first random sample of producers, 837 were returned, yielding a response rate of less than 33 percent. A higher response rate was produced by the sample of Certified Organic Farmers. Out of a total of 194 mail-out questionnaires sent to Certified Organic Farmers, 94 were returned, yielding a response rate of over 48 percent.

A partial explanation for the relatively low response rate among the larger sample may have been due to the lack of salience some producers place on the topic. Another explanation for the lower response rate of the larger sample is that conventional producers of agricultural have been excessively surveyed, as

opposed to the less surveyed sample of organic farmers. With a response rate that was 15 percent higher than the response rate of the random sample of farmers who were sent the same questionnaire, it would appear that organic farmers are more concerned about the issues and controversies related to GM crops. This may be due to the fact that many of the practices of agricultural biotechnology are in stark contrast to those of organic farming.

RESULTS

Presented in the following sections are summaries of the responses to selected survey items from agricultural producers from the five states involved in the survey. The items include those related to orientation to farming, the crop preferences of respondents, opinions concerning the potential moratoria that could be placed on GM crops, and the degree to which producers believe that the planting of GM crops can help solve common farm problems such as farm surplus. Information is also provided regarding the attitudes producers hold toward GMOs and technology's role in the promotion of family farming, and producers' views toward GMOs as a positive new technology.

Orientation to Farming

Assuming that their approach to farming might affect their attitudes toward biotechnology, producers were asked: "Which of the following best describes your orientation to farming?" This item provided respondents with three choices regarding their orientation to farming: conventional, organic, and sustainable.

The conventional orientation to agriculture is best described as agriculture that is based on the capitalistic practices of minimizing costs while attempting to maximize production and profits (Eicher 2003). Conventional producers are often viewed as being more open to the latest breakthroughs in technologies that promise higher yields and other benefits (Illinois River Decisions Support System 2005).

The other two farming orientations have official definitions. Producers of organic crops are those that satisfy the criteria necessary to be recognized as a Certified Organic Farmer typically committed to the planting of non-GM crops. The legal definition of "sustainable agriculture" involves an integrated system of plant and animal production practices. Some of the goals of sustainable agriculture are to pursue the economic viability of farm operations while also promoting land and environmental stewardship (CSREES 2006).

The majority of respondents from each of the five states reported that they conformed to conventional forms of agricultural production. North Dakota had the lowest percentage of conventional producers (70.9 percent),

whereas Minnesota had the highest (82.8 percent). Respondents from Wisconsin (14.4 percent) and Iowa (14 percent) comprised the largest groups of sustainable producers of agriculture. Minnesota had the fewest number of farmers claiming to be sustainable farmers (5.7 percent). Finally, Wisconsin had the lowest percentage (8 percent) of farmers designating themselves as organic farmers, whereas North Dakota (20.3 percent) had the highest percentage of organic farmers (See Table 1).

Producer Crop Preferences

In order to survey respondents on their crop preference, producers were asked to rate their level of agreement (Agree, No Opinion, Disagree) with the following statement, "Naturally occurring crops are preferable to GM crops." There was a substantial range in the agreement with this item. Nearly 48 percent of producers from North Dakota were in agreement with this statement. Conversely, less than 30 percent of respondents from Iowa, and only about 33 percent of respondents from South Dakota agreed with this statement. Respondents from Iowa and South Dakota were also the most likely to disagree with this statement

Table 1. Percent distribution of Producer by orientation to farming, by state*

Orientation to Farming	Iowa	Minnesota	North Dakota	South Dakota	Wisconsin
Conventional	77.3% (116)	82.8% (130)	70.9% (115)	75.9% (142)	77.6% (97)
Organic	8.6% (13)	11.5% (18)	20.3% (33)	12.2% (23)	8.0% (10)
Sustainable	14.0% (21)	5.7% (9)	8.6% (14)	11.7% (22)	14.4% (18)
Total	100% (150)	100% (157)	100% (162)	100% (187)	100% (125)

statement (35.9 percent and 31.3 percent, respectively) (See Table 2).

The Regulation of GM Crops

In order to gauge producers' perceptions toward the regulation of GM crops, respondents were asked about their level of agreement with two separate statements. Both statements pertained to the possible regulation of GM crops through a moratorium. The first item stated, "A moratorium should be placed on the use of GM crops until it is demonstrated that public health is safeguarded." Respondents from North Dakota and Wisconsin showed strong support for this statement, as over 58 percent of producers from

North Dakota and nearly 49 percent of producers highest levels of disagreement with this statement. (See Table 3).

The second item pertaining to the regulation of GM crops stated, "A moratorium should be placed on the use of GM crops until it is demonstrated they can be kept segregated from non-GM crops." Again, producers from North Dakota (55.1 percent) were the most likely to agree with this statement. Producers from South Dakota were the least likely to indicate agreement with this statement, with only about 26 percent of respondents expressing agreement. (See Table 4).

Table 2. The extent to which Producers agreed that naturally occurring crops are preferable to GM crops, by state

Responses	Iowa	Minnesota	North Dakota	South Dakota	Wisconsin
Agree	29.3% (44)	37.7% (60)	47.8% (78)	32.8% (62)	36.5% (46)
No Opinion	39.3% (59)	33.3% (53)	30.6% (50)	30.6% (58)	34.1% (43)
Disagree	31.3% (47)	28.9% (46)	21.4% (35)	35.9% (68)	29.3% (37)
Total	100% (150)	100% (159)	100% (163)	100% (189)	100% (126)

Table 3. The Extent to Which Producers Agreed that a Moratorium Should be Placed on the Use of GM Crops Until it is Demonstrated that Public Health is Safeguarded, by State

Responses	Iowa	Minnesota	North Dakota	South Dakota	Wisconsin
Agree	42.4% (65)	37.1% (59)	58.8% (96)	35.7% (68)	48.8% (62)
No Opinion	15.0% (23)	23.2% (37)	14.5% (24)	23.6% (45)	12.5% (16)
Disagree	42.4% (65)	39.6% (63)	27.2% (45)	40.5% (77)	38.5% (49)
Total	100% (153)	100% (159)	100% (165)	100% (190)	100% (127)

Table 4. The extent to which Producers agreed that a moratorium should be placed on the use of GM Crops until it is demonstrated they can be kept Segregated from non-GM Crops, by state

Responses	Iowa	Minnesota	North Dakota	South Dakota	Wisconsin
Agree	32.0% (49)	32.7% (52)	55.1% (91)	25.7% (49)	35.7% (45)
No Opinion	16.9% (26)	18.8% (30)	19.3% (32)	23.6% (45)	17.4% (22)
Disagree	50.9% (78)	48.4% (77)	25.4% (42)	50.5% (96)	35.7% (45)
Total	100% (153)	100% (159)	100% (165)	100% (190)	100% (126)

Table 5. The extent to which Producers agreed that GMOs are good because they are the latest scientific advancement made by humans, by state

Responses	Iowa	Minnesota	North Dakota	South Dakota	Wisconsin
Agree	27.4% (42)	23.75% (38)	20.8% (34)	31.5% (60)	19.8% (25)
No Opinion	33.9% (52)	43.75% (70)	31.9% (52)	37.8% (72)	41.2% (52)
Disagree	38.5% (59)	32.5% (52)	47.2% (77)	30.5% (58)	38.8% (49)
Total	100% (153)	100% (160)	100% (163)	100% (190)	100% (126)

The Benefits of Agricultural Biotechnology

Proponents of agricultural biotechnology argue that their support for this emerging technology stems from the proposed benefits it can bring to producers (Hillyer 1999). In order to gain insight into how producers perceive the benefits of agricultural biotechnology, they were asked to rate their level of agreement to three separate statements. The first statement read: "Genetically Modified Organisms (or GMOs) are good because they are the latest scientific advancement made by humans." Respondents from South Dakota were the most likely to agree with this statement as 31.5 percent expressed

agreement. Respondents from North Dakota and Wisconsin were the least likely to agree with this statement (20.8 percent and 19.8 percent, respectively). (See Table 5).

The second item in this series surveyed respondents on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "The use of GMOs will help solve the problem of farm surpluses by finding new uses for crops and livestock." Respondents from Minnesota were the most likely to agree with this statement, as nearly 38 percent expressed agreement, while producers from North Dakota displayed the lowest levels of agreement at about 26 percent. (See Table 6).

Table 6. The extent to which Producers agreed that GMOs will help solve the problem of farm surplus by finding new uses for crops and livestock, by state

Responses	Iowa	Minnesota	North Dakota	South Dakota	Wisconsin
Agree	35.9% (55)	37.7% (60)	25.7% (42)	27.8% (52)	32.5% (41)
No Opinion	21.5% (33)	22.0% (35)	30.0% (49)	32.6% (61)	24.6% (31)
Disagree	42.4% (65)	40.25% (64)	44.1% (72)	39.5% (74)	42.8% (54)
Total	100% (153)	100% (159)	100% (163)	100% (187)	100% (126)

Table 7. The extent to which Producers agreed that GMOs promote family farming as much as they promote industrial agriculture, by state

Responses	Iowa	Minnesota	North Dakota	South Dakota	Wisconsin
Agree	31.3% (48)	28.1% (45)	27.3% (44)	31.5% (60)	30.1% (38)
No Opinion	28.1% (43)	31.25% (50)	29.8% (48)	32.1% (61)	34.1% (43)
Disagree	40.5% (62)	40.6% (65)	36.6% (59)	36.3% (69)	35.7% (45)
Total	100% (153)	100% (160)	100% (161)	100% (190)	100% (126)

Finally, respondents were asked about the level of agreement or disagreement to the statement: "GMOs promote family farming as much as they promote industrial agriculture." As with the previous survey item, producers from the five states varied in their extent of agreement. Producers from Iowa and South Dakota were the most likely to agree with this statement (31.3 percent and 31.5 percent, respectively). In contrast, producers from Minnesota and North Dakota recorded the lowest levels of agreement at less than 30 percent (28.1 percent from Minnesota and 27.3 percent from North Dakota). (See Table 7).

State Based Differences

Clearly, there were state-based differences among the respondents. In an effort to determine the reasons for these differences, an attempt was made to select and compare the two states in which the producers were most different through the development of a six-item index. The responses to the six selected items on the survey instrument were combined into one overall score. These items were:

- (1) Scientists should be limited in the kinds of genetic manipulation they can do to crops.
- (2) Scientists should be limited in the kinds of genetic manipulation they can do to animals.

- (3) That which is natural is superior to that which is human made.
- (4) Naturally occurring crops, along with hybridized crops, are preferable to genetically modified crops.
- (5) GMOs are good because they are the latest scientific/technological advancement made by humans.
- (6) GMOs are not inherently good or bad, but rather should be evaluated in terms of their consequences.

The responses to these items were coded 1 to 5. A score of "1" indicated the most negative attitude toward agricultural biotechnology and a score of "5" indicated the most positive attitude a respondent could display toward an item. The possible range of scores was from 6 to 30. This index allowed for a ranking of producers from each state based on their responses.

The mean index score of the entire sample was 20.8. When the mean index scores among the five states and organic farmers were compared, the results showed that South Dakota, with an index mean of 22.5, appears to be the most supportive of agricultural biotechnology and GMOs. In descending order, Iowa ranked second (21.9), Minnesota ranked third (21.6), and Wisconsin (21.2) and North Dakota (20.9) ranked fourth and fifth, respectively. Certified Organic Farmers recorded the lowest score with a mean index score of 14. (See Table 8). The numbers yielded by the six-item index were consistent with the views expressed by the producers in their responses to the selected survey items that were discussed earlier. As

can be seen in Table 8, respondents from North Dakota appear to be the least supportive of agricultural biotechnology, while producers from South Dakota are the most supportive.

This divergence warranted a more detailed investigation. In order to explain the differences in attitudes between these two states, the data on respondents from North Dakota and South Dakota were separated from the rest of the sample. The attitudes of Certified Organic Farmers from these two states were also examined. The separation of organic farmers from the rest of the sample allowed for a comparison between the attitudes of non-organic farmers (both conventional and sustainable producers) from North Dakota and South Dakota and the attitudes of organic farmers from these two states. The original data in Tables 3 through 8 were re-examined to find where the levels of agreement were the most divergent. The responses that varied the greatest were for those items related to crop preferences and the regulation of bio-

Table 8. Index Score Means by Category of Producer

Producer	Index Score	
Categories	Mean	N
South Dakota	22.5	172
Iowa	21.9	137
Minnesota	21.6	140
Wisconsin	21.2	122
North Dakota	20.9	128
<i>Organic Farmers</i> ³	14.0	93
Total	20.8	792

³ The category "Organic Farmers" indicates those respondents who were recognized as Certified Organic Farmers.

Table 9. The extent to which Producers agreed that naturally occurring crops are preferable to GM crops

Responses	North Dakota	South Dakota	Organic Farmers
Agree	39.3% (50)	24.5% (40)	82.4% (47)
No Opinion	34.6% (44)	33.7% (55)	14.0% (8)
Disagree	25.9% (33)	41.7% (68)	3.5% (2)
Total	100.0% (127)	100.0% (163)	100.0% (57)

Table 10. The extent to which Producers agreed that a moratorium should be placed on the use of GM crops until it is demonstrated that public health is safeguarded

Responses	North Dakota	South Dakota	Organic Farmers
Agree	48.4% (62)	29.2% (48)	92.9% (53)
No Opinion	17.9% (23)	25.6% (42)	5.2% (3)
Disagree	33.5% (43)	45.1% (74)	1.7% (1)
Total	100.0% (128)	100.0% (164)	100.0% (57)

Table 11. The extent to which Producers agreed that a moratorium should be placed on the use of GM crops until it is demonstrated they can be kept segregated from non-GM crops

Responses	North Dakota	South Dakota	Organic Farmers
Agree	46.0% (59)	17.6% (29)	89.8% (53)
No Opinion	23.4% (30)	25.6% (42)	6.7% (4)
Disagree	30.4% (39)	56.7% (93)	3.3% (2)
Total	100.0% (128)	100.0% (164)	100.0% (59)

technology and GM crops through moratoria (See Tables 2, 3, and 4). With respect to crop preference, the survey item asked respondents to rate their level of agreement to the following statement, "Naturally occurring crops are preferable to GM crops." Non-organic producers from North Dakota and South Dakota reported differing levels of agreement with this statement. More than 39 percent of non-organic producers from North Dakota agreed

with this statement, compared to only about 25 percent of non-organic producers from South Dakota. Organic farmers from North Dakota and South Dakota were the most likely to agree with this statement, as over 82 percent were in agreement (See Table 9).

A second disparity between non-organic producers from North Dakota and South Dakota was found in the two survey items that focused on the regulation of GM crops through

moratoria. The first item focusing on regulation through moratorium stated, "A moratorium should be placed on the use of GM crops until it is demonstrated that public health is safeguarded." Non-organic producers from North Dakota were far more likely than non-organic producers from South Dakota to agree with this statement as over 48 percent of non-organic producers from North Dakota were in agreement versus less than 30 percent of non-organic producers from South Dakota. Once again, organic farmers from these two states showed very high levels of agreement with this statement at nearly 93 percent (See Table 10).

The second item pertaining to the regulation of GM crops through moratoria stated, "A moratorium should be placed on the use of GM crops until it is demonstrated they can be kept segregated from non-GM crops." As with the previous statement dealing with potential moratoria, non-organic producers from North Dakota were more likely to express agreement toward this statement than those from South Dakota, as 46 percent of North Dakota respondents were in agreement compared to less than 18 percent of comparable South Dakota respondents. Remaining consistent with the other survey item that focused on the regulation of GM crops, organic farmers were in strong agreement with this statement, with over 89 percent of organic farmers in support of a moratorium (See Table 11).

DISCUSSION

The topic of biotechnology is one of great controversy that extends beyond agriculture. The potential outcomes of research conducted in the field of biotechnology, has been a topic of debate in many arenas, from

the political to the economic to the religious. Consumer attitudes toward GM products in general are still quite skeptical (Curtis, McCluskey, and Wahl 2004). In contrast, the attitudes of agricultural producers are much more positive. Producers are attracted to the possibilities GM crops bring, especially in the way of producing larger yields that are easier to manage, less vulnerable to disease and infestation, and ultimately more financially profitable (Fernandez-Cornejo and Caswell 2006).

When looking at the adoption rates and the high percentage of acres being planted with some variety of GM crop, it is clear that, for the most part, the states in this region support the planting of GM crops and the practices of agricultural biotechnology. However, producers from this region are not uniform in their attitudes toward agricultural biotechnology. The divergence in opinion was most evident among producers from North Dakota and South Dakota. Producers from South Dakota are a prime example of those in support of agricultural biotechnology as they have shown the highest rates of adoption of GM crops (Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology 2004). And, among those surveyed, respondents from South Dakota showed the lowest levels of support for the regulation of GM crops through moratoria.

This topic is where the greatest divergence in attitudes existed between the surveyed producers of these two states. Producers and consumers alike in North Dakota have supported the regulation of new varieties of GM crops through moratoria to ensure the safety of GM products and to explore the

possibilities of GM foods being segregated from non-GM foods (Taylor et. al 2004). The support for the regulation of GM crops through moratoria was evident in the responses yielded by participants from North Dakota. Attitudes toward the regulation of GM crops and crop preference might account for the fundamental differences that exist between agricultural producers in these two states.

CONCLUSION

This article focused on the attitudes of agricultural producers toward agricultural biotechnology and the planting of GM crops. Results indicated that although all of these producers were from the same region, there was a surprising amount of disagreement among them. Clearly these producers are not monolithic in their attitudes toward this controversial topic.

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AFRICAN AMERICAN DELIQUENT YOUTH: OVERCOMING ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICIES AND FINDING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

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ABSTRACT

A critical need exists for research on high school failure, dropping out, and the relationship between these actions and zero-tolerance mandates. In this article, the authors summarize the findings of a qualitative case study among seven African American male high school students at-risk of school failure who refused enrollment in alternative education. Five themes emerged in explaining their persistence in successfully obtaining a traditional high school diploma. Using statements from a qualitative interview, the article highlights the obstacles they faced and their determination to complete school in a traditional high school setting. A discussion will offer suggestions on how to successfully serve these particular students, as well as ways to advocate and support their educational needs and decisions.

INTRODUCTION

Zero-tolerance is but one component of federal school violence prevention initiatives that were developed in the 1990s. From these federal initiatives, policies were developed and implemented to severely punish students for a variety of behaviors deemed dangerous and/or in violation of school policies, particularly acts of gun violence (American Psychological Association 2008). However, since its inception, there has been an abundance of controversy surrounding the use of zero-tolerance practices within the American school system. On the one hand, zero-tolerance policies were implemented to provide fairness in addressing student misbehavior. In particular, zero-tolerance practices cover the gamut of student misbehavior, from addressing threats of violence to giving aspirin to a classmate. The practice is designed to

be a one-size-fits-all solution to all the problems that schools confront. Heir and colleagues (2000) posited that zero-tolerance mandates have redefined students as criminals, with unfortunate consequences.

Conversely, both educators and parents have highlighted a major shortcoming of zero-tolerance policies as punishing minor student infractions in harsh manners that mimic the adult criminal justice system. More specifically, zero-tolerance results in student expulsions, suspensions, or even arrests, irrespective of any legitimate explanation (Robbins 2005). Theoretically, zero-tolerance is directed at students who misbehave intentionally, yet it also applies to those who misbehave as a result of emotional problems and/or other disabilities. Furthermore, there is increasing evidence that zero-tolerance policies, while facially neutral, are having a disproportionate impact on minority students and those

who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Kim and Taylor 2008; Munoz 2004). May's (1999) examination of 10 American school districts concluded that, "Black students, already suspended or expelled at higher rates than their peers, will suffer the most under new zero-tolerance attitudes toward rising school violence" (Pp. 3). In essence, zero-tolerance means that students of color will be expelled and forced to receive alternative education at a faster rate than their non-minority counterparts (Kim and Taylor 2008).

The Initiation and Implementation of Zero-Tolerance Mandates in America

Zero-tolerance mandates were initiated in an effort to create safe schools following highly publicized youth-related school homicides in Denver, CO and Jonesboro, AR in the early 1990s. In response to these multiple episodes of youth violence, federal acts such as the *Safe Schools Act* of 1994 (PL 103-227) and the *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act* of 1994 (PL 103-382) were implemented to provide funding for violence prevention programs as well as to initiate and implement peer mediation training and conflict resolution for public schools. The addition of the *Gun-Free Schools Zones Act* of 1990 (PL 101-647) and its expansion (PL 103-227) involved gun control policies at schools and more severe punishment (e.g., expulsion) for juvenile and delinquent offenders. Amendments to the *Gun-Free Schools Act* in 1995 and 1997 expanded the original intent of the legislation such that in 1995 the word *firearms* was replaced with *weapons*; this change in wording made it

possible for schools to expel students for items that could be used as weapons such as nail clippers, files, and pocket knives (Schwartz and Riser 2001). In 1997, the act was amended to allow schools to expel students in possession of illegal drugs and/or drug paraphernalia.

In essence, these federal acts and zero-tolerance mandates represented American efforts to enforce school suspension and expulsion penalties for students caught possessing firearms; however, they were also meant to have a preventative component. An unfortunate outcome of zero-tolerance policies is that many school districts enforce zero-tolerance mandates by choosing to expel students versus implementing the preventive components of the policy such as by providing mediation, counseling, and conflict resolution services to those students deemed delinquent or violent. As a consequence, zero-tolerance policies have been the cause of a large number of students, particularly students of color, being expelled from traditional school settings thereby providing a need for alternative school settings to address their educational needs.

Alternative Education and Zero-Tolerance Mandates

An alternative school is defined by the U.S. Department of Education (2002) as a "public elementary/secondary school that addresses needs of students that typically cannot be met in a regular school, provides nontraditional education, serves as an adjunct to regular school, or falls outside the categories of regular, special education or vocational education"

(Pp. 55). Moreover, federal, state, and local guidelines require that specific types of expelled students, such as those who are on probation through the juvenile justice system, students receiving individualized educational plans (EIP's), and students with disabilities, are provided sufficient opportunities to continue their educational pursuits. During the 1990's, these requirements forced school districts to find ways to educate students who met these federal guidelines and who were also expelled from attending the traditional school setting (Bowditch 1993). The solution for many districts was to create or expand upon alternative programs to educate students who were both delinquent and displayed anti-social behaviors.

As such, alternative education programs throughout America expanded in response to the increased number of students being expelled from, or leaving, traditional school settings due to zero-tolerance infractions. The expanding of alternative education programs to include students who violated zero-tolerance mandates allowed districts to separate aggressive and delinquent youth from youth committing minor violations. Van Acker (2007) stated, "To ensure a safe school environment while continuing to provide quality education to students who display antisocial, violent, and aggressive behavior, some schools turned to alternative school programs where these at-risk and challenging students can be educated in a setting that is typically removed from the general education population" (Pp. 5). Thus, students expelled from school for committing zero-tolerance infractions were transferred to, or enrolled in,

alternative school programs to complete their education.

The use and effectiveness of alternative education. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 2001) conducted the first national study of public alternative schools and programs serving students at risk for dropping out of formal education. The study found that 10,900 public alternative schools and programs for at-risk students served approximately 612,900 students in the United States during the 2000-2001 school year. Barr and Parrett's (2001) report mirrors that of the NCES, but also determined that if private educational schools were included, the projection of alternative schools and programs increased to an estimated 20,000 schools and programs. Of particular interest, NCES reported that alternative schools were located disproportionately in urban districts with high minority student populations and with high poverty concentrations; thereby making these specific school populations susceptible to social, political, economic, and educational inequalities.

Research has been divided on the effectiveness of alternative education, as well as the quality of education provided in alternative school settings (e.g., Powell 2003; Cox 1999; Quinn, Poirier, Faller, Gable, and Tonelson 2006). A major concern centers on the development, educational skill levels, and academic achievement of delinquent students in the alternative school setting (Martin, Martin, Gibson and Wilkins 2007; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2004). More specifically, a number of reports indicate that many delinquent youth fail in their educational pursuits by dropping out of school or by not completing the GED

courses due to educational deficiencies (Siennick and Staff 2008; Wang, Blomberg and Li 2005). Thus, the statement can be made that many students do not benefit from attending school in a non-traditional setting. In fact, being placed in an alternative school, as opposed to traditional school settings, may have a detrimental impact on students' ability to pursue and achieve receiving their high school diploma or equivalency.

Present Study

Many school districts across the United States have expanded their zero-tolerance policies for other purposes; actions of which have negatively affected minority and economically disadvantaged students and their pursuit of receiving a high school diploma or equivalency. A qualitative approach was used as a means of gaining a better understanding of the experiences of a specific group of delinquent African American youth who defied odds by demanding placement in a traditional high school setting and achieved academic success.

Framing the current investigation.

The school district studied for the current article is the second largest in its Midwestern state serving over 35,000 students. The district's informal policy on students exiting detention centers who want to enroll in a district school provides three avenues for attending district-funded classes: (1) enroll directly into the district's school alternative education program; (2) enroll directly into a GED program sponsored and operated by the district; and/or (3) enroll in a modified class schedule that allows students to come to a district-operated traditional school two full or three half days a

week. Seven of 23 students exiting detention centers in spring 2008 refused the school district's protocol, citing that the existing structure of the district's three options was not the best environment for them to complete their education or equivalency.

The school district administration and the director of alternative education were adamant in their stance that the seven students needed to be slowly transitioned back into the community and traditional school setting and that by allowing them to go directly to their home schools from the detention centers was setting them up for failure. The seven students, with support from their parents and their juvenile justice system team, felt that their behavior and grades during their detention warranted them being given an opportunity to prove themselves in a traditional school setting. As supported by the findings of Siennick and staff (2008), the youths, as well as those interested in their well-being, were concerned about their success in a non-traditional educational setting. During their placement hearing, the students were able to verbalize their desire to transition back into their home schools and receive their high school diplomas. With reservations and reluctance, the hearing committee approved their requests. At the closing of the hearing, the committee and alternative school director warned the students of the high failure rate of students exiting detention centers, inpatient substance abuse, and psychiatric programs and returning to the traditional school setting, pointing to the lack of support that they may require and resources that are provided in a standard school setting.

Aims and objectives. Despite the large number of economically

disadvantaged and minority students who have been removed from the traditional school setting based on zero-tolerance mandates, little research focuses on what happens to these youths once they are expelled. There is, however, a dearth of research focusing on programs or services that attempt to educate these students once they are expelled from the public educational system in an attempt to document what works and what does not. Unfortunately, research has shown that a number of these students leave the traditional school setting and never return to formal education (Munoz 2004). Furthermore, many school districts across America, including the one utilized in the current investigation, have made it difficult for these students to return to their home schools and resume their educational endeavors. The individual cases that are the subject of this article help fill the need for research on how to protect, advocate, and empower this vulnerable population.

Using a case study approach, specific concerns from the school district administration, as well as parents of the seven students, were used as framing questions for qualitative interviews and naturalistic observations. There were three guiding questions: (1) Can the seven students defy the odds and achieve success without transitioning from alternative education? (2) Why are these seven students defying protocol and standards set by the school district? (3) What is the motivation of these seven students in attaining a high school diploma in a standard school setting?

METHOD

Participants

In spring 2008, 23 students (14 African American, six Hispanic, and three Caucasian) in a specific Midwestern school district were released from detention centers, psychiatric hospitals, or drug treatment facilities and were to enroll in alternative education. Of the original 23 students, seven African American males appealed to the school district to overturn the requirement to enroll in alternative education and therefore were chosen for the current study. Participants ranged in age from 15-18 years and were in the 10th or higher grade of high school. All seven participants were residing in a state-run detention center for youths convicted of felony acts. Part of their probation/parole plan was to return to school and continue their educational pursuits. All seven came from urban, low-income communities. All returned to single-parent, female-headed households once leaving the detention center.

The lead author, the school district's alternative education director, and a representative from the counseling agency from which they were to receive their mandatory mental health services met with the participants to examine their academic levels. Six of the seven participants tested with reading and math scores at grade level or above. One was one grade lower in reading and two grades lower in math. Four of the seven had a father with a prison history, and five of seven had fathers with a history of drug abuse. Six of the seven had no relationship with their father, with four of the seven never having met their father. Of the seven mothers, two had

been to prison, three had struggled with a drug or alcohol addiction, six were living in Section 8 housing, five had been in a domestic violence relationship, six had a high school diploma, two had some college, and two had been married.

Procedures

Prior to participating in the study, informed consent for participation was obtained from the participants and their parent(s). Following the participants' spring 2008 successful appeal and district approval to enroll in their home schools, a member of the research team met with the participants and their probation officers at their assigned community counseling agency. The participants were required to meet once a week for individual therapy sessions, twice a month for family therapy, and twice a month for group counseling sessions. As a non-participant observer, the researcher was given permission to attend education-specific group counseling sessions, sit in on the participants' visits with their probation officers at the school, and shadow and follow up with school counselors to monitor the progress and compliance of the participants. Initially, the researcher met twice a month with the participants during the semester. After spring break, the researcher met once a month with the participants. The visits continued to be at the school, at the probation officers' offices, or at the community mental health center. The visits continued through summer 2009, which is when four of the seven participants graduated.

Prior to conducting individual interviews, the lead author met with participants in a group setting as a way for them to hear each other's

views and opinions. All seven did not know each other and had only heard that there were others like themselves who refused to accept the district's policy on the treatment of those exiting private and state-run institutions. Since they were all on the same journey to oppose enrolling in an alternative school, it was of interest to observe collective discussions of their objections to alternative education, their confidence to appeal the school district's decision, and their views on education. The seven participants listened attentively to each other's reasons, explanations, and, more importantly to their feelings expressed behind the drives and purposes to request placement in a traditional school setting.

Interview items were selected based on the participants' abilities to verbalize the challenges and obstacles they faced in pursuit of a quality education, their determination to enroll in a traditional school setting, and their motivation for pursuing a high school diploma. During group and individual conversations, participants responded to the following questions: (1) Why were you so adamant against attending alternative schools? (2) Where did you get the strength and courage to appeal alternative school placement? (3) What was your parent's role in your decision to demand traditional school enrollment? Individual and group-based qualitative interviews were recorded and field notes were completed at the conclusion of each interview.

Following the group-based interview, the researcher spent hours socializing with participants and observing them in their home and school setting. Interviews were also conducted with teachers, probations

officers, and family members to gauge levels of commitment to academic achievement, and, secondarily, to assess the trustworthiness of the participants' accounts (Bogdan and Biklen 1998; Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, and Richardson 2005). Field notes and audio tapes were transcribed and analyzed ethnographically so that emergent themes in participants' responses could be identified and categorized as appropriate. Name and other details reported in the current article are anonymous. The use of different data collection methods (interviews, observations, and field notes) and different sources of information (talking with multiple informants) allowed the researcher to triangulate data and look for evidence of regularities and irregularities in the interviews and data (Cresswell 1998).

RESULTS

Analyses

The primary goal of analyses was to establish conceptually related cluster matrices for interpretation (Miles and Huberman 1984). Such matrices provided a method of organizing data so that important themes emerged. Following the initial sorting, coding and memoing, many themes were identified. Determining the core themes, the researchers decided to "give priority to topics on which a substantial amount of data [were] collected and [for] which a recurrent or underlying pattern of activities in the setting under study" emerged (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995:5). Five overarching themes materialized from the data either singularly or in combination: (1) Safety, (2) Anti-delinquency, (3) Pride,

(4) Support, and (5) Motivation. The following paragraphs provide a brief description of each participant as a means of setting the foundation for more fully discussing the emergent themes. The life stories reflect statements made by the participants themselves, their parents, teachers, and parole officers. The latter sections discuss each major theme in detail; proving specific representative quotes from participants.

Brief Biographies

Marcus: As a 16-year-old, African American male, Marcus resides with his mother and three siblings. His mother and father never married, and he has no relationship with his father. Marcus and his family have lived in low income housing since his birth. His mother graduated from high school and attended three semesters at a local junior college. Marcus reported that he was always a problem child at home and school. He recalls having had a number of encounters with the criminal justice system, starting with stealing at the age of ten. Marcus became involved in a gang when he was nine, following in the footsteps of an older cousin and had his first gun at 11-years-old. He was a chronic youth offender and was on probation at the age of 13 years following a drive-by shooting with his fellow gang members. Marcus was charged and sentenced in the juvenile court system and served 3½ years in a state-run detention center. An academic placement test while incarcerated showed that his reading and math skills were 1 grade above his grade level.

Anthony: An 18-year-old male who lives with his mother, grandmother, and 2 siblings. At 12 years old, while

-serving nine months in an inpatient behavioral health facility, Anthony was diagnosed with conduct disorder and dysthymia. His aggressive, violent behavior followed him into his teen years. He admits to joining a gang at the age of nine and committing his first felony shortly after. He also admits to being a problem child and always being in trouble with his mother and the police. He has never met his father. Anthony is angry, defiant, and has very little regard for adults or authority and admits to only respecting his mother and grandmother. He was charged and convicted for assault, battery, and drug trafficking. Anthony was tested while incarcerated, with test scores showing he read at one grade lower than his grade level and performed math problems two grades lower.

Terrance: Terrance is a 17-year-old African American male who lives with his mother and three siblings. His mother and father are high school graduates. He has never met his father but knows that he is in prison and that at the time of his incarceration was addicted to crack cocaine. His mother works full-time as a cashier at a grocery super center, and the family lives in a federally subsidized home. Terrance was always considered a bright student throughout his elementary and middle school years, but that changed when he joined a gang. He started using and abusing alcohol and marijuana and becoming involved in criminal acts. Terrance was involved in a number of petty crimes during his pre-adolescent years, but his criminal behavior and aggression began to blossom during his teen age years. At 13, he and two friends were convicted of armed robbery. While incarcerated, he was

tested and found to be one grade level higher in reading and at grade level in math.

Andre: A 16-year-old male, Andre lives with his mother and one sibling. His mother works part-time and is in a training program for persons receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). She hopes to be a medical assistant when she completes the program. Andre has very little interaction with his father and admits to not remembering him since he last saw him 11 years prior. His father has been in and out of prison and has a history of drug abuse. Andre has been in an inpatient mental health facility due to his aggressive, violent outbursts. He was diagnosed with conduct disorder and intermittent explosive disorder and was in an inpatient hospital for six months when he was 11 years old. Andre was unable to control his anger and temper, and because of this, he has found himself involved in violent confrontations with peers. Andre was sentenced when he was 14 years old for assault with a deadly weapon when he beat a neighborhood schoolmate repeatedly with a pipe. Andre was tested while incarcerated and found to be 1 grade level higher in math skills and at grade level in reading.

Keeton: A 15 year-old male, Keeton lives with his mother, aunt, two cousins, and two siblings. His aunt and her children have lived with Keeton's family for two years because the aunt lost her low-income housing due to allowing her boyfriend to sell drugs from her apartment. Keeton vaguely remembers meeting his father who moved to Georgia when he was three-years-old. Keeton is a shy, respectful, and a quiet young man whose naïveté has gotten him into

trouble throughout his short life. His mother works full-time at a local convenience store and receives government assistance for food, housing, and day care. She graduated and completed two years of college. Keeton is a follower and wants to be accepted by peers, which oftentimes causes him to act out to get attention. He admits to having low self-esteem and knows his behavior is counter to his upbringing. At 13, Keeton and three older friends stole a car at knifepoint, were caught, and sentenced. Keeton was unaware of the carjacking and was treated less severely than the others. He was tested while incarcerated and found to read and perform math problems two grade levels above his grade level.

Jerome: Jerome is a 16-year-old male. He lives with his mother and one sibling in a low-income apartment complex. His mother did not graduate from high school; she had Jerome during her sophomore year of high school. Sporadically, Jerome sees his father who lives in the same city and with whom he has a strained relationship due to a number of factors, most noticeably is his father's lack of child support and inconsistent relationship. His father has been in and out of prison, has battled drug and alcohol issues, and was physically abusive to his mother during their short marriage. His mother was imprisoned for a short time and also battled drug addiction but has been clean and sober for over three years. She works part-time at a national food chain and receives government assistance for food and housing. Jerome is a loner and has few friends but is loyal to the ones he has. He is not involved in a gang, but his closest friends are; and oftentimes they pull

Jerome into their delinquent and criminal acts to assist them: Jerome prides himself on being smarter than most of his friends and family members. He is aware of his negative behavior before acting out and admits to choosing to engage in criminal activities. Explaining the reason for his delinquent behavior, Jerome said that he considered crime glamorous and fulfilling. He was charged and sentenced for breaking and entering and robbery. He was tested while incarcerated and found to read and perform math problems at grade level.

Sean: An 18-year-old male, Sean lives with his mother and four siblings in a low-income housing apartment complex. His mother and father were married for two years, but divorced due to domestic violence issues, substance abuse, and infidelity. Sean sees his father and his father's relatives at least monthly, if not more. His father is self-employed as a yard and handy man in the community. His mother is currently not working due to a workers' compensation lawsuit stemming from a fall she had at work that hurt her back. Sean's mother used drugs in her past and has a prison record. However, she says that she has found religion and has changed her life. She has always been supportive of Sean even when he was doing wrong. Sean was a problem student during his elementary and middle school years and was frequently suspended from school. Sean is a member of a gang and has a reputation of being aggressive and violent. He has carried a gun since the age of 11 and admits to using it on occasion. Sean admits to being proud of being feared and respected in the gang community and of carrying out a number of violent acts to build his

reputation. School was easy for him, and he did well. Sean was charged and sentenced for drug trafficking and carrying a concealed weapon. Sean was tested and found to have reading and math skills at grade level.

Qualitative Themes

The data has been grouped into five themes, with one emergent theme represented by two subthemes. Four of the five emergent themes resulted from group-based interviews which sought to examine participant's collective objections to alternative education, their confidence to appeal the school district's decision, and their views on education: (1) Safety, (2) Anti-delinquency, (3) Pride, and (4) Support. The individual interviews sought to explore the participants' commitment to obtaining a high school diploma and their overall views of education. Specific responses from both the individual and group-based interviews are reflected in the fifth theme referred to as Motivation. The Motivation theme consists of two subthemes: (a) motivation to change other's negative perceptions of themselves, and (b) motivation to obtain a diploma.

Safety. The Safety theme is characterized by the participant's unanimous concerns regarding exposure to rival gang members and the lack of protection they would receive while attending alternative school. For example, Anthony voiced his hesitancy in attending alternative school as:

"We have done some bad things to people, and they know our reputations and to put us in schools that can't protect you don't make sense. Almost everybody that came from the

detention center goes to one of three alternative schools and the odds of you bumping into someone you had a problem with are certain."

Jerome also voiced his safety concerns:

"The people that are there [alternative school] are the people that we were locked up with, and at the alternative school, the kind of protection needed don't exist. I think all of us are trying not to go back to any type of prison, and I think alternative schools force a lot of us back."

Of particular concern is that several participants suggested that the district was aware of the problems that may arise when rival gang members are placed in the same vicinity and used each of the three alternative schools as "dumping grounds" for problem students in hopes of expelling them from school on a permanent basis. In particular, referring to school officials Marcus stated:

"I think the people at the school know that too. Why else would they put a whole lot of criminals and gang members together knowing we don't like each other? I know me and if I went there, I would be in trouble."

Terrance admitted that he was motivated to return back to a traditional school setting so that he could "learn without looking over my back so much and maybe meeting new people to kick it with." Terrance, and many others, was well aware of how safety fears would distract from his learning experience and even

sought to make new pro-social relationships with students in a traditional high school setting.

Anti-delinquency. The anti-delinquency theme reflects participants' desire to avoid engaging in delinquent acts upon being released from the detention center. Each of the seven participants acknowledged that placement in alternative education would inevitably result in them being expelled from school or even arrested as a result of attending school with other delinquent youth. Anthony mentioned:

"You know what will put you back behind wires and being surrounded daily by rival gang members and criminals will get you in trouble eventually... Maybe not today or tomorrow but soon enough it's going to happen."

Andre added to the topic stating:

"I still have a temper, and being around people all day that you know don't like you don't sit well with me. When we leave mental hospitals or detention centers, we just want to be normal for a while...not thinking about going back to our old ways...Everybody I know who went to alternative school say the same thing. Man the same fools that got you locked up are at the school, and they don't care what you trying to do positive. They are trying to trip you up... Like these other brothers here, I just don't want to go back or get any new charges, and alternative education would have done that."

Pride. The third emergent theme represents participant's spontaneous positive remarks regarding how they

felt about themselves for requesting placement in traditional school settings and being granted this opportunity. Words such as "brave," "bold," and "courage" were used to describe themselves and their actions. For many, it was the first time they felt as though they had accomplished something that would have a positive impact on their lives. In explaining his pride Jerome recounted:

"We have never been in high school, and to go to the board and say we wanted to be treated fairly is a big deal...What we did was important I think...We were able to get our point across and they heard us... I am proud of what we did...For the first time, I did something right for me."

The participants were aware that their past transgressions preceded them and did not give them credibility in requesting placement outside of an alternative educational setting. However, they were willing to take this risk because they felt as though they "had nothing to lose." For many, it was an opportunity to demonstrate they had, and even wanted, a voice in their education. For example, Keeton adamantly stated, "I think we showed them that we ain't stupid, and we can speak up for ourselves."

Support. The topic of support, or lack thereof, was a common theme discussed by participants. Since many of their fathers were not part of their lives, mothers and even grandmothers were the persons to whom the participants looked for support and guidance on their decision to request placement in a traditional school

setting. Unfortunately, the majority of participants reported that their mothers and family were against them fighting to enroll in their home schools upon being released from the detention center. Several mothers feared that by "fighting the system" their sons were causing more problems for themselves and preferred that they [their sons] accept placement in alternative school since at least they were allowed to receive some form of schooling. Upon being asked about how his mother felt about his decision to request placement in a traditional school setting, Marcus replied:

"My momma didn't say much. She thought I was making too big a deal over the school thing. She wanted me to go wherever they would let me go and be glad because they did not have to let me in anywhere. My momma didn't want to come to the hearing...She didn't know I was appealing until she got there. She said if she had known what I was doing, she wouldn't have shown up."

What is also evident in this passage from Marcus is the fact that many mothers refused to attend the hearing; leaving their sons with no form of support during one of the most stressful and important times in their lives. For many, their sons did not deserve the opportunity to receive their education in a traditional high school setting. In particular, Keeton explained:

"My mom don't really care about too much when it comes to me. I have been the problem child since birth according to her...She said she didn't care if

I dropped out or not and just stay out her way. She don't think I am going to do nothing and I am just talk...If I needed her, I don't think she would show up. After I told her I got into regular school, all she could say is you going to mess that up too. I hope to prove her wrong too."

Where many mothers and families refused to support their sons, there were in fact two mothers that shared their sons' desire to seek placement outside of alternative school despite a lack of support from other family members. For these particular participants, gaining the support of their mothers, maybe for the first time, had a positive impact on their self-concept. Not only had they noticed a change in themselves, but their mothers also acknowledged their transformation and wanted what was best for them. These mothers voiced their concerns regarding their sons attending alternative school and even attended the hearing to display their support. Andre recounted the experience:

"My mother stood by me on this, maybe her first time doing that. I told her why I didn't want to go, and she said she would help. I was surprised because since I've been getting in trouble, she always sided against me. This time she said she would go with me and tell them what she wanted to see for me. I think she finally believed that I'm trying to change. I think doing this is going to make me and her closer...The rest of my family was another story. They wanted me to go to school wherever they sent me

because I didn't deserve to be making any demands...That's why I am so happy about my mom."

Likewise, Sean's mother showed her support by making her own attempts to find ways to remove her son from alternative school. Sean stated happily:

"My mother was behind me because she visited the school before I started. She saw the type of kids that were there and knew that I wouldn't last...She said, boy you will be fighting in here the first day. All the kids they don't want, they throw away in here. She phoned some people about how to get me out of alternative education. I don't think she would have done this if she had not seen it with her own eyes. She said she was proud of me, and I think this was the first time she ever said that, I am glad I did it."

Motivation. The most common theme that emerged from both the group-based and the individual interviews centered on issues related to motivation. In general, participants discussed their motivation to seek placement in a traditional school setting for two main reasons: (1) as a means of changing people's negative perceptions of them, and (2) to ensure that they received their high school diploma.

Change negative perceptions.

Upon being released from the detention center, many participants felt as though they were reformed and deserved a chance to prove to others that their behavior and attitude had changed for the best. Many

acknowledged that alternative education was not the best placement for them since their self-perceptions had changed to more pro-social identities of themselves. Anthony stated, *"I think just coming out, we want a chance to succeed, and see if the stuff we learned while locked up can work for us...going to alternative school would just be setting us up. I think we deserve a chance."* Of most importance to the participants, they wanted an opportunity to demonstrate to others that they could be successful in a traditional school setting despite their past. For many, the negative remarks made by family members, friends, and even teachers in relation to their ability to succeed, was a powerful motivator for them to seek a traditional education and do so in a successful manner. Keeton passionately mentioned:

"My motivation is to show people that you can come from nothing and still finish something...I know a high school diploma is not a big deal to some people, but around here it is...I want the younger people in my family to know that you can mess up with the law or whatever else and still be given another chance."

Terrance further remarked:

"I heard one of the ladies at the school say that they [the seven participants] will be back into alternative education before nine weeks and she said we probably will be failing too...I don't think no one gives us a chance or believes in us...I'm going to show them that I deserve a high school diploma, and I ain't supposed to get no GED...Everybody should have a

high school diploma and to be tried to be talked out of it ain't fair. My diploma will show the people at the detention center, my probation officer, and the school, and anybody else that bet against me that I did it."

Achieve a diploma. As referred to in the latter part of Terrance's statement is the motivation that many participants had to graduate from high school. On many occasions, the participants voiced concerns in their ability to remain in alternative school long enough to receive a diploma. Keeton mentions, "I think they knew they'd be setting people up and if you want to go to school and learn something, alternative education ain't the place." Accordingly, many feared that placement in an alternative educational setting would "set them up for failure," leaving them with no diploma and having a negative impact on their future aspirations and job opportunities. Marcus posited:

"I think everybody wants to do as good or better than their parents, so a high school diploma is a must...Plus if I ever decide to get a job, I will need a diploma. If you look in your family and community, those who are doing the worse are those who don't have an education...Sometimes without a high school education forces you to do illegal stuff."

Each participant understood that "a high school diploma gives you a better chance" for a successful and productive future. In particular, Andre makes the statement, "I want a diploma because I want a diploma...If I get this, no one can take this from me...Who knows? One day I might

want to go to the community college." Moreover, many sought a diploma as a means of escaping their harsh realities. For example, Jerome mentions:

"I am afraid of what's going to happen to me in the future if I don't get an education...Man, it's tough in this neighborhood, and most of us don't get out...The ones that get out are the ones who go to school and really go off to college...I hope a high school diploma will get me out of here. I hope the high school diploma leads to better things for me. At least I hope it does...I got to find a way to get out of here."

An overarching theme that emerged from the interviews was that participants understood that receiving a diploma would allow them opportunities to better their future and maybe even attend college.

Sean serves as an exemplary example by admitting:

"I think I finally understand that if I don't go to school and finish, I might end up doing crime as a profession. I got to make changes, and the first one is to get an education...If I don't, I will be stuck in the life. I have to do this for me and my future...I see people every day in my neighborhood that wasted their life like I am doing and never get anywhere...I don't want to end up like that. I have to get my education and try to leave the game and settle down away from the madness. This is what motivates me, and the hope that there is something better waiting for me when I graduate."

Participants came to realize during their time at the detention center that an education would be beneficial to them sometime throughout their lives. They initially wanted to prove or show others in their families, in the school district, and the court system that they were capable of being successful in their academic pursuits. This anger and "chip-on-the-shoulder" mentality was the catalyst for them to be successful in school. They were aware of the statistics indicating that they were less likely to graduate than peers who have no delinquent background. More importantly, they acknowledged that their having been imprisoned in a juvenile detention center placed them at an even greater risk for academic failure. These facts motivated the young men to seek education in a traditional school setting and succeed in receiving their diploma.

DISCUSSION

Participant Update

Sixteen of the 23 students that started this journey with the original seven were enrolled in alternative education and GED programs. Of the 16, four have been expelled from alternative school for behaviors that met zero-tolerance mandates, five have stopped participating in their GED programs, two dropped out of school, one was on a modified school schedule (going two days a week), and four remained in alternative school. The participants in this study were followed for one year from spring 2008 until the start of the spring 2009 semester. At the conclusion of the study all were on schedule to graduate. These participants may have had an advantage due to their prior academic success. They were

not typical delinquent and low-income students. With the exception of one of the participants, they all read and did math at or above their grade levels which may have increased the chances of their academic success.

Summary of Findings

Like so many at-risk African American youth, participants had very little support from parents, peers, and the community. The parents may have been too busy, too tired, otherwise encumbered, or disinterested to concern themselves about the educational needs and desires of their children. The lack of interest seemed to be a motivating factor for participants. At some point participants may have felt that a high school diploma was unimportant but changed their perspective along the way. Their refusal to enroll in alternative education indicated that they saw the need and benefit of a standard high school education and environment.

Over the course of the academic year, the participants displayed tremendous growth. Once they embraced the notion of getting a high school diploma and made that a personal goal, there was a noticeable behavioral change in each of them. During their group meetings and individual sessions, they readily admitted that they have slowly moved away from their criminal behavior and have decreased their drug use. Because of their desire and proven commitment to an education they have been shown leniency by the court system and have received some attention from the school community. They are encouraged and praised by their probation officers and held up as examples of successful transition from detention to school and the com-

munity. The schools they attend were made aware of the participants before they enrolled and were strongly encouraged to keep a close eye on them. Principals and teachers admitted that they were model students and encouraged them to join extracurricular activities at the schools. This support has given them the confidence to want to continue on a positive path and reinforces their choice to refuse alternative education was the correct decision.

Participants were given an opportunity to return to a traditional school setting in which they were able to socialize with peers that were diverse in interest, behaviors, motivations, and values. All participants stated that they felt going to regular school helped them stay out of trouble and focus on completing high school. The ability to interact with peers who had things on their minds other than criminal activities was an inspiration to participants. They all admitted that they believed they could get an education and move forward with their lives and escape the trappings of returning to the detention center. It is important to mention that the current study examined seven participants; therefore, to generalize their experience to a larger group may not yield the same findings.

CONCLUSION

Zero-tolerance mandates have disproportionately impacted minority and economically disadvantaged youth and their families. A number of school districts have been able to suspend students for long periods of time and to expel students without providing alternative education options. School districts attempt to

accommodate minor behavior infractions such as truancy, smoking on campus, and some unruly behavior. But for students that display delinquent and criminal behavior, the zero-tolerance policies have given school districts license to remove students from campus, sometimes permanently. The preventative aspects of the federal acts are often overlooked because implementation of mediation programs, conflict resolution programs, and counseling are time consuming and often expensive. Expulsion sends a clear message of behavior expectations and makes district administrators, teachers, other school personnel, and students feel safer without the presence of certain students. This was the initial intent of the federal acts. However, many less desirable, unintended applications and outcomes to the zero-tolerance mandates have also occurred.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although few would quarrel with a policy of zero-tolerance toward youths who misbehave; unfortunately, when it is examined closely, it turns out to have very little to do with zero-tolerance, and everything to do with one-size-fits-all mandatory punishment (APA 2008). Of particular interest, zero-tolerance mandates affect students of color and those who are disenfranchised at disproportionate numbers by placing them in alternative educational settings. Research has shown that alternative education leads to educational inequality and inequity (APA 2008; Kim and Taylor 2008), leaving many students unprepared for the world of work. The current study has shown that by enabling students to return to their home school or

traditional school setting allows them to receive required credits to graduate from high school. The fact that participants were on schedule to graduate and receive their high school diplomas indicate that the return to the traditional school setting may be more beneficial than requiring alternative education.

In essence, zero-tolerance policies would have prevented participants from returning to their home schools if they had not appealed the alternative education placement. In fact, for the fall 2008 semester, 18 students residing in detention centers, inpatient drug treatment, and psychiatric hospitals were automatically enrolled in alternative education by this study's subject school district. None of the 18 refused the placement; therefore, the district did not feel obligated to inform them that the return to the traditional school setting was an option through the appeal process. Even with the apparent success of the seven participants, the school district automatically enrolled the 18 in alternative education programs. The fate of the 18 students closely mirrored that of the 16 students mentioned in the current investigation who accepted alternative placement. If in fact students will continue to be forced to enroll in alternative school settings, there are two important recommendations stemming from the current research that may improve their retention and graduation rates. Of most importance, these same guidelines can be applied to students demanding placement in traditional school settings upon being released from detention centers.

Our first recommendation is that support must be provided from both

parents and teachers. Educational support is particularly needed since research has shown that 40 percent of at-risk students drop out of high school (Nowicki, Duke, Sisney, Stricker, and Taylor 2001). In addition, with the tensions that exist, both within and outside, of alternative schools between rival gang members, there is a critical need for students to feel comfortable and as though there is mutual respect between students and teachers (Kim and Taylor 2008). Without the support of primary caregivers, mentors, and/or teachers, students with a history of delinquency may feel as though an education and diploma are not within their grasp. Our final recommendation would be for school districts to be open to reconnecting alienated youth and reestablish the school bond for students at-risk for discipline problems. When lines of communication are opened between schools, parents, law enforcement and mental health professionals, alternatives to school expulsion and placement in unconventional school settings can be developed and implemented (APA 2008).

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A graphic celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Urban Institute. It features the number '40' in a large, bold, serif font. To the right of the '0' is the word 'YEARS' in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. Below 'YEARS' are the years '1968' and '2008' stacked vertically in the same sans-serif font.

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COMBINING MERTON'S STRAIN THEORY WITH LABELING THEORY AND MORAL ENTREPRENEURS

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Abstract

Ritzer (1974) wrote that sociology is a multi-paradigmatic discipline where each framework can hold several theoretical explanations. Such declarations are often treated individually, but there are often unexplored confluences between them. Merton's goals-means theory of social strain, for example, is here considered as a labeling one heavily laced with implications about moral authority when applied to studies in deviant behavior. The synthesis of dialogues, illustrated with sociological ideas from modern novels, validates the thesis that social complexities deserve integrated explanations.

"Being a disfigured felon carries weight in certain circles..."
(novelist Carl Hiaasen 2010)

"Police had a natural suspicion of teenagers, especially those who already had track records of trouble."
(novelist Tami Hoag 1991/2006)

"Not all sexual predators are killers or serial rapists. The most successful of them live well within the boundaries of the law and they're probably more common than we'd like to believe. See ... the problem is identifying the bastards. They're not social anomalies; they are deviants."
(novelist Randy Wayne White 1998)

INTRODUCTION

I have long believed that literature is a marvelous outlet for social discourse that readers can easily understand. Novelists have always been peripheral social activists (R.G. O'Sullivan¹ 2007) exploring such complex topics as deviance and

conformity, reporting their findings to faithful followers. Sociologists do the same, but in different ways and venues.

Introductory sociology textbooks all contain a chapter on deviant behavior where social deviance is defined as rule- or norm-breaking behavior and conformity is defined as rule-defined as rule- or norm-abiding activity. The texts, conduct codes used as standards for evaluations, a failure noted by O'Sullivan (2007). The texts confer that the rule breakers or deviants will be treated as outsiders resulting from social stigmas, but rule followers or conformists are not usually accorded haloes (O'Sullivan 2007) because quiet choices do not garner notoriety. The chapters include many of the historical and modern masters of the subjects, including Merton's 1967 theory of adaptations that is co-referenced in the social strain and rational choice frames,

¹R.G. O'Sullivan is hereafter just called O'Sullivan, except when needed to avoid possible confusion with F.D. O'Sullivan.

telling us that people make studied economic choices rather than spontaneous ones toward cultural and social expectations. The chapters also offer information from Goffman's 1963 study on stigmas and H.S. Becker's² discussions on moral entrepreneurs as elements of the interactionist approach, enhancing our understandings about social labeling and a community's moral oversight. Little space is available in the texts to combine these approaches on adaptation, labeling, and moral authority so that task is accomplished by following several steps.

First, some alternative ways to look at definitions for deviance and conformity are offered because traditional ones are simplistic and limiting. Second, the basic premises of Merton, Goffman, Becker, and of O'Sullivan are highlighted, setting the stage for their ultimate synthesis. Third, those thoughts are made available in easy-to-read and side-by-side manners to envision the bonds between them and within them, with discussions following. No numerical data are offered. Instead, existing expressions are mixed with emergent ones, "new wine in an old bottle," as a different way to look at familiar subjects for those who like to explore sociology by going "outside the box" of convention.

LOOKING AT DEVIANCE AND CONFORMITY: TRADITIONALLY AND ALTERNATIVELY

The social sciences are dependent on their key terms as bases for discussions, and sociology is no exception. Sometimes, however, such simplicity is confusing. Sociology, for example, is often considered as the

scientific study of society, making one wonder if there is an unscientific approach, and what, then, are the roles of history, economics, political science, social/cultural anthropology, and social ecology if they are not comprised of empirical explorations?

The same dilemma of absolutism exists with traditional definitions for deviance and conformity. Before leaving academia, I offered my students an alternative perspective because any understandings of deviance evaluations of those codes and social responses to the acts and the actors.

As I see them, deviance and conformity refer to the definitions that exist for inappropriate and appropriate behaviors based upon the local moralities (O'Sullivan 1994) of groups, organizations, communities, and larger social systems. Two examples exist. All states have criminal codes that define illegal acts in "thou shall not" forms, including listings about inappropriate methods of goal acquisitions. The states also have rules for the road handbooks that define proper motor operation as "thou shall" guidelines.

Such codes and others exist at several levels of social importance in civil, military, and religious settings containing differential distribution of social power to protect people, their properties and rights, as well as group, organizational, and societal preservation. The mere presence of the codes, however, guarantees neither adherence to them nor their effectiveness. People evaluate the norms in terms of efficacy and

²H.S. Becker is hereafter just called Becker to avoid possible confusion with H.P. Becker.

opportunities, responding with a range of options that includes Merton's. Others then respond to the selections by assigning the labels of deviant or conformist to the participant and choices, allowing social and legal definitions for deviance to expand and deviant labels to amplify through systemic processes (Buckley 1976; Lemert 1951; Quinney 1970). Responses to conformity do not grow in similar manners.

Deviants are likely to receive public and sociological attention whereas conformists fly "under the radar" fitting personal ethics with the community's. At times, however, such anonymity goes unrewarded and special notes of good deeds are made. Prominent sailors have ships named after them, and school committees honor distinguished alumni. People are canonized for religious deeds, and monies traditionally bear the images of prominent politicians. Military personnel are awarded with medals and promotions for acts of bravery, whereas post office walls have historically been strewn with posters of less honorable people.

My preferred classroom definition for deviance evolved into "those violations of mores, institutional traditions, and laws that reinforce each other," invoking social indignation against the violators. This outlook contains the triune of definitional, behavioral, and responsive elements, but it is still oppositional to the reciprocal facets of conformity. That weakness was partially addressed by O'Sullivan (2007) as he identified social variance as activities that exist between the dichotomies, thereby easing the problems of a dualist

fallacy creating a sliding scale of deviance-variance-conformity.

LOOKING AT SOCIAL LABELING: MERTON, GOFFMAN, BECKER, AND O'SULLIVAN

Merton, Goffman, and Becker are renowned sociologists, O'Sullivan is less well known. All have made contributions to social labeling theory and studies in deviant behavior so their individual sets of ideas are quickly reviewed.

Merton's Thoughts

Merton's stylized adaptations to cultural materialism are standard fare in most discussions about deviance and conformity enhancing our ability to discuss both topics simultaneously: They give dualistic capital to the other. He stated that we have a variety of goals worthy of achievement and access to them, but discrepant availability to each causes social strain. The adaptations of conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion are ultimately based in perceived economic outcomes of gains versus losses. Merton's adaptations also show continuity with labeling theories. The act of conformity is made by the conformist and the act of innovation is accomplished by the innovator³. The act of ritualism is accomplished by the ritualist, and the act of retreatism is accomplished by the retreatist. The act of rebellion is accomplished by the rebel, so the acts designate the actor. Any act other than

³*Not all acts of innovation are negative deviance, but they get more attention than positive deviance as Wolfzorn, Heckert, and Heckert affirm (2006).*

conformity has the potential for being called deviant, depending on its consequences, the actor, and the authorities of observers.

Merton may not have meant for his model to become a general-use device, but it has. O'Sullivan (1995) first employed the device in a study on religious revitalization illustrating that people adjust to a religious congregation's traditions by conforming to them, or by switching places of worship via innovation avoiding internal conflict. Congregants can go along with local habits without internalizing them via ritualism, withdraw from any membership affiliation via retreatism, or try to change tradition-laden gatherings via rebellion.

O'Sullivan used the model again in his 2002 case study in labor economics, illustrating that workers can adapt to hostile work environments by conforming to a company's precepts, or through innovation by quitting, telling the company to "Take this job and shove it!" They can be ritualists by just doing the work without using it to define master statuses, or by the retreatism or withdrawal from the active labor force. The company rebel who questions managerial policies, decisions, or authority runs the risk of being told "You're fired!"

O'Sullivan (2010) revisited that study, making a needed adjustment to innovation's quitting-out-of-anger mode. As companies downsize offering reduced hours and take-home pay, wage-earning employees with stationary cost-of-living and cost-of-work expenses exercise a personal version of asset-liability management. The workers may participate in proffered voluntary layoffs, pursuing other jobs or unemployment and

COBRA insurances that outweigh the reduced benefits of diminished work time. Still an innovator, the act identifies the actor.

Goffman's Contributions

Goffman's analyses of stigmas and other labels are important discussions on social deviance and conformity. They were not the first, however, having had many major and minor precursors. F.D. O'Sullivan's little known 1928 *Crime Detection* presents a list of environmental factors contributing to a *culture for urban deviance* (R.G. O'Sullivan forthcoming) and one variable is incarceration that opens revolving doors for continued juvenile deviance. Marked youths may adopt the label of spoiled identity as their own and act on it, contributing to the self-fulfilling prophecy of deviance that Tannenbaum (1938) called the "dramatization of evil." That idea was later reinforced in Lemert's (1951) discussions about the shift from primary deviance to secondary deviance, and modern novelist Hoag (1992/2006) used this train of thought to her literary advantage.

Transitions from tainted identities to saintly ones can be slow and uncertain, but movements in the reverse direction can be swift and sure as novelist White depicted. Witness, for example, how quickly public opinions can change toward the following illustrations: Priests who exploit acolytes, politicians who exploit interns or who transfer campaign contributions to private "offshore" accounts, teachers who sexually exploit students, the business mogul who uses a ponzi scheme to fleece megabucks from unsuspecting

investors, the marquee athlete who wagers against the home team or is held accountable for the death of a family member, the good cop who goes "rogue," or father and son presidents who are vilified as being slow when responding to natural disasters (Bush 2010). So, who does the labeling and why? Becker offered answers to these questions.

Becker's Ideas

His *moral entrepreneurs* are a community's guardians of morality. They want the unit preserved, and such stability is dependent on the presence of community-wide ethics, visions for the future, and behavioral norms. Notable aberrations from them are threatening. His *rule creators/makers* define the behavioral guidelines, and his *rule enforcers* are agents of social control whose duty is ensuring social conformity. Both categories entail legitimate authority which is the main reasons that folkways were excluded from my definition for deviance: These codes of etiquette are unofficial, casual, and regional, whereas many mores and institutional traditions have greater social value accounting for inclusions in my perspective. Since rule creators/makers and rule enforcers are differentially empowered and enabled to formally label/stigmatize, is Becker's list complete? O'Sullivan does not think so.

O'Sullivan's Thoughts

He expanded Becker's list several times enhancing scholars' perceptions of moral entrepreneur status-role sets. The social legitimacy and proper applications of laws are determined on case-by-case bases when legal panels such as juries, or arbiters such as

judges, have such responsibility after hearing arguments from opposing counsel. O'Sullivan (1995) named the decision makers *rule interpreters*, and the advocates of differing juridical outcomes are *rule users* (O'Sullivan 2007). Police or other rule enforcers who side-step permitted investigatory methods are called *rule abusers* (O'Sullivan 2006), and he identified legitimately-labeled deviants as *rule breakers* (O'Sullivan 2007) whose individual moralities violate those of a collective.

The extended list of moral stewards is still incomplete. *Rule influences* try to shape the directions that laws or regulations should take, and there are others that further reflect Merton's categories. *Rule pretenders*, like ritualists, feign allegiance to a maxim as a means to an end, not an end in itself. *Rule avoiders*, like retreatists, believe that socially-approved goals and avenues of achievement are restrictive or unnatural so they drop out, becoming seekers of alternative meanings (Lofland 1966). *Rule changers*, like rebels, see inherent discrepancies in goals-means properties and want to modify them by creating alternative expectations and opportunities. Finally, *rule abiders*, like conformists, internalize and follow the rules as their own.

COMBINING MERTON WITH LABELING THEORISTS

Merton's theory of action identified five forms of behavior and their attendant actors. Merton, then, is a labeling theorist by virtue of connecting personal activities with identifiers, but social labeling is more than simple tagging. Labels are

consequential for the labeled as they open some door of opportunity and close others. The moral entrepreneurs identified by Becker and by O'Sullivan play the roles of official observers, becoming enablers or gatekeepers. Anyone can make casual and informal judgments about others, but similar opinions from people vested with social power are accordant. Several sets of related ideas have been presented in these pages, and they are better seen with visual reminders

of the interplay between them. (See Figure 1 and 2).

Once the guiding principles behind cultural materialism, social labeling, and moral standards are set and vocabularies are refined, the paradigmatic and theoretical coalitions between them are evident, and for good reason. No single explanation for deviance or for conformity has domain over all others. Multi-dimensional topics are worthy of dedicated explanations.

Figure 1. Old and New Sets of Moral Entrepreneurs*

From Becker	From R.G. O'Sullivan	The New Ones
Rule Creators/Makers	Rule Interpreters	Rule Abiders
Rule Enforcers	Rule Users	Rule Influencers
	Rule Abusers	Rule Pretenders
	Rule Breakers	Rule Avoiders
		Rule Changers

*Figure 1 identifies the parallel sets of moral entrepreneurs.

Figure 2. Integration of More Entrepreneurs and Merton's Adaptation**

Moral Entrepreneurs Means	Adaptation	Goals	Means
Rule Abiders	Conformity/Conformists	+	+
Rule Breakers	Innovation/Innovators	+	-
Rule Pretenders	Ritualism/Ritualists	-	+
Rule Avoiders	Retreatism/Retreatists	-	-
Rule Changers	Rebellion/Rebels	+	+
Rule Creators/Makers			
Rule Influencers			
Rule Abusers			
Rule Enforcers			
Rule Interpreters			
Rule Users			

**Figure 2 presents them against Merton's adaptations and each other.

DISCUSSION

A question was raised earlier asking whether or not there is an unscientific, casual, or informal sociology? The question is likely answered in the negative within the discipline, but that response may not be so self-aggrandizing outside it. The novels of Hiaasen (2010), for example, usually address the serious issues of exile- and eco-politics in Florida couched in humor to entice appreciative audiences, and each standalone tale commonly has two characters attracting such interest. Please bear in mind, however, that his storylines are less important for this study than his understanding of social deviance and deviants.

One person is the returning "Skink" as a decorated army captain and sniper turned governor of the state turned survivalist recluse swamp rat—the one-eyed innovator/retreatist/rebel and rule breaker/avoider/changer who exacts creative justice on those who defile his state. The other varies from story to story, but in *Star Island* he is "Chemo." Stigmatized because of his criminal record and disfiguration, his convoluted sense of right and wrong emerges in his role as a bodyguard for tragic others. After making hedged choices against the law and imprisonment, Chemo was arrested by rule enforcers, and trial lawyers, as rule users, argued for his guilt or acquittal. Jurors and a judge, as rule interpreters, determined that the charges against him were justified, so he was sentenced to Raiford Prison as a rule breaker, but the handle remained with him as an ex-convict. Casual stigmas were also attached to him because of his marred body, but stigmas are not always

damning, and may even have the reverse effect as sociologists and storytellers have noticed. Chemo's prosthetic arm, a battery-driven weed whacker, is abhorred and admired. As the housing market of Florida improved, he took a job in an occupation that he had studied while doing time – real estate finance. Skink remains at-large.

Sometimes sociologists are slow or reluctant to address possible bridges existing between their ideas; they may be reticent to admit that others outside academia notice those connections; and simple definitions as ideal types cannot be absolute. The quotes from Hiaasen (2010), from Hoag (1992/2006) and from White (1998), for example, highlight many sociological truths. Moral entrepreneurship addresses several responses to cultural expectations. Social labeling is not always official. Stigmas and haloes are sometimes justified, sometimes not. Stigmas can have the latent function of enhancing social reputations rather than demeaning them. The assigned labels from Merton, Goffman, and from other labelers can overlap. Sometimes deviance is seen as less bad, conformity is less good, resulting in the anti-hero and social variant statuses of Skink and Chemo, for example.

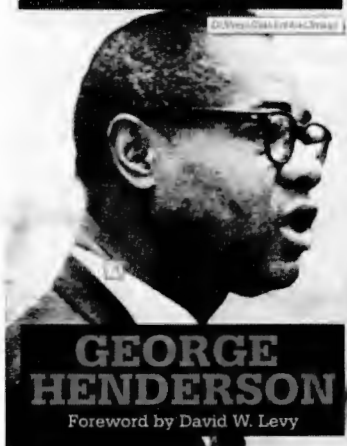
I agree with the combined beliefs of Ogburn (1930) and O'Sullivan (2006, 2007) that it is appropriate to look beyond sociology at alternative or non-traditional sources of information to ground research. Ritzer (1974) is correct when he states that sociology is a multiple paradigm endeavor of integrated theories to be pursued vigorously, but we must go beyond formulaic traditions because outsiders,

including the three novelists borrowed for this study, already know to do so far beyond their quoted snippets. They "get" Ritzer.

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Race and the University
A Memoir



RACE AND THE UNIVERSITY
A Memoir

By George Henderson
Foreword by David W. Levy

An African American scholar recalls an academic civil war

In 1967, George Henderson, the son of uneducated Alabama sharecroppers, accepted a full-time professorship at the University of Oklahoma, despite his mentor's warning to avoid the "redneck school in a backward state." Henderson became the university's third African American professor, a hire that seemed to suggest the dissolving of racial divides. However, when real estate agents in the university town of Norman denied the Henderson family their first three choices of homes, the sociologist and educator realized he still faced some formidable challenges.

In this stirring memoir, Henderson recounts his formative years at the University of Oklahoma, during the late 1960s and early 1970s. He describes in graphic detail the obstacles that he and other African Americans faced within the university community, a place of "white privilege, black separatism, and campus-wide indifference to bigotry." As an adviser and mentor to young black students who wanted to do something about these conditions, Henderson found himself at the forefront of collective efforts to improve race relations at the university. Henderson is quick to acknowledge that he and his fellow activists did not abolish all vestiges of racial oppression. But they set in motion a host of institutional changes that continue to this day. In Henderson's words, "we were ordinary people who sometimes did extraordinary things."

Capturing what was perhaps the most tumultuous era in the history of American higher education, *Race and the University* includes valuable recollections of former student activists who helped transform the University of Oklahoma into one of the nation's most diverse college campuses.



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A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF GENDER IN THE CONTEXT OF METHAMPHETAMINE USE ON THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

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Abstract

In-depth interviews were conducted with 70 male and 30 female methamphetamine drug users in the U.S.-Mexico border of Ciudad Juarez and El Paso, Texas. Topics included types of methamphetamine used, settings, as well as family, social and environmental influences. Interviews were taped, transcribed and translated. Content analysis was conducted and found women tended to buy or get drugs with people they knew and trusted. The differences suggest that although venue-based interventions may be appropriate for male methamphetamine users, personal network interventions may be more appropriate among females.

INTRODUCTION

Epidemiological research has consistently shown health disparities among population groups defined by gender, race, ethnicity, income, and education (Healthy People 2010). Such disparities are evident in mortality rates, disease prevalence, and service utilization, with the worst health outcomes commonly seen among those groups characterized by poverty, low education, and ethnic minority status. But these patterns are dynamic and influenced by changes in context and location. Historically, reproducing the pattern observed in the interior of Mexico, Hispanic women living in the U.S. had high rates of abstinence from alcohol and low levels of heavy drinking as compared to the general female, practically disappears after three generations (Collins and McNair 2003). On the U.S.-Mexico border region, population in the U.S. has decreased markedly over

subsequent generations as Hispanic women became more acculturated to the U.S. This pattern took some time to be replicated given the stronger influence of Mexican mores and the cross-border mobility and bi-national identity of a large segment of the regional population (Ramos and Ferreira-Pinto 1996). The decade long and continuing restriction on the free movement of people across borders has dramatically accelerated this acculturation phenomenon and exacerbated negative drug use related health outcomes (Ramos and Ferreira-Pinto 1996). Some women have been "trapped" in either side of the border without the opportunity to easily maintain family and friends networks, which has always been a source of reliable emotional and material support and a constraint to the initiation of drug use. To better understand drug abuse among Hispanic women on the border it is important to consider not only

individual risk factors, but also the influence of established gender roles in the cultural context in which they live.

Gender Roles

Gomez and Trierweiler (1999) describe a theoretical framework that posits that *inferiorization* is a function of the confluence of stigma, context, and associated cultural myths. The feeling of inferiorization is described as general social process that remains sensitive to the group's context of stigmatization. Women are embedded in a web of interpersonal, familial, and social issues and the effects of the knowledge of substance abuse will affect their relationships as daughters, partners, friends, and parents (Finkelstein 1994).

The stigma associated with drug use and associated health risk factors, and limited social support and economic resources can interfere with decisions to enter treatment and change behavior (Schober and Annis 1996). National studies on Hispanics' health and mental health needs and their use of health care delivery services almost always include insufficiently sized samples and/or use different sampling designs that make comparisons of results difficult. Of particular concern is the fact that Spanish-speaking women are the least likely to use such services due to their being the individuals with the lowest levels of insurance coverage, education, and minimal income, and because they are frequently not included in research studies that are not completely bicultural and bilingual in their design and execution (Vega and Alegria 2001).

One of the shortcomings of research on health disparities among

minority women is the tendency of concentrating on individual-level risk factors and not viewing external factors as important mediating variables. The public health trilogy of host, agent and environment is acknowledged as the mechanism for disease transmission, but much of the existing research pays scant attention to environmental variables, including those that are proximal to the individual, such as family and friends. Although taking into account to explain causal mechanisms for the currently documented poor health outcomes - in our case drug use (Adler and Newman 2002).

Demographics

Commerce, family ties, and culture, interlink the population in the El Paso-Juárez sister cities, making it an excellent place from comparative studies involving Hispanic women. In our case, the comparison involves health disparities and health status among women using drugs in this metroplex. The city of El Paso, Texas is located north of Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Together, they comprise the largest metropolitan area on the U.S.-Mexico border. El Paso is the 23rd largest city in the United States and the fifth largest city in Texas; ciudad Juárez is the fifth largest city in Mexico.

There are 296,011 females in the city of El Paso comprising 52.5 percent of the total population. The median age is 31.1, and 69 percent of the population is over 18 years old. The number of males and females that are 15 years of age or older who never married, are separated from partner, or are widowed or divorced is 191,223 or 34 percent of the general population. Almost one-third (31.5

percent) of the population in the city of El Paso has less than a high school diploma and about 18.3 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Department of the Census 2000). In El Paso, 76.6 percent of the population is of Hispanic descent. Moreover 135,229 people (24 percent of the total population) were born in Latin America, predominantly in Mexico. Twelve percent of these foreign born are naturalized citizens, and 14.6 percent are not U.S. citizens. About 44,675 (7.9 percent) are recent immigrants who have entered the U.S. after 1990.

In Juárez over 409,130 inhabitants or 34.4 percent of the total population of 1,187,275 were not born in the city. From these, about 199,385 or 48.7 percent are women. Overall 49.7 percent of the population in Juárez's municipality is female. The median age is 31.6, and 42.4 percent of the population is under 18 years old (INEGI, 2000). The Spanish language is ubiquitous in everyday life in the metroplex. According to the Census Bureau in the city of El Paso, 84.1 percent of people five years and older speak Spanish, and 30.5 percent of this population reported speaking English "less than well" (U.S. Department of the Census 2000).

Tijuana and Juarez share the dubious reputation of being major epicenters for drug abuse, and both lie on major drug trafficking routes (Bucardo et al. 2005; Brouwer K.C. et al. 2005). Tijuana is thought to have one of the fastest growing drug user populations in Mexico with three times the national average consuming illicit drugs (Magis-Rodriguez et al. 2000). In 2004, there were an estimated 6,000 persons injecting in more than 200 "shooting" galleries in Tijuana.

Juarez is ranked second only to Tijuana in the number of illicit drug users, which is estimated to be twice the national average (SSA 1998). In 2001, a community-based survey estimated that there were approximately 6,000 Intravenous Drug Users (IDU) in Juarez (Cravioto 2003a 2003b). There may be considerable overlap between populations of IDUs and female sex workers in Juarez. In 2005, Patterson et al. (2006) found that three quarters of female sex workers in Juarez had ever injected an illegal drug, compared to one quarter in Tijuana (Patterson and Strathdee 2006). In contrast, only ten percent of female sex workers reported injecting drugs in 1992 (Valdez, Cepeda, Kaplan, and Codina 2002).

Concerns that injection drug use is on the rise in Tijuana and Juarez have implications for the transmission of blood-borne infections such as HIV and viral hepatitis. Prevalence of HIV among IDUs and other high risk groups in Mexico has thus far remained low (UNAIDS 2002), but a seroprevalence study of pregnant women in Tijuana observed an HIV prevalence of 1.1 percent overall; zero percent among non-drug using women and 6 percent among those admitting injection drug use (Brouwer and Pollini 2006). A mathematical model using capture-recapture methods conducted in 2001 estimated that there were approximately 6,000 IDUs including 3,000-3,500 "heavy" heroin users (defined as having used heroin 2-3 times a day in the previous 6 months) and as many as 186 shooting galleries in Juarez (Galvan et al. 2006). These numbers are of concern, given the probable increase in the number of methamphetamine users that will start injecting the drug intravenously.

Borders as Places of Transition

Jackson (1964) refers to the borderlands as zones of transition where the environment for mutual learning and consensus between two countries exist. Socio-political and cultural patterns are more fluid and more integrative. This desire to meld and cooperate is apparent in the U.S.-Mexico border context. Given its cultural and linguistic homogeneity and the attractiveness of the borderland to the way of life of the other side of the border, this integrative tendency helps create a composite border culture. Martinez (1994) describes the U.S.-Mexico border as a place to, "intermingle at close range, borrowing from and contributing to each other's way of life, including cross-borrowing of such things as language, religion, customs, traditions, holidays, foods, clothing, and architecture and by the cross border mobility that leads to a shared culture among Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Anglo Americans." In the last decade this mutual influence has been weakened by the increase in border security and the decrease in the flow of people across the border. These events have transformed the U.S.-Mexico border as a natural laboratory to study the contrast between the two countries and the rapidly narrowing drug gender gap that results from interdependence of many regions in the world. The present article examines how the contextual changes of continuing restriction on the relatively free movement of people across borders has affected women's emotional and material support in a larger degree than men's and its effect on the pattern of drug use and access to drug treatment among drug using women on both sides of the border.

Disparities in Health and Access to Care

According to Aguirre-Molina and Pond (2003) barriers to access health care generally fall into three categories: financial, structural, and socio-cultural. Although financial and socio-cultural barriers continue to exist, most Hispanic women seeking drug treatment face multiple structural barriers when accessing the healthcare system. Before a health provider can see them, they have to overcome transportation obstacles, long waits for medical appointments, and the lack of availability of affordable child care to free their time for medical visits. Moreover, healthcare institutions have difficult intake requirements, less convenient hours, and most lack interpreter services. Finally, women are confronted with a healthcare system where they have little representation and are made to feel unwelcome. This is particularly true for those women who are drug users (Aguirre-Molina and Pond 2003).

In most cities along the U.S. border with Mexico, women accounted for only about 10 percent of the total drug treatment admissions. Women account for the highest percentage of treatment admissions in the South Valley in Texas (15 percent) and in the Yuma area in Arizona (2 percent). Mexican researchers representing sister cities on Mexico's northern border reported that women account for about 10 percent of all treatment admissions for alcohol, tobacco and drug addiction (Wallisch and Spence 2006).

Women and Drug Use on the Border

Findings of a border study with women who are sexual partners of drug users (Ramos, et al. 1998) in a stable union show a very high use/abuse of alcohol. In addition, preliminary results of a recent research project targeting Hispanic women who are sexual partners of drug users (Ramos 2009) show that socio-cultural driven behavioral patterns place these women at a higher risk for drug abuse than their non-Hispanic counterparts. Even more worrisome, many subjects of this particular study exhibited a high degree of denial of their own risk. We speculate that this denial may be based, at least partially, on the fact that these women and their children live as part of a domestic unit that is highly dependent on a male partner for economic survival. Although they have an increased risk for the use and abuse of sedatives or alcohol, when interviewed these women report fewer of the traditional risk factors than their English speaking counterparts and are less likely to report a history of drug use.

In a 2004 household drug survey in four border sister cities in the states of Arizona and Sonora, data were collected on the perception of residents about the prevalence of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs confirmed that alcohol, tobacco and drug availability and use are higher in the border region of both states (Arizona and Sonora) than in the interior of the two countries (United States and Mexico). The survey also shed some light on the use patterns of adult women in the Arizona border region. Women reported using alcohol and crack/cocaine at half the rate of

men, but they had similar rates of marijuana use (García and Magis-Rodríguez 2004).

By 2004, methamphetamine use had become prevalent in Tijuana, had diffused to key populations of drug users, and had started to appear in Juarez. A recent study of female sex workers in Tijuana suggests that methamphetamine use is widespread among this population, with 35 percent reporting methamphetamine use in the previous month. In Juarez, methamphetamine use among female sex workers is much less common, with only 6 percent of Juarez female sex workers reporting methamphetamine use (Patterson et al. 2006).

Methamphetamine appears to be primarily used orally, given the widespread use of injected drugs, such as heroin and cocaine in both Tijuana and Juarez. It warrants further monitoring of any changes in the patterns of consumption. The potential of diffusion of a new highly addictive drug into the existing drug network is concerning. Given the absence of data on the patterns of methamphetamine use in the border region, the authors decided to conduct a qualitative study to describe the context of methamphetamine use, the methods of use and to contrast the patterns of use between Hispanic men and women. The present paper describes the findings of this study.

METHODS

Approach

Given the social context of drug use and associated disease transmission, along with the absence of data on border city drug use patterns, we used an exploratory qualitative study to describe the

context of methamphetamine risks and resiliencies among male and female users in the Paso del Norte area. Since we were exploring emerging trends and supposed current low use of this drug, a qualitative-exploratory approach was indicated. Data collection involved in-depth interviews with methamphetamine drug users. We also identified key public health and treatment professionals able to provide other perspectives on regional drug use. A semi-structured interview guide was developed, informed by the literature and specifically by the exploratory research discussed (Ramos 2010). The domains addressed included: physical drug using environments and settings, knowledge about methamphetamine in the user population, information on the manufacture and distribution of methamphetamine, patterns of individual or socio-network use, mode of administration (e.g. injected, snorted and smoked), and poly-drug use/combinations of drugs.

Recruitment was carried out by a research team familiar with the issue of drug use and with contact within the local high-risk communities. The outreach/ interviewers visiting drug use venues identified 100 male and female users of injectable and non-injectable methamphetamine. Interviews were carried out in safe, appropriate, and confidential spaces. All interviews were taped, transcribed verbatim and themes identified and coded using SuperHyperQual (Padilla 2010), qualitative textual analysis software. Before the interviews were conducted the study participants were asked to read, complete and sign an informed consent form.

Sample

More than 100 methamphetamine drug users were recruited and interviewed, 69 from Juarez and 31 from El Paso between January and December 2007. All interviewees were over 18 years of age. As mentioned, 70 percent of the interviews were with males and 30 percent were females. Social network search methodologies and snowball-sampling techniques were used to recruit respondents throughout the study. Efforts were made to assure that this sample reflected the general population of methamphetamine users in El Paso and Juarez. Outreach interviewers kept respondent profiles with basic socio-demographic information to monitor the recruitment of an adequate representation of males and females, as well as injectors and non-injectors into the study. The distribution of males and females does not necessarily represent the natural distribution found among users; it is possible that there was some oversampling of females, since the interviewers were asked to recruit a targeted percentage of women. In the past, for example, only 20 percent of the users of drugs such as heroin and cocaine identified had been women (Ortiz-Mondragon et al. 1998).

Interviewing

The staff of the Alliance of Border Coalitions (ABC) and Programa Compañeros with experience in community-based participatory research had periodic debriefing sessions with the interviewers to monitor data collected and identify problems of recruitment and interviewing. Interviews were carried out in Spanish or English depending on the language preference of the

respondent. The Alliance staff monitored accuracy of the interviews to assure the highest possible quality of the data. Data collection done by the staff of Programa Compañeros involved two steps. During the first step respondents were screened and those who could provide "accurate" descriptions of the methamphetamine usage domain for interviews were selected. During the second step, a semi-structured questionnaire about factors affecting methamphetamine availability, accessibility and use in El Paso and Juarez were administered. For the purpose of this paper, only the English version of the dialogue collected will be presented.

Instrumentation

As part of the development and refinement of the instruments, field-testing and analysis of pilot data were conducted to validate the data collection instruments, where possible, and evaluate reliability where appropriate. These instruments were modified as the data collection progressed, however, core questions were the same across interviews for comparability. The instruments included:

Recruitment Register (RR): The Recruitment Register had two aims. The first was to recruit users of methamphetamine or those who had observed its use. At the end of the study only users has been recruited. The second was to systematically obtain contact information from respondents who have used or observed that women who use drugs are heavily dependent on their social network to buy or get drugs, and that they relied mainly on people they knew and trusted for purchases, which was many times a stable sexual

partner. Contrary to the social group pattern of use by female injecting drug users, female methamphetamine users tended to be solitary users, with very limited sharing of drugs within family or among their immediate social circle. The recruitment information was coded and only the Principal Investigator and Co-investigator would have access to the names and contact information, which were kept in a file cabinet under double-lock and key. Those users who were selected for the study had to be, in their parlance, "hooked" on methamphetamine, and willing to commit to participate in the study. For those respondents meeting the criteria and expressing interest, a consent form was provided in English or Spanish to be reviewed and signed before he/she took part in the research. A brief guide with key questions was part of the Recruitment Register to help identify those respondents with knowledge of Methamphetamine drug use.

Intake Questionnaire and Background Inventory: This instrument contained items measuring socio-economic status and other background variables of interest, including migratory patterns. This was collected from all persons recruited.

In-depth Interview Guide: The instruments had been used in a prior study (Case et al 2008). This in-depth guide was tailored to address the stated research domains, including the social, cultural, political, and economic factors affecting methamphetamine injecting and other use, including factors that lead to initiation, progression, and cessation, as well as the social and environmental context of methamphetamine usage. Questions from prior research were the starting point for the development

of this instrument. The 100 in-depth interviews followed a semi-structured outline and include a drug history component. Selective parts of the in-depth interview were completed for every respondent who was contacted by an interviewer based on firsthand knowledge of the use or whether they had witnessed the use of methamphetamine. Items describing drug-using environments/settings, knowledge about methamphetamine, the user population and information on manufacture and distribution were included. Other sections of the interview addressed patterns of individual or network use, mode of administration, (e.g. injected, snorted and smoked); and poly-drug use/combinations of drugs.

Data Analysis

Data were in the form of audiotapes, interview instruments, observation notes, transcripts, reports and publications. User, and key informant interviews were taped and the tapes transcribed. Notes from meetings, debriefings, supervision of data collection and interviewing were used. These data include: information on the environment or context, perceptions, beliefs, opinions, linguistic preferences, and interpretations of behaviors or events central to the research questions. Preliminary analysis of the data and documentation of interviews and observations were done continually during data collection. Assessment of the quality and completeness of the data in relation to the key research questions was an ongoing process. Because multiple data sources were involved (IDUs, non-IDUs, males, females), multiple data sets were made available on the research

domains and key issues.

A grounded theory approach was used to explore emergent themes and constructs from our data (Strauss and Corbin 1994). Analysis involves the classification of evidence from all data sets organizing them to identify patterns and relationships relating to the research domains. Qualitative coding of content related to research domains identified above fitting the exploratory nature of the questions and the complexity of open-ended responses to interviews.

RESULTS

Seven main themes dealing with gender differences between male and female drug users in Juarez emerged from the content analysis of the interviews. They deal with current and changing patterns of use among women, the places where drugs were used by women as opposed to men, the importance of relationships and the pattern of drug use among women, the gender-based differential access to drugs, the involvement of women in the sex trade, the class difference and their effect on methamphetamine use among women and the consequences of long term use of methamphetamine. Each of the themes will be discussed and examples of verbatim responses presented.

DISCUSSION

Current and Changing Patterns of Use Among Women

Male and female methamphetamine drug users in Juarez reported a similar pattern in the use of drugs. Some female users reported an increase or qualitative change in the drugs being used by

women.

"It seems that men are the ones that use more drugs, they are much more affected. Now women are replacing men, women are also becoming more dependent on drugs. Drug addiction is growing among students, among women, especially among young women around 19."

The majority of women reported that there was little difference in the amount or types of drugs being used by men and women. Most women reported that sometimes drugs were being used by men and women together.

"Yes, from coke, pot to pills and crystal."

"Well marijuana, almost always, is something that is the same for both men and women, the same and for both together."

It appears that methamphetamine in pill and powder form is more socially acceptable.

"As a whole, pills are like more sociable, more acceptable."

Female methamphetamine drug users in Juarez reported similar severity level of drug use among men and women. The majority of women and men reported that there was little difference in age of first use by either.

"Well I believe that we are very experienced, to the same degree, now one drug leads us to another, to experiment, both men and women with the same

addictions, to marijuana, to cocaine, to crystal, to heroin, we no longer hold back"

"We women also like drugs a lot, specially 'tachas' (stimulants in pill form). But like a man, or a woman consumption is the same from age 13 on, up to age 25, 28 that is they keep consuming, it is not short term, use a bit and stop, that is sometimes it is forever."

They also reported some differences in the strength of the drugs used or in the mode of consumption between men and women. The majority of women and men reported that, although both men and women use drugs, men are the ones that use "stronger" drugs or use forms of the drug that are considered more radical.

"The same drugs. Yes, but, well I do not know, I see that usually men go much further, use much stronger or harsher stuff, like rock (referring to crack cocaine versus powdered cocaine), not all women I think will use rock, yes."

Places Where Drugs Are Used By Women As Opposed To Men

Some women described men buying and using drugs either outside their own homes or with a greater degree of freedom.

"Well I suppose that men consume more for the simple reason that they have more freedom than women, women not as much, because they are at home, although [drug] use I think is now pretty much the same."

However women described using drugs outside their own homes with a high degree of freedom.

"Many times I consumed it on the street, I went to get the drug and my addiction was such that I could not wait until I got home or to the gallery to use, I would use on the street, I would park the car in order to consume it."

Relationships and Drug Use among Women

In a study among women who use injectable drugs, drug use was often reported as a social experience shared with friends, partners and spouses (Mata 1988). Women expressed the importance of using drugs around people they knew and trusted. And although this is an experience also reported among methamphetamine users in Juarez, there are more frequent reports of solitary drug use.

"Well many times, we, the addicts, because we want to consume by ourselves, yes because we do not want to give to anyone else, because our addiction is so strong, we do not want the drug to run out, we simply do not want to share."

Injection drug using women in Juarez routinely reported injecting with a male partner, spouse or friend. They spoke of the familiarity and comfort of injecting in the company of one's spouse or partner, many women described sharing equipment, syringes and drugs exclusively with this person. For methamphetamine there were very limited contexts for the sharing of drugs within family or social circles,

"With whom will you share with? With my female friends."

Methamphetamine in pill or powder form is used in social settings in parties called raves.

"I heard, so I went to my first rave, well we got there and by seeing all those people, you are approached by all those people, your own friend, so, you are not going to. Or yes. What is up? Well you say yes, you taste it, and you enter that world."

A few women have had more long-term exposure among their family and social networks.

"How did you hear about methamphetamine? Well I saw my uncle, and I saw a female friend, using, smoking crystal in front of me, but my friend I told, I rather use...well I do not know, better use pills."

Differential Access to Drugs

The majority of males reported buying drugs in many different places, such as shooting galleries ('picaderos'), local shops ('tienditas'), bars ('cantinas'), vacant lots, abandoned homes, markets and street corners. There is a very broad drug distribution network described by the men in the study. Women report a more personal system of drug acquisition.

"Well I believe it is easier for women (to obtain drugs), because we are women, many pushers guide us to where there are drugs or were we can use drugs, and with men they hold back,

because they are men, just because they are me, and with women they manipulate us more."

"No, I think men can obtain drugs faster; they get the drugs and then distribute them to the women."

Many women using methamphetamine in Juarez appear to have been introduced into drug use by males that they trust.

"Who first proposed methamphetamine drug use to you? To me...a friend. He only asked me if I wanted some and all I said, do I want some? Yes I said and that was it."

An emerging pattern in the US is the use of prescription drugs (Ramos 2002). Among the Juarez women there is evidence of well-established use of amphetamine-based prescription drugs that are very accessible to women through their neighborhood pharmacy.

"I was a very avid consumer of them, I experimented, I experimented but I did not like them, I don't like to be unconscious, on one occasion the first time I experimented I became unconscious, I do not remember anything, I do not know what I did, that is why I did not like them, I wanted to have a burst of joy or happiness, but I do continue to use prescription pills, I never had, I did not know about it, but I do have a friend that is a pharmacist, I

take a person that is supposed to be my friend, at the very early hours of the morning after quitting time, she would stop by the pharmacy and they would sell her strips of pill, she would then sell them in the neighborhood."

Sex Trade Involvement Among Women

Prior studies (Firestone et al. 2006) state that there is much sex trade involvement among female IDUs. Half of the women in Juarez and two of the women in Tijuana openly disclosed having exchanged sex for drugs or money. Among female methamphetamine users the relationship is subtler: *"No, women can get drugs easier, many times in exchange for sex."*

Overall, regardless of the conduit, women have a sense that it is easier for them to get drugs because of the promise of sex. Regardless whether there is any actual exchange of sex for drugs.

"For women in reality, many time it is easier, or for example men who carry drugs they distribute to you young women, so they get some offered to them, that is they get drugs given to them."

"Sometimes it is much easier for women to get them, well because you are pretty, they are going to give them to you, it will be easier or it will be cheaper, or they can even be a gift."

Class Differences and Their Effect on Methamphetamine Use Among Women

There appears to be some class distinctions in the use of methamphetamine, with smokers of rock and ice being considered of "lower class." When asked about "smoking dens" or fumaroles, a middle-class woman stated:

"Smoking dens, well I guess those that are smoking lots of marijuana, there are bongos, and people are using the bongos to always be smoking and smoking, or they can even smoke rock, there are many people that smoke rock, but that is much lower, for people without any money, they get hooked on rock cocaine or rock crystal (ice)."

Among the marginal classes the lifestyle of the methamphetamine users is attributed to the addiction.

"Yes those that get hooked on it many times have problems, they get money any way that they can, they steal, they pawn many things, even their friends suffer, when a person is in need of a hit."

The "elite user" tells a different story when referring to the smoking of methamphetamine.

"Our friends, not here in Juarez, I was aware that it existed, in other cities where we get offered some, we went to a friend's home and there..."

"Frankly I was a consumer until I realized that what I was using was crystal, I wasn't even aware of what I was consuming, really, in my dependence I did not care I would use anything. But when I realized I was using crystal, oh!!! I realized I had not used this before, but had started to use a couple of times... I became aware that it was in fact crystal and other junk I was adding to my repertoire In any event I used because it made me feel relief, I wanted to feel, I don't know, in tune, and it is a drug that produces irreversible effects to the nervous system, our heads..."

Well to be honest, I did smoke but I was not aware that it was crystal, I was not aware of what I was consuming, really. My degree of addiction was such that I would consume almost anything without really being aware of what it was. Then when I found out it was crystal, Oh my word! I did not really know, but I had already consumed it several times. Moreover, when I realized what it was, that it was crystal, I just thought, well something else in my repertoire, no? When I was consuming it I wanted to feel uplifted, well I wanted to feel, I don't know, in tune, and it is a drug that irreversibly affects your nervous system, your head..."

Long Term Use and Its Consequences

Methamphetamine has not been around long enough to develop an entrenched culture among its users, unlike the heroin-based Tecato culture that has produced multiple generations of users (Mata 1988). Among women who use methamphetamine, regardless of the type they use or their social class, they acknowledge the long-term physical, familial, and societal consequences of using the drug:

"I have an acquaintance that for a long time used crystal, she is a very unstable person, very temperamental, she cries very easily, she is mentally "touched", I see her, like someone that is touched, a person that cannot make her own decisions, she is changing all the time, her temperament, she feels ok, then suddenly she feels bad, then I have seen the long term big effects of using this drug, yes the physical and mental condition, it stays like that..."

"In reality I had what other addicts, male or female, or alcoholics, persons who were involved or got involved in prostitution, in truth I used that drug in front of my daughter, she was very young... she caught me in the bathroom, she came in with me, I saw she was very small so I went ahead and used the drug in front of her, but she asked me, what is it? I told her that it was medicine that the doctor had

prescribed. By now she is twenty years old and she has not forgotten, it is something she has engraved in her mind, having at the time I'd been an addict I lost track of reality, it made me lose, well even my values and principles and those of the people around, those people that we are impacting..."

"The last time we used crystal, there was marijuana, cocaine, liquor, really that last time there was such violence, even among friends, even one friend I knew from the start, he got violent with his wife and his young daughters, he used crystal that night, he got violent, really violent, he wanted to kill his wife, he had a weapon, he had a knife and went after his wife with it, he cut a gash in one of her fingers, I and a friend intervened... realizing he could not harm his wife, he cut his own wrists in front of the children...it was so powerful, the impression it made on me, on my life, it made me think, what am I doing here, where am I headed..."

CONCLUSIONS

Drug prevention campaigns have targeted young men in the assumption that they comprise the largest number of users, but the results of the present study interviews with female methamphetamine users have confirmed what has been seen in drug

treatment centers in Juarez - women are becoming more dependent on drugs, especially young women. The drug use pattern among women who are methamphetamine users is rapidly approaching that found among men. Moreover, the types of drugs used and the frequency of use are similar, and there is no age gap between men and women users.

One difference that is important in the design of methamphetamine prevention and treatment programs is that women who use drugs are heavily dependent on their social network to buy or get drugs and that they relied mainly on people they knew and trusted for purchases, which was many times a stable sexual partner. Contrary to the social group pattern of use by female injecting drug users, female methamphetamine users tended to be solitary users, with very limited sharing of drugs within family or among their immediate social circle. These results strongly suggest that although venue-based interventions may be appropriate for male methamphetamine users, for female users personal network interventions may be more appropriate.

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A Letter to America

By David L. Boren

A powerful wake-up call to all Americans

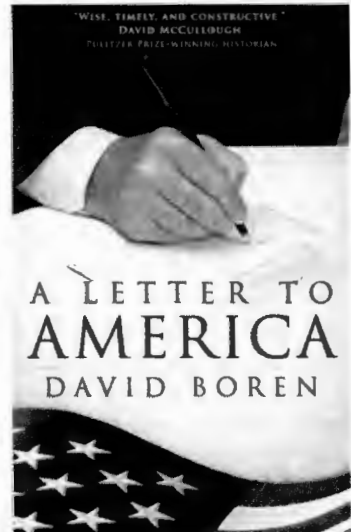
With only 6 percent of the world's population, how long will the United States remain a global superpower? The answer, David Boren tells us in *A Letter to America*, depends on asking ourselves tough questions. A powerful wake-up call to Americans, *A Letter to America*, forces us to take a bold, objective look at ourselves.

In *A Letter to America*, Boren explains with unsparing clarity why the country is at a crossroads and why decisive action is urgently needed and offers us an ambitious, hopeful plan.

What the country needs, Boren asserts, are major reforms to restore the ability of our political system to act responsibly. By relying on our shared values, we can replace cynicism with hope and strengthen our determination to build a better future. We must fashion a post-Cold War foreign policy that fits twenty-first-century realities—including multiple contending superpowers. We must adopt campaign finance reform that curbs the influence of special interests and restores political power to the voters. Universal health care coverage, budget deficit reduction, affordable higher education, and a more progressive tax structure will strengthen the middle class.

Boren also describes how we can renew our emphasis on quality primary and secondary education, revitalize our spirit of community, and promote volunteerism. He urges the teaching of more American history and government, for without educated citizens our system cannot function and our rights will not be preserved. Unless we understand how we became great, we will not remain great.

The plan Boren puts forward is optimistic and challenges Americans to look into the future, decide what we want to be and where we want to go, and then implement the policies and actions we need to take us there.



**PREDICTING METHAMPHETAMINE AND OTHER DRUG OFFENDING:
EVIDENCE FROM A RURAL COUNTY DRUG COURT**

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Abstract

Arrests resulting from drug-related offending from January through December 2007 were compared between an urban and a rural county, both in the Midwest. Marijuana and methamphetamine were found to explain significantly more drug-related arrests in both counties with methamphetamine accounting for a significantly higher percentage of rural than urban drug arrests after controlling for the differences in total population sizes of the two counties ($\chi^2 = 10.26, 2 df, p < 0.01$). A descriptive parsimonious socioeconomic and demographic profile was established for the typical methamphetamine/rural drug offenders.

INTRODUCTION

Since the war on drugs was declared in the early 1970s and picked up momentum in the eighties, drug abuse has gained a place as one of the most researched social problems of our time. Considerable attempts have been made to create what has come to be referred to as the profile of a typical drug offender. Over the years, drug offending has been epitomized by crack cocaine, marijuana, and heroin (see Stephens, McGee, and Braithwaite 2007; Hopwood, Baker, and Morey 2008; Brecht, Huang, and Hser 2008) and the phenomenon has largely been perceived and conceptualized only as an urban social problem.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in research on profiles of offenders of specific types of drugs. Available research findings especially on rural drug involvement continue to yield mixed and sometimes contradictory results, with the

exception of the now commonplace finding that drug users are mainly inner city black males. This notion has lingered on while the drug problem steadily shifts from the crowded urban streets where the likelihood of being detected and apprehended are at an all-time high to the otherwise less-patrolled rural communities that have traditionally been assumed to be drug-safe. The result is an uneven distribution of preventative resources, treatment facilities, and educational opportunities, all of which are skewed toward urban communities, while the drug problem continues to migrate to presumed rural safe zones.

This background creates and highlights a growing need to empirically verify the types of drug involvement that are common among the residents of rural communities and to collate a parsimonious profile of rural drug offenders. In response to that need, this study compares arrests for drug involvement in two counties, one with most of the known rural

characteristics such as social and cultural homogeneity, collective efficacy, and residency stability (Grinstein-Weiss, Curley and Pajarita 2007; Boyd, Hayes, Wilson and Bearsley-Smith 2008), and another with the common urban distinctiveness that includes overcrowded neighborhoods, socio-cultural and economic heterogeneity, residency instability, diminished collective efficacy and a strong sense of normlessness (Shaw and McKay, 1942; Sampson and Wilson, 1990; Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls 1997). These comparisons pave the way for highlighting the type of drugs that characterize rural communities and for building a sound inventory of the socio-economic and demographic profile of the typical methamphetamine/rural drug offender.

Study Objectives

There were three interconnected but intrinsically different objectives in this study: (1) to offer an empirical verification that drug offending is not a largely and uniquely urban phenomenon; (2) to establish the drug of choice among rural residents; and (3) to produce an accurate and parsimonious inventory of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of a typical rural drug offender. To achieve these objectives, a three-stage process was involved. First, drug-related arrests were compared to the total population for two counties, one of which was largely urban and the other predominantly rural. Second, a tally was made of all the drugs involved in the drug-related arrests in both counties. Lastly, socio-economic and demographic profiles of the arrestees in the rural county were compiled.

Literature Review

Research findings have been unequivocal that the largest proportion of inmates in the prison population of the United States has been convicted of drug-related violations. It is also claimed that fifty percent of all arrestees for all types of crimes test positive for an illicit drug at the time of arrest (Office of National Drug Control Policy 2003). By 1999, more than 83 percent of state prisoners scheduled for release had used alcohol or illicit drugs at the time of arrest (Office of National Drug Control Policy 2003). One of the leading explanations to the overwhelming numbers of inmates with drug-related charges can be traced to the "war on drugs," a term coined in 1971 when President Richard Nixon created the Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention as the forerunner of the 1973 Drug Enforcement Administration. The 1980s witnessed what has widely been viewed as a cocaine epidemic in the country leading to great public pressure to "do something" about the drug problem (Fisher 2006). This pressure gave rise to President Ronald Reagan's assent in 1986 to the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, which included mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenders. The most significant component of the bill that gave rise to the Act was that it differentiated penalties for selling powder cocaine from selling crack cocaine with the result that African Americans, who were much more likely than other racial groups to be arrested for distributing small amounts of crack cocaine, ended up being disproportionately incarcerated (Fisher 2006).

Historically, different drug policies have had a manifest disproportionate

effect on different racial communities. The 19th century campaigns against opiate products targeted Chinese immigrants, the 20th century criminalization of marijuana focused on Mexicans and other Hispanics and to a lesser extent African Americans, while the widespread war against cocaine in general and crack cocaine in particular, focused largely on African Americans (Gerber and Jensen 2001). Thus, the manifest result of the war on drugs was disproportionate incarceration of racial minority citizens. While rural communities continue to receive less attention than urban areas, ostensibly because they experience less drug problems, residents of rural communities who might be in need of help are not likely to seek interventive attention because culturally appropriate educational opportunities are also not likely to be available to them (Warner and Leukefeld 2001). Yet, drug abuse, especially methamphetamine, has been on the increase in the rural areas as indicated by such parameters as arrests, availability of methamphetamine labs, and paraphernalia seizures (Stroops, Tindall, Mateyoke-Scriver and Leukefeld 2005; Hertz 2000). To be sure, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reported in 2005 that while there were only 10 methamphetamine treatments per 100,000 for ages 12 and over in 1992, the treatments rose to 64 per 100,000 in 2004 (Zabransky 2007).

Methamphetamine

Compared to cocaine and other abused substances, methamphetamine is easy to manufacture, it produces a longer lasting euphoria, and its short- and long-term effects

can be extreme (Hertz 2000). Since its metabolism rate is lower than that of other stimulants, methamphetamine's euphoria is more sustained and may last for as long as eight hours (see Cartier, Farabee, and Prendergast 2006). Unlike other stimulants, research has also shown that although arrestees in urban areas are more likely to have used drugs in general including cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and any other hard drug, the drug of choice in most rural areas is methamphetamine (Stroops, et al. 2005). This is particularly true because the ingredients needed to make methamphetamine are readily available in rural places. The common names for homemade methamphetamine include *speed*, *meth*, *crystal*, and *crank*, while purer forms of the drug are variously referred to as *ice* or *glass*.

The manufacture process, known as pseudoephedrine reduction, involves use of common household items such as iodine, pseudoephedrine, anhydrous ammonia, and lye, which is often found in pain medicines (Stroops, et al. 2005). The main ingredient, anhydrous ammonia, which is an agricultural fertilizer, is a common possession among farmers. This underscores further the reason why the manufacture and circulation of methamphetamine remains largely a rural enterprise. Even more pertinently, the distinctive odor of ammonia is too detectable for locating a methamphetamine lab in a crowded urban street. As a rural commodity, distribution of methamphetamine follows familial and friendship patterns as opposed to strict urban dealer-buyer relationship. In addition to the typical methamphetamine user being a rural dweller, Edwards (1992) has

shown that the user is also characteristically a poor, unemployed, young white male. Other factors found to be predictive of methamphetamine use, especially relapse during and after treatment, included race, gender and previous drug abuse treatment (Pennel, Ellett, Rienick, and Grimes 1999; Hillhouse, Marinelli-Carsey, Gonsalles, Ang, and Rawson 2007). There is also evidence that offenders charged with drug violations are more likely than other offenders to have had earlier criminal histories (Bouffard and Richardson 2007), and that drug-involved offenders manifest higher rates of mental health problems than non-drug-involved offenders (Gray and Saum 2005).

Like methamphetamine, marijuana violations have similarly been associated more with the rural than urban populations. A recent study by the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse found persons living in non-metropolitan areas to be more likely than those in metropolitan areas to report that marijuana was fairly or very easy to obtain (NHSDA 2002). In addition to race and gender, other specific socio-demographic characteristics that have been linked to the likelihood of success in completion of drug treatment programs include age and offense type (Butzin, Saum, and Scarpitti, 2002; Lang and Belenko 2000; Mateyoke-Scrivner, Webster, Staton, and Leukefeld 2004). The present study examines data from a rural and an urban county with a view to verifying the reported rural-urban differentials in drug offending and to isolate a parsimonious characterization of rural drug offenders.

Study Methods

The arrest data in two Midwestern counties were examined. One of the counties, characterized by a large metropolis, was mainly urban with most of the residents living in the city located at the heart of the county (U.S. Census Bureau 2008). The other was predominantly rural with only scattered townships and a fairly stable settlement that epitomizes rural populations. All the arrests that were entered for the analysis took place from January through December 2007. For that year, there were 225 and 1,251 drug-related arrests in the rural and urban counties, respectively. At the time, the rural county had a total population of 47,518 while the urban county had 343,112 (U.S. Census Bureau 2008). The data included social, economic, demographic, educational, and health backgrounds, specific arrest charges, previous crime histories, and treatment regimens of individual arrestees. The significance of the relationship between the two samples with respect to drug choices was established by using the chi-square.

RESULTS

All the arrests in both counties were classified according to the violations for which they were originally arrested and charged; individual case dispositions were not considered. Three broad drug-type categories emerged. They were marijuana, methamphetamine, and "other" drug types. The distribution of the arrests in the two samples is presented in Table 1. The rate of marijuana-related arrests did not vary in any significant way between the rural and urban samples (53.8 percent

and 52.8 percent, respectively). The chi-square was used to measure the statistical significance of this difference for all three categories. The chi-square coefficient was 10.26 with two degrees of freedom, which was statistically significant at the .01 level of probability. There was an evident interaction term between marijuana and methamphetamine for the rural sample, but since the same was not available in the urban sample, it was not entered into the analyses. From these results, it is evident that the "other" category in the urban sample was more than three times larger than the "other" category in the rural sample. While almost all drug violations in the rural county could be traced to marijuana and methamphetamine, about percent of drug violations in the urban county were accounted for by other drug types. The most commonly reported under the "other" category included cocaine, heroin, ketamine, glue, and Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD).

In order to meet the other major objective of the study, which was to generate a parsimonious profile, the inventory of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of a

typical rural drug offender, rural county sample was analyzed for the drug offender characteristics. The results are presented in Table 2. As already demonstrated by current literature, drug users are more likely than non-users to have a history of contact with law enforcement and others a history of drug treatment (Pennel, Ellett, Rienick, and Grimes 1999; Hillhouse et al. 2007). Of the 225 rural county drug-related arrestees in this study, a large majority (84 percent) had experienced at least one previous arrest and about 12 percent had a history of as many as six arrests. The study also sought to establish the modal marital status of the rural drug offenders. About 60 percent had never been married while 22 percent had divorced and another 19 percent were married.

Existing literature has also suggested that methamphetamine users are typically poor, unemployed, young white males (Edwards 1992). The current study sought to test these claims as well. To address the extent of the assertion of poverty and unemployment among the rural drug offenders, three variables were tested, namely, employment status, length of

Table 1. Rural-Urban Differences in Arrests

Drug Type	Rural county	Urban county
Marijuana	121 (53.8%)	661 (52.8%)
Methamphetamine	88 (39.1%)	278 (22.2%)
Other	16 (7.1%)	312 (25.0%)
Total	225 (100.0%)	1,251 (100.0%)

* $\chi^2 = 10.26, 2 df, p < 0.01$

time on the current job, and current hourly wages. Approximately 50 percent of the subjects were not employed at the time of arrest. Among those who were employed, over 60 percent received an hourly wage of less than 10 dollars while only 11 percent of the arrestees earned 16 dollars or more per hour. Further, approximately 70 percent of all the arrestees had been on their current job for less than six months and that only 9 percent of the subjects had been employed

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offenders, three variables were tested, namely, employment status, length of time on the current job, and current hourly wages. Approximately 50 percent of the subjects were not employed at the time of arrest. Among those who were employed, over 60 percent received an hourly wage of less than 10 dollars while only 11 percent of the arrestees earned 16 dollars or more per hour. Further, approximately 70 percent of all the arrestees had been on their current job for less than six months and that only 9 percent of the subjects had been employed continuously for over two years at the time of arrest.

The claim that most of the rural arrestees, who also happen to be predominantly marijuana and methamphetamine users, are young, white males who were similarly tested. According to the results presented in Table 2, nearly 65 percent of the rural drug-violation arrestees were less than thirty years old. Over 80 percent of the arrestees were male. Whites represented 90.6 percent of the arrested population while 5.8 percent had Hispanic origins. All other racial minority groups together accounted for 3.6 percent of the total arrests.

DISCUSSION

From the findings of this study, it is evident that drug abuse afflicts rural areas no less than it does urban communities. More specifically, the study revealed that marijuana is the most commonly abused drug and this is true for both rural and urban settings. This is an important finding as it serves as a refutation of the commonly held notion that cocaine, in its various forms, is the drug of choice for most drug offenders. The finding is therefore an

Table 2. Rural Drug Offender Characteristics

Characteristic	Operationalization	N = 225	Percentage
Number of prior arrest	0	36	16.0
	1-5	163	72.4
	6+	26	11.6
Marital status	Married	43	19.1
	Never Married	133	59.1
	Divorced	49	21.8
Gender	Male	183	81.3
	Female	42	18.7
Race	White	204	90.6
	Hispanic	13	5.8
	Other	8	3.6
Age (in years)	< 30	146	64.9
	31+	79	35.1
Employment status	Employed	117	52.0
	Not employed	108	48.0
Time on current job (in months)	0-6	161	71.6
	7-12	23	10.2
	13-18	11	4.9
	19-24	9	4.0
	25+	21	9.3
Hourly wages in \$ (for the employed, N=117)	5-10	75	64.1
	11-15	31	26.5
	16+	11	9.4

empirical pointer to the direction in which policy makers should look in the raging war on drugs. Although abuse of methamphetamine was common in both rural and urban areas, a significantly higher concentration of arrests related to methamphetamine violations were found in the rural county compared to the urban county after controlling for the differences in population size. One of the main reasons for this trend may be the distinctive odor of the ingredients of the drug, particularly anhydrous ammonia, which would increase the risk of being detected and apprehended in places with high population density as is the case of urban streets and neighbor-

hoods. Given the ease with which methamphetamine is manufactured and the fact that it produces a longer lasting euphoria with extreme short- and long-term effects (Hertz, 2000), the need to identify and develop more rigorous and effective drug alleviation programs in rural areas becomes paramount.

One way in which to confront the rural drug problem is through Drug Court programs that allow offenders to participate in intense supervision and treatment regimens and to stay out of further violations as a tradeoff for being diverted from possible incarceration. Drug Court programs are routinely non-adversarial and allow the offenders to interact with the judge in an ongoing

participation process, which promotes rehabilitation. They also offer graduated rewards and sanctions in addition to saving local and state tax money, which would be spent in the upkeep of offenders had they been jailed or incarcerated.

This study also revealed that a typical methamphetamine user is an unmarried white male who is either unemployed or works an unstable job that typically pays low wages. Unmarried persons, who also happen to be generally younger, tend to have less social capital; they have invested relatively little in their social networks than the married and this is especially true if the person is also uneducated. This combination frees one from obligations that would conventionally hold a person down to socially accepted forms of behavior. If all other factors are equal, the unmarried persons are more likely to venture into risky and often illegal types of behavior than the married. As a result, an increase in youth community programs in the rural areas would help to channel the youths' energies toward law-abiding growth trajectories.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drug-related offending knows no rural-urban boundaries and, while marijuana is the most commonly abused drug, methamphetamine is more of a rural than an urban drug. The finding that drug offending is no longer an urban-only phenomenon prompts a need to rethink the current secondary position of rural communities in relation to resource allocation for programs that target citizens with drug-related problems and to redistribute the resources

accordingly. Such resources should include not only law enforcement, treatment and detoxification facilities, but also educational programs that help raise the communal awareness about the adverse effects of drug abuse and how to ensure continued community safety. The study also showed that the socio-demographic characteristics of the rural drug users are different from the stereotypical inner city drug offender. The typical methamphetamine drug offender is a young unmarried white male with a history of arrests for drug or non-drug related offenses and no stable employment. This discovery should form the basis on which the target rural population in need of drug-related treatment and rehabilitation should be identified.

The data for this study were obtained from government agencies. Since deliberate manipulation of data by government agencies for the purpose of image-building is not uncommon (Hagan 2003; Mbuba and Grenier 2008), a possibility of such manipulation in the data used for this study cannot be entirely ignored although there was no evidence to suggest that it occurred. It is also acknowledged that while most of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the rural drug offender may be true of most rural communities, the racial composition of the sample may be a reflection of the common characteristics of most rural communities thereby whittling down, to some degree, the claim that rural drug offenders are predominantly white. However, this particular finding does not deviate from observations made in other countries that have racial heterogeneity. In the Czech Republic, for example, use of methamphetamine

does not follow any concentrations of minorities, cultural groups, or ethnic social groups (Zabransky 2007:153). Finally, although literature abounds with antecedents of drug involvement including peer influence, socio-economic status, mental health, and other socio-psychological factors, these variables were not within the scope of this study. However, it would be interesting to see how these factors explain drug use in rural communities and whether there are any drug use factors that exclusively affect rural populations.

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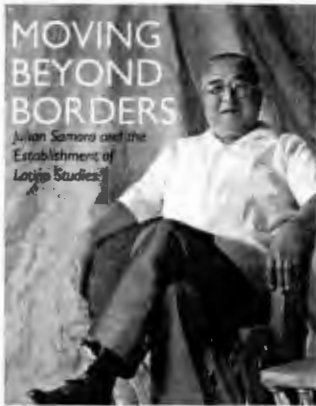
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Moving Beyond Borders: Julian Samora and the Establishment of Latino Studies

Edited by Alberto López , Barbara Driscoll de Alvarado, and Carmen Samora
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Books

Bernard, Claude. [1865] 1957. *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*. Translated by H. C. Greene. New York: Dover.

Mason, Karen O. 1974. *Women's Labor Force Participation and Fertility*. Research Triangle Park, NC: National Institutes of Health.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1960. *Characteristics of Population*. Vol. 1. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Periodicals

- Conger, Rand D. Forthcoming. "The Effects of Positive Feedback on Direction and Amount of Verbalization in a Social Setting." *Sociological Perspectives*.
- Goodman, Leo A. 1947a. "The Analysis of Systems of Qualitative Variables When Some of the Variables Are Unobservable. Part I—A Modified Latent Structure Approach." *American Journal of Sociology* 79:1179-1259.
- 1947b. "Exploratory Latent Structure Analysis Using Both Identifiable and Unidentifiable Models." *Biometrika* 61:215-31.

Collections

- Clausen, John A. 1972. "The Life Course of Individuals." Pp. 457-514 in *Aging and Society*, vol. 3, *A Sociology of Age Stratification*, edited by M. W. Riley, M. Johnson, and A. Foner. New York: Russell Sage.
- Elder, Glen H. 1975. "Age Differentiation & the Life Course." Pp. 165-90 in *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 1, edited by A. Inkeles, J. Coleman, and N. Smelser. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.

Dissertations

Charles, Maria. 1990. "Occupational Sex Segregation: A Log-Linear Analysis of Patterns in 25 Industrial Countries." Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.

Machine Readable Data File

American Institute of Public Opinion. 1976. *Gallup Public Opinion Poll #965* [MRDF]. Princeton, NJ: American Institute of Public Opinion [producer]. New Haven, CT: Roper Public Opinion Research Center, Yale University [distributor].

Foreign Language Books, Journals & Articles

Kardelj, Edvard. 1960. *Razvoj Slovenackog Nacionalnog Pitanja* (Development of the Slovenian national question). Beograd, Yugoslavia: Kultura.

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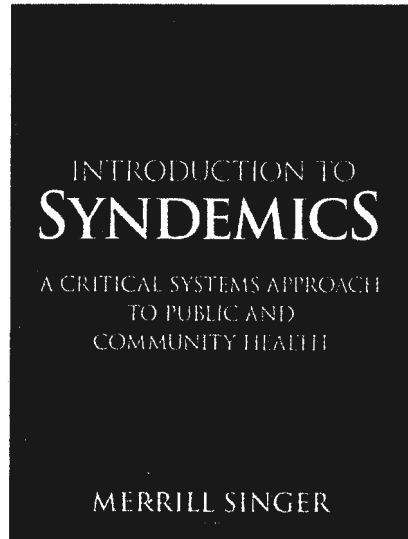
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This book explains the growing field of syndemic theory and research, a framework for the analysis and prevention of disease interactions that addresses underlying social and environmental causes. This perspective complements single-issue prevention strategies, which can be effective for discrete problems, but often are mismatched to the goal of protecting the public's health in its widest sense.



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