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Letter From The Editors of the
Silicon Valley Sociological Review, Volume 20

Dr. Molly M. King & Dr. Di Di, Co-Editors
Naomi Yang, Student Editorial Assistant

The Sociology Department at Santa Clara University is proud to present, in this volume of the Silicon Valley Sociological Review, seven research papers written by students majoring in sociology. This 20th volume continues a tradition to provide students with a meaningful opportunity in professional socialization while honing their research and writing skills.

As in past years, the substantive, theoretical, methodological, and applied content of the Sociology curriculum at SCU are reflected in these papers. The articles highlight students’ ability to engage in meaningful professional work informing sociological understanding of important topics. The authors studied important social topics about individuals, interactions, and institutions. Furthermore, the authors incorporated their theoretical, substantive, and methodological training in their analyses of real-world social problems.

Molly Flood’s “The Dangerous ‘Wasn't Super Consensual’: Sexual Culture of Santa Clara University” seeks to understand the nature, prevalence, and dynamics of sexual assaults occurring within the university community. Through a qualitative content analysis of the Instagram account @metoo.scu, Flood documents the experiences of survivors of sexual assaults and how they make sense of their trauma. Findings from this research provide practical implications. Her recommendations focus on programs and protocols that engage in creating a safe and healthy sexual culture that centers the experience of survivors so they may more adequately heal.

Judith Li, Megan Imai, Brooke Rose and Mika Abe’s “Finding a Place: Involvement in College Social Justice Organizations and its Impacts” aims to answer the question: How does being involved in social justice organizations at SCU impact students’ experience in higher education? In order to further understand involvement in student groups of college students, the researchers conducted eight interviews and eight observations. Research findings suggest that being involved in social justice organizations has a positive impact on students’ experience in higher education by developing their senses of identity and community. The authors tie their results to the sociological theories of Robert Merton’s manifest and latent functions, Emile Durkheim’s social solidarity, and Pierre Bourdieu’s social capital. This study is not only important to understand the direct benefits that students attain from involvement in social justice organizations, but also its further influence on colleges and communities.

Brooke Rose’s “Sustainability at Jesuit Institutions: How are we teaching the next generation to care for our common home?” addresses environmental degradation and institutions taking notice. The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) offers a way for higher education institutions to promote
sustainability through participating in the Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS). This report evaluates participation in the STARS by eight Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities. Rose gives several examples of colleges and universities putting into place specific steps to take action on sustainability.

Joshua Huizar's “Improving Student Services: A Study of Disabilities Resource Offices at Jesuit Institutions” addresses how colleges and universities are seeing an increasing number of students with requests for accessible education assistance. The purpose of this project was to compare the disabilities resource office websites of seven comparable Jesuit universities and colleges to provide recommendations for areas of improvement. The findings from this research can be used to make recommendations for disability resource offices, along with including a campus accessibility map.

Megan Imai's “Challenging the Conflict Paradigm, A Ted Talk Reflection” is a reflection that brings various sources into dialogue to demonstrate the variety of ways religion and science may be interpreted to interact. She primarily utilizes a Ted Talk by Bryan Enderle on the compatibility of science and religion to discuss the inadequacy of the conflict paradigm for explaining the interaction of science and religion. This reflection makes a contribution to the emerging field of sociology of science and religion.

Ava Martinez’s “Mental Health Stigma in the Military Context” addresses predominant military ideology, which perpetuates hegemonic masculinity by demanding emotional and physical discipline. She demonstrates how this fosters a culture that resists mental health diagnoses, resulting in increased stigma and barriers to care. Martinez compiles and analyzes prevention tactics, institutional changes, military ethos, statistical data on yearly suicide rates by service members, and perceived barriers to care. A review of this scholarship found that particular demographics increase the risk that service members and veterans sustain mental health disorders. Additionally, a service member’s intersecting identities play a role in the compounding levels of mental taxation they face, discussed in this paper specifically for women and people of color. Relying on a theoretical framework of intersectionality, this article provides critical insights to sociology of mental health.

Madison Hoffman’s “Immigration Status as a Social Determinant of Health: An Analysis of an East San José-Based Community Farm” focuses on ways to help a public health nonprofit and community farm located in East San José better understand its clients and how to best serve and meet their needs. The research identifies the health-related consequences of immigration status and assesses the success of current social policies, programs, and local organizations in being able to adequately meeting the needs of impoverished immigrant communities. This project used geodata to examine various factors important for achieving good health, including looking at locations of community health clinics.

As a collection, the student research presented in this volume exemplifies the evidence-based social science curriculum offered by the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. The collection also reveals sociology students’ deep care for
social equity and justice. The social issues explored have important policy and programmatic implications. These applications resonate with the University’s mission to prepare students of competence, conscience, and compassion, who will help fashion a more just, humane, and sustainable world.

Our cover art for this volume comes from talented major Cathy Moya. The piece is titled “Cozy Afternoon.”

Bringing this issue to life would not be possible without the support and input from all members in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. We are grateful to our volunteer Editorial Board members for this volume for their time and effort in reviewing authors’ submissions and providing detailed reviews: Erick Berrelleza SJ, Cara Chiaraluce, Patrick Lopez-Aguado, Laura Nichols, Laura Robinson, and Molly King. We also are indebted to the hard work of our Student Editorial Assistant, Naomi Yang, who kept us organized and kept communications running smoothly.
The Dangerous “Wasn’t Super Consensual”:
Sexual Culture of Santa Clara University

By
Molly Flood

ABSTRACT. The rise in cases of sexual assaults occurring on Santa Clara University’s campus begs the question of why and how the sexual culture on campus allows these traumatic situations to occur and prompts the consideration of how best to support the survivor and uphold justice. Previous research has explored the saturation of sexual assaults on college campuses and revealed a lack of understanding of what constitutes consent and college environments being prone to such crimes. In an effort to center survivors’ needs, I utilized personal stories from the Instagram account @metoo.scu to gather information on the assaults and personal sentiments of the survivors’ trauma and healing processes. The findings indicate in the case of the assault there is no practice of consent, often the use of intoxicants, and social power dynamics lead to victims feeling powerless. In terms of the trauma and post-assault life, survivors showed a lot of self-denial, trivialization, and little to no social support, leading to worse mental health, poor performance in school, and harm to relationships. These findings can be used to create programs for education on healthy sex and protocols for helping survivors heal and supporting whatever path to justice they need.

At the beginning of the fall quarter of the 2021-2022 academic school year, there was a rise in stories and accounts of sexual assault, and a campus-wide discussion was set off about the sexual culture of Santa Clara University (SCU) that allows these crimes to occur, exist, and go unaccounted. Therefore, the goal of this research project is to understand the nature, prevalence, and dynamics of sexual assaults occurring within the Santa Clara University community to inform programs and protocols that engage in creating a safe and healthy sexual culture and an informed process for holding offenders accountable that upholds justice and centers the experiences of survivors so they may more adequately heal.

As sexual assaults often go unreported to authorities or college staff, for a variety of reasons, I chose to use the @metoo.scu Instagram account as the data for analysis. This page was launched at the beginning of 2021 as a part of the #MeToo movement that encourages survivors to share their stories of sexual assault to expose the deeply rooted social problem that contributes to these dangerous dynamics that create harm and trauma. The page posts stories submitted by survivors through an anonymous

1 Trigger Warning: The stories and content described in the research have graphic depictions of sexual assault, violence, and rape that are very disturbing. Please prepare yourself emotionally before proceeding or forgo reading this research if it may be triggering.
survey to expose the harsh reality of sexual assault on SCU’s campus. The exposure generates awareness and motivates other survivors to label their experiences and join the pursuit of changing the culture. To analyze the stories, I conducted open coding to find the common themes that emerged from the data. Given that the voices of survivors are often lost in debates about addressing sexual assault on college campuses, this method was chosen as it lends itself to feminist standpoint theories of analysis, which center on the experiences of women.

The findings revealed many aspects of dangerous sexual encounters in Santa Clara University’s community. The analysis showed that for all of the stories, the assault occurred in the survivor’s first year at SCU, either as a first-year or sophomore transfer. Many of these stories referred to the offender being an older student, in a fraternity or sports team, or even a student leader in the dorms. Furthermore, there is a common theme of intoxicants being involved and for the assault to have occurred at or after parties which blurs the lines of consent and clearly reveals a lack of understanding of what conscious consent entails for both parties. Many parties at SCU are fraternity-hosted, though Greek life at SCU is unaffiliated, leaving a lack of structure for accountability when harmful experiences occur. In terms of reporting, there is a common theme of self-denial for the survivor after the assault which is often detrimental to personhood and blocks social integration. Therefore, the themes can reveal what aspects of the social culture need to be addressed to protect the humanity and dignity of all students at SCU.

**INTRODUCTION**

Sexual assault is a public health and public safety epidemic with lasting personal implications and a symptom of a violent sexual culture shaped by dominance and control. College students are at an elevated risk of sexual assault, especially college-aged women. This project employs a feminist standpoint theoretical approach to acknowledge the gendered reality of sexual violence. Given the research revealing high rates of sexual assault cases on college campuses, many have responded with resources and programs to support survivors; however, very few survivors use these for many reasons. Due to weak programs, survivor-blaming, a lack of support for the survivor post-reporting, and the perceived grey area of what classifies as sexual assault and/or rape, many sexual assault reports are skewed and not representative of the reality of the situation. Furthermore, as the processes have not met the needs of survivors and often submit them to further trauma, students on college campuses have resorted to ulterior methods of bringing the frightening reality to light. Some examples include #MeToo Instagram pages that anonymously report stories to raise awareness, grassroots marches, and student club support groups for survivors. These approaches respect the healing of the survivor by keeping anonymity and are more accessible to survivors. Unfortunately, these sources often raise personal experiences with anecdotes of reasons for not officially reporting, often because of a lack of clarity of what classifies as sexual assault and the complicated and further traumatizing journey of processing, reporting, and dealing with a trial. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to make recommendations to colleges around how to better understand students’ experiences
and implement programs and a culture that allows for students to feel more comfortable labeling and reporting incidents of sexual assault and creating a sexual cultural shift away from violence.

Statement of Positionality

Over the past three years attending Santa Clara University, I have explored the social scene, the sexual culture, and the dating and relationship culture of the school. As a cis-woman, I have had to navigate these from a certain positionality that starts at a disadvantage. This disadvantage can be understood as being socially constructed and oriented towards employing the passive role in conversations and in heterosexual relations, initiation, dating, and more. While I personally have disdain for this social construction and orientation and have made a conscious effort to rid myself of these, these function to submit women to a lack of agency over their roles, bodies, and relationships. For example, recently when chatting with some fellow peers, they were talking about how if a guy at a party is creepy to you, you choose to just go with it out of fear of how the guy may respond if you reject him. This sort of social control the “creepy guy” has over the woman is problematic and creates a gridlock towards women claiming their independence, agency, and pleasure. Furthermore, the heterosexual culture of SCU has toxic hookup and binge drinking characteristics that unfortunately go hand in hand and create more harm than good. As someone who has experienced this firsthand, I have a desire to transform this culture, so that no woman at SCU has to experience the pain, trauma, and depression that comes from sexual abuse. I am not implying resorting back to purity culture which functions contrary and produces shame and guilt; rather, I believe that a justice framework that considers social power, dynamics, and equity will provide a sexual culture that encourages wisdom and celebration surrounding sexuality.

Literature Review

The epidemic of sexual assault on college campuses is part of a larger social problem involving heteronormative, patriarchal gender relations as a normalized violent sexual culture. In light of the reality that most sexual assault perpetrators on college campuses are male, I employ a feminist theoretical approach to understand the prevalence, nature, and reporting of the crimes for the purpose of using the research to propose a program. Sexual assault is a symptom of ‘rape culture’– the tolerance and normalization of violence against women. This culture has led to a lack of reporting through formal channels among survivors, forging a gridlock in any action to redesign the culture and address the traumatic situations. The lack of action is not to say that the survivors are at fault for failing to report; rather, the violence-tolerant culture and criminal justice structure do not allow them to hold their offenders accountable, perpetuating the violent cycle. This culture is not only experienced in colleges; rather, it is interwoven into every aspect of society. This cultural framework can be dismantled through policies and programs that are aware of society’s tendency to demean the voices of those offended via survivor-blame, heteronormative gendered power dynamics, and violence.
COLLEGE CAMPUS SEXUAL CULTURE

The sexual culture on college campuses refers to the social scripts shared among students that inform perceptions of sexuality and sexual encounters. Much contemporary research has revealed an internalized ‘rape culture’ structured through a patriarchal understanding of sexuality (Spencer et al. 2017). This rape culture is prevalent in many aspects of society. However, given that 20-25% of women experience sexual assault in college, this culture takes its fullest expression on college campuses in which there is a demographic and context that is high risk for sexual misconduct (Holland and Cortina 2017). In the 1990s, “hookup culture” emerged among college campuses and spaces alike, which is described as an environment that encourages sexual contact without the binds of emotional commitment (Reling et al. 2018). While the sexual revolution in the 60s and 70s promoted casual sex as a celebration of sexuality in efforts of de-stigmatization, especially for women, the creation of hookup culture reproduced existing hegemonic power dynamics across race, class, and gender, reinforcing the perceived heteronormative sexual roles of male dominance and aggression and female passivity and submissiveness (Reling et al. 2018). Because of this patriarchal power dynamic between the binary genders in a seemingly sex-positive culture, in conjunction with the reality that most sexual assault survivors are women, rape culture has been tolerated and normalized, embedding itself into college social norms. For example, based on a study from the U.S. Department of Justice, women aged 18-25 have the highest rates of sexual assault victimization compared to any other age group (Sinozich and Langton 2014).

With many college campuses’ social scenes centered around drinking culture, the understandings of consensual sex become more unclear as violations of it have been normalized. For example, many survivors struggle or do not label their experience as assault because of the intoxication levels of the offender or survivor (Khan et al. 2018). Drinking culture is a symptom of hookup culture. By binge drinking alcohol, the vulnerable and intimate experience becomes palpable in an unromantic context. Considering the social codes and constructions of the genders that lead to drastically unequal power dynamics, these cultures work destructively towards the inferior power agent, often women. Drinking alcohol functions as an inhibitor to the prefrontal cortex, which makes conscious decision-making unclear (Abernathy et al. 2010: 289). Between the power dynamics and the effects of drinking alcohol, hookup culture has allowed the norms of what is considered rape to be blurred, especially when the survivor or offender may not even remember due to intoxication. For example, on average, half of the college women who report being sexually assaulted stated that the assault involved using drugs or alcohol by the survivor, offender, or both (Krebs et al. 2017). “Incapacitated sexual assault” includes voluntary intoxication, in which drinking was voluntary (Krebs et al. 2017:10). Involuntary intoxication involves using date-rape drugs, defined as “drug-facilitated sexual assault” (Krebs et al. 2017:10). Incidents labeled as such involve the survivor being unknowingly drugged, incapacitated, and unable to provide consent. Drug-facilitated assault is a double assault to the survivor’s autonomy due to the survivor’s lack of awareness of consuming the intoxicant and is often used to
achieve a sexual encounter by the offender, pointing toward a premeditated plan to assault.

Early feminist insights posit that the codes of masculinity make sexual conquests normative and encouraged, and hegemonic masculinity is accomplished through displays of power (Haaken 2017). Based on the federally funded Campus Sexual Assault Study, most reported sexual assaults were with a known male counterpart involved in a male bonding institution, like a fraternity or sports team (Krebs et al. 2017). This finding dismisses the common notion that a stranger perpetrates rape in an unfamiliar place. Socialized gendered codes have produced the idea of “rape myths” to refer to false beliefs, stereotypes, and perceptions towards agents involved in a rape crime (Reling et al. 2018). Rape myths convolute the reality of the gendered power dynamic that submits women to traumatic sexual experiences and construct women survivors as not living up to the norms of heterosexual interactions. Heterosexual hookup culture allows the acceptance of rape myths through the symbolic reinforcement of men as the pursuer, controlling the hookup, typically the only agent experiencing pleasure, and gaining social value from the encounter and the number of encounters (Reling et al. 2018). On the contrary, in hookup politics, women’s pleasure is overlooked, and they hold little to no power over the hookup. Furthermore, they are often stigmatized and judged to be promiscuous if they are engaging in as many encounters as men (Reling et al. 2018). Therefore, the patriarchal context of hookup culture produces an internalized social hierarchy between the binary genders that has led to an increasingly violent sexual culture targeting women.

**Feminist Standpoint Theory**

Feminist standpoint theory “places subordinate groups at the center of logical inquiry, exposing sexist, racist, and heterosexist biases in research methodology” (Spencer et al. 2017: 168). Standpoint theory considers the socially situated knowledge of the oppressed group. It acknowledges the reality of double consciousness in which the oppressed group experiences an internal conflict between their perception and the oppressors’ perception because of living in a structurally oppressive society. Along with employing feminist standpoint theory is the similar standpoint theory of intersectionality that considers the variety of identities – race, class, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, ability level, and more – that form experience and determine access to power (Spencer et al. 2017). These theories are imperative to examining sexual assault because they inform research with a consideration of power and identity, which are implicit in the dynamics of sexual assault. Sexuality is politically charged because it involves the control of women’s bodies under the patriarchy. However, a politics that is too focused on the dangers threatening a woman’s experience of sexuality can perpetuate the same patriarchal forces that undermine a woman’s agency to live as a sexually free and empowered being (Spencer et al. 2017).

The patriarchal understanding of sexuality prevails because reporting processes, narratives of sexual assault, and the perception of the “survivor” are informed by a patriarchal understanding of value. For example, when rape is revealed as a crime to be dealt with, it is often phrased politically, focusing on one instance brought to the public,
in which narratives of something being taken from a woman without any opportunity for return are accepted and used to achieve justice (Haaken 2017). While this path to justice may effectively generate an immediate emotional reaction, the narrative provides social symbols that decontextualize the broad reality of gender violence and infantilizes college-aged women as something capable of being taken or stolen (Haaken 2017). The narratives surrounding rape reinforce dominant patriarchal understandings of sexual encounters in which women can be taken advantage of, continuing to source women’s value, purpose, and agency on their bodies and sexualities. Statements like these reproduce the patriarchal realities that allowed the assault to happen, which situates women’s violations within an economic understanding of women as property. For example, typical throughout discourse surrounding sexual assault, the term “victim” is commonly used to refer to the person victimized by the offender. The word victim risks reducing the person to their negative experience and implies no opportunity for healing, expressing female sexual ruination (Haaken 2017). Therefore, the term “survivor” provides a term for referral that upholds the humanization, value, and sense of self for the person. Overall, discourse relating to campus sexual assault politics needs to avoid infantilizing women. This dialogue provides no productive means to dismantle the issue; instead, language needs to focus on the larger social and cultural contexts that produce sexual violence.

In addition, feminist standpoint theory can be used to center the experiences of women in research, so the voices of women can be centered for the purpose of designing programs and interventions that would be valued by those who need them most. In this way, interventions are designed by and for women, of particular importance when current practices are not working for women (Bracken 2011).

**WHY DO SURVIVORS NOT REPORT TO COLLEGES**

Reporting sexual crimes to any source can be retraumatizing in itself, as an assault on someone that involves such a vulnerable aspect of their personhood can have compounding effects on a person’s identity, mental health, and social circle. Furthermore, the social risks, personal risks, and ambiguity underlie why many survivors choose to forego a formal reporting process in hopes of a simpler healing process allowing for a greater range of future identities, relationships, and social projects. One study found that roughly five percent of sexual assaults on college campuses are reported (Holland and Cortina 2017). Given the complicated nature of the crime, the sexual culture that blurs labeling, and the dynamic social reality of college-aged life, I will explore three primary reasons why many survivors choose to forgo a formal process of reporting, holding their offender accountable, and seeking support.

First is the concept of personal and social acceptance of labeling the experience as assault and deeming it acceptable to seek support. Negative emotions such as
embarrassment and self-blame are common reasons for survivors to dismiss using formal support; for example, a common narrative, “I knew I shouldn’t have been drinking as much as I was at the time. It was partially my fault” (Holland and Cortina 2017:56) reflects shame and fear that paralyze the survivor from holding the offender accountable. Also, statements like “I felt as though I would be blamed for putting myself in the situation” are a common theme for survivors that speak directly to the concept of rape culture and rape myth acceptance (Spencer et al. 2017:175). Other reasons for not labeling or reporting are the personal and social consequences that can follow seeking support. Many students are afraid of feeling revictimized by reliving the experience, being blamed for the experience, or disrupting their social network. Social networks are forming in college and pressure individuals to meet social goals within institutions on campus, and reporting a crime involving someone within these institutions could jeopardize reaching their goals (Khan et al. 2018). Furthermore, the social hierarchies of institutions present concern to the victim on actually holding the offender accountable given their often privileged stance among the student body (Khan et al. 2018).

The second is the context of the situation. The contextual characteristics of the assault also breed doubt in the survivor, like it occurring off-campus, involving coercion, mild harassment, or drugs or alcohol, witnesses blaming it on how the survivor was dressed, or even happening in a committed relationship (Holland and Cortina 2017). As well, research shows that most women experience “mild” sexual assault and aggression and rationalize it as “annoying-but-harmless flirtation” because it is “normal” for young girls; however, this pattern suggests the unequal power dynamic of sexuality that breeds a dangerous entitlement of men which leads to more intense and brutalizing sexual assault and rape (Papp and McClelland 2021: 496). This sort of rationalization of seemingly “harmless” behavior minimizes the assaultive, unequal reality of why sexual assault happens in the first place. Furthermore, survivors will share with others about the event and responses questioning their attire and claiming “what did you expect,” while wearing a tight skirt, are mitigating the fault towards the survivor as if it was something they could have controlled, further alienating and traumatizing the survivor (Holland and Cortina 2017:56). Women will often evaluate how the experience affected them, and the normalization of this behavior leads women to be numb to advances that fuel the more “severe” cases of assault. For example, a typical anecdote for college-aged women is, “Because these things are normal for most women… I didn’t consider it serious enough because it happens to girls all the time” (Holland and Cortina 2017: 56). Common conceptions of college-aged women point to the larger social problem that has created a sexual culture of male domination and female submissiveness internalized to the point of justifying violence.

Lastly is personal safety, relevancy to an institution, and accessibility to adequate resources and support. Many survivors suffer from post-traumatic stress and fear repercussions for reporting the situation from the offender or peers of the offender. A common conception held by survivors is that they, “didn’t know who to report to” or that they could not report something of this regard to the school (Spencer et al. 2017:173). As well, that reporting could lead to a dysfunctional means of justice given it is often “my word against his” and women have little power or agency within rape culture, so survivors will decide it might not even be worth the trouble, given a lack of security.
regarding the outcome (Spencer et al. 2017:173). Another theme found in research is survivors’ hesitancy to report because of relevancy to the university (Holland and Cortina 2017). For example, if it did not happen on-campus or by a student of the college, survivors will choose to forego reporting to the institution out of a lack of relevancy, despite Title IX’s obligation to address any forms of sexual assault concerning a singular student (Spencer et al. 2017). In this light, survivors perceive that reporting a sexual assault case to an institution will bring it into the open, often to unfamiliar people and conspicuous to the public, which is typically what a survivor does not want to do after a traumatic experience.

Acting SCU President Lisa Kloppenberg sent an email addressing sexual assault reporting during the first week of the 2021 fall quarter after Student Body President Abby Alvarez sent an email about the spike in sexual assault allegations reported to Greek Panhellenic (Kloppenberg 2021). Alvarez ensured to respect the experiences of survivors by iterating to them “preventing rape is not your responsibility.” She went on to explain precautions created by Greek Life and ASG to take responsibility and promote community care. Kloppenberg followed up this email by explaining that the school “unequivocally condemn(s)” sexual assault and “treats [it] with the utmost seriousness” (Kloppenberg 2021). Kloppenberg went on to explain that any accountability for the offender and justice for the survivor relies on an investigation which must begin with reporting. She explained, “in order to investigate, both the University and police need students who were subject to either drugging or sexual assault to report what happened to them” (Kloppenberg 2021). While reporting is a tangible way to account for the assaults, there is a disconnect between this assumption that reporting just needs to happen and the complexity of survivor’s healing in their sentiments. Therefore, survivors’ sentiments are crucial to generating any real social change and will be the focus of my findings.

METHODS

To understand the nature, prevalence, and reporting of sexual assault on the Santa Clara University campus, I read and reviewed the 23 anecdotes posted between January 7th, 2021 to October 15th, 2021 that were posted anonymously to Santa Clara University’s #MeToo Instagram page, @metoo.scu (see Appendix for all stories analyzed). I conducted a content analysis of the anecdotes to gain clarity of the nature of the assaults reported and how those who posted talked about their experiences of assault. Centering women’s experiences employs feminist standpoint theory as it grounds action in the theory of finding solutions by going to the individual being affected by the problem, taking a grassroots approach.

Analysis of the posts about the assaults revealed common themes of a harmful sexual encounter, reasons for not officially reporting, and the personal effects of a disempowering experience. I chose to use Instagram posts as these posts were shared by the survivors with an informed understanding that they would become public
knowledge rather than conducting interviews which can be triggering and exploitative to survivors.

To organize information regarding the encounters, I took a screenshot of each post, numbered them, and noted the following details: the time of year, the relationship between survivor and offender, location, levels of intoxication, the violent/sexually assaultive behavior, if the survivor personally labels their experience, and their use of reporting or services. Organizing these details helped me to recognize major themes in the experiences. After organizing these details, I coded the information by the themes which included: low level of social integration, ignored consent, physical force, coercion, incapacitated intoxication, acquaintanceship/relationship, and reporting. The themes were chosen based on the frequency; reporting was rarely mentioned. I attempted to include reporting as a closed code to show the discrepancy of official reporting in relation to real experiences of sexual assault and rape. To analyze these codes, I calculated the proportion in relation to the sample of anecdotes that included the respective theme to present accurate ratios. In my findings, I refer to the person telling the story as the ‘survivor’ rather than ‘victim’ to ensure not to trigger self-defeating emotions that can further negative perceptions around the trauma and posit an adaptive mindset around those who have experienced trauma. As well, I avoid the use of any gendered pronouns, even if the anecdotes did use them, to avoid assumptions; therefore, I will refer to the perpetrator of the assault as the ‘offender.’

LIMITATIONS

The limitations to my findings are the fact that the data was taken from an Instagram page that collects anonymous data willingly given by survivors. There are most likely many other survivors with different stories and perceptions of their experiences. Therefore, it is important to recognize the limitations of the sample of data used to make these assumptions.

FINDINGS

College Campus Sexual Culture Analysis

Consent requires both agents to be coherent and aware and must be active throughout the sexual encounter as intimacy of activity progresses. Ignoring consent is an act of violence and involves disregarding someone’s agency to have power over them. Therefore, in my analysis of consent, I will include instances in which the survivor does not remember the encounter due to intoxicants but knows after the fact that they were assaulted, I will refer to this as “incapacitated intoxication." As well, I will include coercion as a form of ignored consent as it typically involves using force or threats to make the survivor comply with their demands. While all of the anecdotes are instances of ignored consent because of the fact that they were posted on the account, I will focus on 18 stories that blatantly describe ignored consent in the context of sexual acts, composing 75% of the anecdotes.
A common theme among stories of ignored consent was the survivor’s perception of being “trapped” until they complied with the offenders’ advances and requests. For example, in story #4 the survivor told the offender they did not want to have sex, the offender proceeded to ignore the lack of consent and penetrate them, the survivor asked what they were doing and the individual responded “oh sorry did you want me to wear a condom?” The survivor complied to get out of the situation. Story #6 explains their repeated “no I don’t want to have sex,” which was responded to with, “I know you want to.” The survivor reports, “I was in his room for over 4 hours...I felt trapped like I was in a cage...he held me captive till we had sex.” Both of these stories describe ignored consent and rape. The latter story includes the sexualization of violence which came up frequently in the anecdotes.

Another common theme among the anecdotes of ignored consent was the use of physical force. The societal understandings and symbols of heterosexual sex have contributed to a rape-prone culture in which being “hard-to-get” is sexualized. While every individual has the freedom to explore their sexuality in any way they please, consent by both parties is still required for whatever activity. In story #1, the survivor reports being choked with her mouth covered so no one would hear them yell as the offender raped them, and this was the survivor’s first time having sex. Story #8 describes the offender being very intoxicated and trying to have sex with the survivor as they kicked and yelled trying to get them off. The offender held the survivor down and slapped their body, bit their ears, and pushed down on their throat to the point they saw stars. The offender said, “you like that you little slut,” the survivor commented, “I had never felt so small...and genuinely feared for my life.” The offender raped them with no protection and finished inside of them. Story #12 tells a similar story in which the offender pushed the survivor’s head down to perform oral sex as the offender was talking on the phone. The offender proceeded to punch the survivor in the chest, rape them, film with their phone, finish, and pee on the survivor. An utter act of violence.

Many anecdotes involved incapacitated intoxication of the survivor in which 11 out of the 24 mentioned alcohol or drugs inhibiting their ability or memory. Two of the stories coded as incapacitated intoxication reported the use of involuntary drugging. The remaining nine reported they drank well beyond their limit and experienced a loss of consciousness resulting in partial to total memory loss. Four of these stories explain the survivor did not know they had had sex until asking the offender. Two of them didn’t know they had had sex until they found a tampon lodged inside of them. These findings reveal a grave misunderstanding of what conscious consent means and a grave morality disparage of young men dehumanizing women to please their own internalized entitlement.

All 18 anecdotes that mentioned what year in college the experience occurred were in the early part of the first year and second year of college. There is an apparent trend of sexual assaults and rape happening to those individuals with low levels of social integration. Of the 18 anecdotes including the year, 88% occurred in their first year at SCU. Of the 21 anecdotes that mentioned the existing relationship between the offender and survivor, 95% knew the offender, only one anecdote did not know the offender. Out of these 21 mentioning an acquaintanceship or friendship, four (or 21%) mentioned the
offender was a trusted and/or close friend, seven (or 33%) mentioned the offender was a known friend, and nine (or roughly 43%) reported the offender was initially a person of romantic interest. One of the trusted acquaintance sexual assaults included a student leader in the dorms who assaulted the drunk victim. This power dynamic inhibited the survivor from accepting their experience as assault. Of the nine anecdotes that mentioned being initially romantically interested in the person, five were referring to individuals older than the survivor, and all of the survivors were first-year students.

The status and social placement of the offender are important to understand the power dynamics and context. Unfortunately, frequent in the responses is a referral to the offender being on a sports team or a Greek life organization. Three of the stories specifically state the offender was a part of a fraternity, others mentioned meeting them at a fraternity party but do not mention whether the offender was a member of the fraternity. Regardless, Greek life at SCU is not affiliated with the school itself, which has various implications for students’ safety and inhibits these student-run organizations from comprehensive accountability structures for instances of assault and other harmful experiences that occur at the parties. Therefore, this begs the question of whether the “off-campus” and “unaffiliated” Greek life allows harmful sexual encounters to go unaccounted for and leave survivors feeling unsupported and like there is no way to address it as the school takes a hands-off approach in terms of problems within Greek life. If the school were affiliated with Greek life, the school could support these institutions in avoiding assault at their parties and within the communities and actually intervene when assaults occur. The unaffiliated Greek life at SCU is a reckless expression of indifference to the reality of the college student experience and leaves the community flailing amidst heavy and difficult experiences.

Overall, in light of the hookup culture that blurs the lines of what is consensual, there is often an “active” agent and “passive” agent in heterosexual hookups. This unequal power dynamic sexually and socially sets up the passive agent to have little to no control over the hookup which allows assaultive behavior and violent sexual encounters to go unaccounted for and even overlooked as normative. This culture of passivity and activity has taught the active agent, typically the man in a heterosexual encounter, that sex is something that is done to the passive agent, the woman, rather than with the woman. Furthermore, the active agent is typically the one who initiates and leads the hookup. In this power dynamic, the passive agent may feel a sense of fear if they do not share the same intentions as the active agent, which often leads the passive agent to be complicit in the encounter, often leaving them feeling exploited, horrified, and shocked. Therefore, a sexual culture that promotes sexual encounters of equity of power, control, and activity is necessary to combat the deeply rooted social problem of a violent heterosexual culture.

**Post-Assault Perception/Feeling Analysis and Likelihood of Reporting**

Most of the posts reveal the survivor’s own feelings about their experience and the unwarranted self-doubt, shame, and guilt that hindered them from addressing the problem and holding the offender accountable. After a violently traumatic experience, denial can be a coping mechanism. For example, story #2 reports they were suicidal for
months after and convinced themself that it was their own fault because they drank too much and they had been “leading him on” so they “should’ve been expecting it.” Two years later the survivor is able to label the experience as what it was. Taking years to personally label their experience as assault was another common theme among the anecdotes. Seven of the anecdotes claim it took them half a year to three years to personally label their experiences as assault and stop their self-denial. One anecdote did not take the case to Title IX because they were under the impression that they would not hear the case if it occurred off-campus, which is where the majority of the experience occurred, pointing toward a lack of education on the school’s part, once again signaling to the school’s apathy and lack of concern of off-campus parties, which let these experiences perpetuate and go unaccounted. Another anecdote reported they did not take it administration because their friends said it would “get the frat in trouble,” sacrificing her own mental and emotional health for the relevance of a group of boys.

Most of the anecdotes do not include any statements pointing toward reporting assaults, for many reasons revealed in the words expressing the survivor’s feelings after the assault. Stories #6 and #15 were officially reported to the school but neither ended in justice for the survivor. For example, story #6 dropped the case because they were told a hearing would take months and they were distraught and depressed from the experience and needed to start a healing process. They were able to have one therapy session with CAPS on campus and then were told another session wouldn’t be available for a year. The survivor posted the story as a senior and the experience happened as a first-year. Story #15 is two sentences and has the quote of the school’s response: “Were you a virgin when you met him?” This anecdote reveals the administrative internalization of rape culture and victim-blaming.

Overall, in terms of officially reporting and holding offenders accountable, there seems to be a general consensus that the lack of cultural awareness surrounding what constitutes an assault prevents survivors from addressing them. Furthermore, this lack of cultural awareness allows survivors to go long periods of time in denial. Denial kills personhood and often submits the survivor to mental health struggles like depression, anxiety, and PTSD which make vulnerability and confiding in trusted confidants difficult and sometimes, not a possibility. Therefore, there needs to be a cultural shift in sexual encounters that acknowledges that intimacy is vulnerable and it should only be acted on if both parties consent to the intimate experience. In this light, intimacy has to be something that is approached with care, concern, and conscious decision-making so that the intense drinking culture at SCU cannot be understood as an invitation for sex. Often the norms and expectations of drinking culture are a symptom of a hookup culture that puts pressure on individuals to engage in casual sex as a means to social status. This cultural message is dangerous and insensitive to the reality of sexual encounters as inherently intimate. As well, there needs to be a complete cultural shift away from survivor-blaming. This social change has to start with holding offenders accountable by educating people that it is never the survivor’s fault, no matter how intoxicated the person is. Sex cannot be consensual if the person’s hippocampus is unable to form long-term memories which increases the rate and length of memory loss. Therefore, if intense binge drinking is occurring there has to be a social consensus that sex can be saved for later when all agents’ hippocampus is active and forming memories.
Lastly, administration support has to take an approach informed by the reality of gendered power dynamics. While all of the anecdotes do not reveal the personal identity, most of them use pronouns or the descriptive language of genitalia that point to most of the survivors being women and the offenders being men. In heterosexual sex, the man typically takes a more dominant role as the penetrator. Unfortunately, these roles have been internalized into a sexual culture that entitles men to dominance in decision-making, physical force, and social and emotional force. Therefore, sex roles between the two binary genders have to be reframed so there is an emphasis on mutuality, reciprocity, and equality. The recommendations that follow will use the insights gained from the posts by survivors to guide suggestions that respond out of the lived experiences of survivors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Informed by real survivors’ experiences, I recommend a strategic program for prevention that focuses on defining unhealthy sexual encounters so as to instill a sexual culture that is rooted in justice and the dignity of all persons. As well, I recommend greater accountability by the administration and the school which must be expressed through targeted and effective intervention strategies. While I will recommend programs for prevention and campaigning for a safer student sexual culture, I urge the administration to acknowledge the recklessness of unaffiliated Greek life and its various implications on the safety and well-being of its students.

Best Practices Recommendations

While there are various programs implemented in colleges and universities to address sexual assault, I will refer to the evidence-based program Sex Signals, which is used at over 1,000 universities, including Marquette University, a Catholic university, and now is conducted within the military (Catharsis Productions 2022). This program has shown promising results by its use of a scripted performance informed by real stories, audience-driven engagement, and guided discussions geared to interrogate the rape-supportive culture of many college spaces. The program uses humor as a means to engage the students, reduce resistance, and comprehensively teach the students in an approachable manner about stigmatized topics. It explores the culture that justifies unhealthy sexual behavior with an emphasis on power dynamics but maintains a sex-positive framework. Specifically, it considers power dynamics and entitlement as perpetrators of sexual violence. The program bases its theory on the research that rape perpetrators are often acquaintances or even friends of the survivor and that consent is the responsibility of the initiator of the sexual encounter. The theatrical performance and other narratives are informed by real experiences of college life and hookup culture and propose ways to maintain a sex-positive culture but one that is rooted in equity, respect, and agency.

The Sex Signals program is an effective curriculum that should be implemented, but is not sufficient alone. Sarah Zasso, the membership coordinator of the Violence Prevention Educators on campus, recommends anonymous group therapy for survivors, on-campus professionals geared at helping intimate partner violence, especially BIPOC
and Queer professionals, and more funding for preventative programs and bystander trainings that target stigmas rooted in sexism, racism, homophobia, and ableism, which are all intersecting identities that make it more difficult to report, process, and heal from sexual violence (Zasso 2021).

**Administration Recommendations: Greek Life**

While educational programs, campaigns, and awareness contribute to raising awareness and prevention, there needs to be action taken by the school to understand the context of these assaults and the school’s role in them. The majority of the stories reported them in the context of a party, with the assault either happening there, meeting the offender there, or the offender being a host of the party. While SCU does not affiliate with Greek organizations, the majority of social events off-campus are hosted by fraternities. The lack of affiliation allows these parties to have zero structure, accountability, or measures and protocols for instances of harm. In 2001, Father Locatelli decided to “phase out” sororities and fraternities at SCU (Santa Clara University Media Relations 2001). Following a five-month study of Greek life, regarding racist and sexist allegations, the committee recommended staying affiliated and increasing control and resources (Santa Clara University Media Relations 2001). Fr. Locatelli overrode the committee’s informed decision and carried out dismantling official Greek life with Santa Clara University. This prompted the existing Greek life at the time, which was four sororities and four fraternities, to move “off-campus.” Since then, Greek life has significantly grown and dominated the off-campus social scene. The lack of affiliation may provide the school with less liability to what occurs in these institutions, but the lack of liability translates to a lack of accountability when harm occurs. This lack of accountability does not align with the Jesuit mission of Cura Personalis, or care for the whole person, in which SCU prides itself; therefore, I urge the school to critically reflect on its mission, values, and hopes for the future of SCU and make an informed decision that protects and supports its students in the reality they live.

**Grant Funding Recommendation**

The U.S. Department of Justice Office for Violence Against Women, has a great focus on college campuses and their tendency to be environments for assault, specifically towards women. The office has a grant specific for college programs named, The Grants to Reduce Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking on Campus Program (U.S. Department of Justice OVW Campus Program). This grant is applicable as it has a narrow focus to college environments, takes a community approach that supports survivor healing with resources and services, and enforces efforts to hold offenders accountable. The funding supports trauma-informed services for survivors and strategies for prevention through education targeted at shifting the college sexual culture through a justice framework. It supports the strategic path for addressing the unique problem on college campuses and recognizes the solution within the community at large. Therefore, I recommend the administration apply to the Campus Program grant to fund effective, targeted solutions of awareness, prevention, and protocols rooted in the experiences of survivors.
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the heteronormative framework to sexual encounters needs to experience a cultural shift in which power dynamics, social status, and entitlement are considered to create a culture of equity and nonviolence. This must start with a bottom-up approach in which the voices of those affected by this harmful culture are uplifted and used as a means to identify solutions. Therefore, the analysis above provides a means to effective, targeted solutions that consider those being affected and the societal root causes. Following the recommendations, I propose, would uplift and respect the perceptions and feelings of survivors to provide a means towards a safer, unified, just, and equitable sexual culture at Santa Clara University in which the beautiful and passionate aspects of sexuality can be celebrated. Overall, Santa Clara University needs to consider the contexts in which these assaults occur and question the school’s positionality and role in addressing these to be able to thoroughly provide a means to create a culture where all can safely thrive and flourish while being supported.

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APPENDIX
Appendix

Story #1

ANONYMOUS

“Sophomore year I transferred into ECU from a very small college. I didn’t know many people at this school besides a few from high school. Week 2 we were celebrating one of my friends’ birthday’s where we had been heavily drinking and substances was involved. In our new friend group we had someone who was a junior and we had been spending time with him during the 1st week because we had been going to welcome week parties together. At a point during the party, him and I started to making out. I started to get nauseous and felt like I was going to sick so I didn’t really drink before college or even in high school. At this point he leads me into the bathroom and locks the door.

I remember feeling over and wobbling around the bathroom, as he increasingly got more touchy. I had never been sexual in any way with anyone before. I had only kissed a few people which I had only just done over welcome weekend. He even knew I was fully a virgin. He started choking me, and forcefully pulls down my top and down my pants, and starts to rape me. I was paralyzed in fear during this and he covers my mouth so I don’t scream. I begin to hear my friends boyfriend knocking and banging on the door to let him in. He was the only one who had realized what might be happening. I was pushed behind the door but it was obvious what had just happened because I had bleed all over the bathroom from losing my virginity.

It was terrifying. He ends up putting his shirt (which also had my blood) on it and running out of the bathroom into the room and says “I didn’t do anything to her”. He leaves and my friend come to check out me and ask me if I’m okay, which I was very shaken by what just happened. The next day, my friend who had the birthday party got a text from her housemates saying that “they all do not feel comfortable with *** at their house because he has sexually assaulted another girl in their house, and that he is blacklisted from the house”. During this time I was so lost and devastated, I had just transferred into a new school and didn’t know anyone yet or what resources I had. I just botted it up and blamed myself.

Once I was at bars, someone came up to me and said “I *** has been telling people how he took my virginity while I was blacked out. This person proceed to ask me if I was OK because from what he had heard it sounded very traumatic and it was very obvious he has taken advantage of me. Hearing this absolutely broke me and as I cried outside almost all my new friends came up to me and tell me their own experiences of sexual assault and how they were going to help support me get through this.

Looking back I really do wish I had done something about it and done more to make sure he could never hurt another girl. You can get support from the University through CAPS anonymously without allowing it be reported to police or the university if you are feeling alone.”

Story #2

ANONYMOUS

“It was freshman year and I didn’t know my alcohol limits yet, so I drank too much and blacked out. I had been talking to a boy who was a year older than me for a couple of weeks and he met up with me that night, I don’t even remember running into him. I blacked back in right around when he was finishing in my mouth and immediately felt disgusting and made him leave, even though he pushed back hard against my request for him to leave my room. It still haunts me that I have no idea what he did to me before I regained consciousness and what could have happened if I hadn’t.

I was suicidal for months afterward and in denial about what had happened since I’d been convinced that I drank too much so I put myself in that situation knowingly and 2 ½ years later I should’ve been expecting it. But from the beginning, all I wanted to be was friends. Now I know that it was assault, and I was way too drunk to consent to that, he wouldn’t stop snapping and texting me for weeks afterward until I finally blocked him, and to this day I still see him at school and at his frat’s parties all the time. I don’t want to ruin his life, even though for a while it felt like he ruined mine. 2 years later and I’m just now able to share my story without breaking down or going into shock.”

Story #3

ANONYMOUS

“My freshman year I went to a party with some friends. My friends and I partied before, but I have a specific limit and never drink more than that limit. This particular day, I didn’t want to get very drunk, I just wanted to have a good time with my friends, so I drank well below my limit. This particular day, I didn’t want to sleep with anyone, I just wanted to have fun for myself. I went out to a party at a fraternity and decided to get a snow cone from their little bar table, it was a winter themed party and snow cones are my favorite, so I just couldn’t help myself. I asked the guy at the table what was in it and he said vodka and blueberry flavoring, so I took s. 1 thought, what’s the harm in 3 more shots. I thought it was no big deal.

Within 20 minutes things started getting really hazy, but I didn’t really think much of it. Then the police came and the party got rolled and my friends and I went to another party. It was in a dark room with no windows, could have been a basement but I don’t remember too much. The whole night is really blurry. One minute I was dancing with friends, the next minute I was falling on the floor, and the next I was getting picked up by a man who began kissing me. Again I didn’t think much of it, at point my brain wasn’t able to tell right from wrong very well. Next thing I remember the man is carrying me on his back down the street. The next thing I remember after that is he’s naked on top of me.

The next thing I remember is me throwing up, ion after I threw up I began to understand the situation and left. I didn’t think much of it the first few days after “I must’ve drunk too much without realizing and blacked out, no big deal.” It’s funny, when I left that day, I didn’t realize that I didn’t remember several hours of my life. In fact, I didn’t even think I had sex with at man, since my memory completely skipped that part of the night. But when I woke up at my next morning, I realized I remembered. I had seen the wrong the night before was shoved way into my face (I spent like half an hour trying to get it out). This made me question whether or not I had sex that night.

I ended up messaging the person to ask, and while they were offended that I didn’t remember, they told me that we had. That same morning, I realized my chest hurt really bad (it felt as though someone was sitting on my heart). I just assumed that maybe it was the effects of a bad hangover or something, until I found out that it wasn’t. Three nights after the party while talking to someone about the experience, I learned that this particular frat put “obscene amounts of xanax” into the drinks they handed out that night. Now xanax might not be a “date rape drug”, but it sure as hell can be dangerous to your heart, memory, and decision making skills when mixed with alcohol.”


Anonymous

(did I mention my chest continued hurting for 3 more days and I was extremely anxious) I don’t know whether or not to blame the guy who I slept with. For all I know he might not have realized how messed up I was that night. I do, however, blame that fraternity that drugged me. And the reason I am writing this, the reason this whole thing pisses me off so much tonight, is because on Instagram, in response to the horrible drugging and sexual assault scandal this past week, they stated that “this behavior is unacceptable” and “we have a zero tolerance policy” and we “hold our brothers accountable,” but they don’t.

Anonymous

If they really cared about victims of drugging, sexual abuse, and sexual assault, then they, as a group, wouldn’t be drugging people at their bar stand. And I hope one day they learn how hypocritical and horrible human beings they really are. I stand for all people who have undergone such trauma, or whoever might undergo it (and forbid) in the future.

Anonymous

“Story #4

“This is a story of ignored consent. I do not consider myself a survivor of sexual assault but do know I did not give consent to have sex with a guy that took me to a date event freshman year. I had met him randomly 2 nights before he asked me and I said yes. We ended up back at his apartment couch and started to make out. I told him then that I didn’t want to have sex that night, he nodded then took me to his bedroom. Things started to progress and before I knew it he was about to start having sex with me. I was shocked and asked him what he was doing and he responded “oh sorry did you want me to wear a condom?”. I didn’t know how else to get out of this situation so I had sex with him and immediately left after.”

Anonymous

Don’t pressure girls especially if they have told you they are unsure.

Anonymous

“This the summer before my sophomore year I arrived early on campus. I had befriended a new student that was on the soccer team. I invited him to go out with me and meet some of my friends. He then later invited me to hang out with the soccer team. I had just started drinking that summer so when we played rager cage I did not know it was Four Loko. I remember sitting on his lap and him kissing me. Then it became really fuzzy. He led me to his truck parked outside and I remember the back and forth motion as I pushed against his chest in refusal. I felt frozen. I threw up and I remember him pushing my head out of the car door near the grass. He drove me back drunk.

Anonymous

He somehow got into my phone and texted my extremely worried friend who picked me up outside of the dorm. I was not wearing underwear, my skirt was sideways and I had my bra on and his jacket. He handed a bag to my friend that had my underwear and shirt. She sponged bathed me and put me in her pajamas and had me sleep in her bed as she watched me through the night. I was so lucky to have someone like her. I texted him the next day and asked, “Did we had sex?” He said, “Yes.” I asked, “Did you use a condom?” He said “No.” I said “Did I throw up in your car?” He said “Ya, I had to get it cleaned.”

Anonymous

I had just gotten out of a 3 year physically and emotionally abusive relationship with the boy I first had sex with. So I wanted my next time to be with someone who truly loved and cared for me. And this guy on the soccer team took that from me. It led me to have issues with my self-worth. If someone could just see me like that after I told him about what I went through, why should I care? I slept around a lot that year. And I did not look out for my own feelings. I am still healing from that.”

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Story #6

**Anonymous**

"It’s been almost 3 years since I was assaulted by a fraternity member. I went to a party. I kissed him. Him. A man who’s face is burned into my memory. A man who stole from me. To this day I wish I never kissed him. Eventually we went back to his room. I had gone back with guys before and we never had never had sex or continued what we were doing when one of us said no. But this time was different. I verbally said no and physically rejected his sexual advances for hours. I’m not exaggerating. I told him I didn’t want to have sex and just wanted to go home. I knew something was wrong when he whispered to me "I know you want to" after I told him "no I don’t want to have sex.”

At one point I even sat up and tried to leave, but he wouldn’t let me. I didn’t want to have sex, but it became clear I wasn’t leaving unless we had sex. He even took off my belt without me knowing or asking me. I was in his room for over 4 hours until he let me go home. I felt trapped, like I was in a cage. Deep down I knew he was wrong and I knew he knew too. He held me captive until we had sex. Eventually I learned a term for what I went through- coercion, I pretended for a while I wanted to. It was easier to lie to myself. It was my first time having sex with a complete stranger. I did not want it. What happened to me after? I was able to get ONE therapy session with SOU.

That was all. ONE session. I was so broken. After pouring my heart out and trying to heal I was told they were full for the year. They could not accommodate me. I was so discouraged. I cried myself asleep that whole week. I was so angry at my abuser, myself, and the system. I thought my raped would be apologetic. But he denied what had happened. He attempted to contact me a few weeks later. I didn’t meet up with him. I couldn’t. The next day I filled out a no contact form. Sometimes from afar I’d see him in the library with a group of girls. I wanted to tell them so bad. I reported the assault, but was told a hearing would take months. I didn’t want to feel all this pain for months.

There was so much pain and I wanted it to go away. I just didn’t have the strength to go forth with the report. Everyone told me one day things would look up, but when? Almost three years later and I have graduated. I now know that it was never my fault. I have a partner who loves me. I can trust again. The word no has meaning now. I am finally going to therapy. But I think about what happened to me a lot. I want you to know my fellow survivors, that I think about you all the time. If there are times where you feel like no one cares - remember I do. You are never alone in this journey even in your darkest hours. Just know there is someone out there who cares.”

Story #7

**Anonymous**

“One time during freshman year I went out with some friends and got extremely drunk. I came back to Benson and was separated from my friends and from what I remember I ran into a guy in Benson and started hitting on him pretty directly. He was a 2% and 100 percent sober and I don’t remember what had exactly happened leading up to this because I was pretty intoxicated but he eventually took me back to his room. I remember immediately regretting it and started to leave but he kept saying that I was too drunk to go back to my room and wouldn’t let me leave (I lived in a different residence hall)

He took off my clothes and his and started to kiss me and I remember trying to talk to him so that we wouldn’t have to do anything. He eventually kept on insisting that I suck his dick and I kept figuring out a way to avoid it but then finally gave in. I remember running to his bathroom to throw up either during or after because I had drank way too much. I eventually fell asleep in his bed because I couldn’t find my clothes after coming out of his bathroom and woke up and left as soon as I could in the morning. He then continued to message me and follow me around campus the next couple weeks while I continued to avoid/ignore him. I still am unsure if I was assaulted/taken advantage of.”

Story #8

**Anonymous**

“Freshman year I went to a big day party fall quarter and saw this guy who had flirted with me in the past. I hadn’t been drinking very much because I was anxious to be super drunk around so many people I didn’t know. We made out at the party and decided to go back to my dorm to hang out. We walked out hand in hand and everything seemed totally fine. As soon as we got to my dorm he started saying and seemed very drunk. I suggested that we watch a show and drink water but he didn’t want to. He threw up in my trash can and proceeded to lock the door.

At this point I was very turned off to the idea of hooking up with him because he had just thrown up, but he threw me on the bed and started taking off my clothes super aggressively. I kept insisting that we take things slow and even began resisting. He then proceeded to rip his own pants trying to take them off and continued! I started kicking him and telling him to relax and stop but his eyes were completely empty. He turned me over and started spanking my butt and legs so hard that I had bruises of his hand prints for over a week. He kept holding me down and saying “you like that you little slut” and I had never felt so small.

He bit my ears so hard I thought they would bleed and pushed down on my throat so hard I was seeing stars and genuinely feared for my life. I punched and kicked but, he felt nothing. He threw up on my floor, took off the condom and finished inside me without my permission, but at that point I had given up and forced myself to accept what was happening. He passed out on top of me and I was underneath him for about 2 hours. In his sleep he threw up on me and I had to throw away my pillows. He finally woke up and left my room without hardly saying a word. I was so scared to do or say anything since it was the third week of freshman year and I barely had friends.

One night I drunkenly confided in one of his friends about what had happened because he grabbed my ass at another party. This completely triggered me and I broke down on the street sobbing. I texted him to talk but, he never approached me and apparently had no memory of what happened. Three years later after numerous panic attacks and nightmares I finally had the balls to tell him how what happened to me and a couple other girls since. They promised they’d take action. Nothing happened and everyone still thinks he’s a good guy. This is exactly why I never told anyone as a freshman, now as a senior with good friends in that frat, I thought things would be different.”
Story #9

I was a sophomore and I was a newly transfer student. I met a “friend” who attended SUC with me. We immediately became “good friends”. I had a very small number of friends and I felt so homoced. I settled for “friends” who were nothing like me. They were into the party culture and I was trying to socialize and enjoy my transfer student experience. My “friend” would get super drunk and really high and I would always look after her. There were times when she slept over at my dorm. I was starting to get uncomfortable with this but it became a routine for her and I didn’t know how to set boundaries because I was afraid of losing a friend and staying alone. I didn’t like to share my bed, but I wanted to be a good friend and host her when she was way to drunk to go to her place. One night, at a house party she gave me a drink she prepared. I drank it and felt my body so loose. I didn’t feel right.

Anonymous

Story #10

This was move-in night of my freshman year. I didn’t party in high school so I didn’t realize how much I had drank. I was standing in the crowd of people dancing, barely moving, when a guy came up to me. I’m a small person, and this guy was about a foot taller than me and weighed twice as much as me. He said, “You look pretty,” and then grabbed me, restraining my arms, and started kissing me. I tried to push him off of me, but I could barely move at all. I was able to wiggle my hand a bit to hopefully brush someone’s leg. Luckily, a girl felt my hand and intervened.

Anonymous

Story #11

It was my freshman year and I had just started talking to this guy and we had made plans to hangout but we didn’t go into the specifics of what we would do. He was older and lived in a house off campus so I went to meet him there and we started hanging out and talking while sitting in his room. He had gotten a phone call so I sat there next to him scrolling through my phone waiting for him to be done. The next thing I knew he was grabbing the back of my head and forcing himself in my mouth while he was still talking on the phone. He eventually hung up and threw me on the bed and started taking off my clothes and I was so terrified I felt helpless.

Anonymous '23

He proceeded to enter me and punched me in the chest when I told him to stop and I was so scared I didn’t say anything else. He even took out his phone and started recording without my permission. After he finished inside me, without my permission, he pulled out and peed on me and then threw me a towel to clean myself up. I have never felt so used and the experience replayed in my head for weeks. I only left my dorm to go to class and I even considered dropping out and going home after this has happened.

Anonymous '23
Story #12

In October of 2019 I went with a few friends to a well-known frat house after to hang out with 2 other guys. I thought one of the guys was cute, and my friends left but I stayed behind because I knew the guy. After I told him I didn’t want to have sex he replied “no”. I told him no a few more times during the course of it all. He later told a close friend to my boyfriend at the time that the encounter “wasn’t super consensual” and when asked about our relationship he said he “had me first”.

Anonymous ‘21

Story #13

I was at a Halloween party and got separated from my friends while I was drunk. I was wearing a skirt and I remember a group of guys standing behind me, lifting my skirt and taking pictures with the flash on, but I was too drunk and scared to defend myself. The next morning I was so paranoid because I had no idea who had seen the pictures and who saw me that night. I had a panic attack in Benson because the feeling of people standing behind me reminded me of what had happened. I told a friend about what happened and they told me not to report it because then that frat could get in trouble.

Anonymous ‘23

Story #14

I was raped and abused for two years. After my friends finally reported it, the school asked me, “Were you a virgin when you met him?”

Anonymous ‘20

https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/svsr/vol20/iss1/1
Story #15

My freshman year I went to bars with some people on my floor. I got quite drunk and wanted to go back to my dorm, but everyone that I came with wanted to stay. One of my friends at the time found a guy who said he would be willing to walk me back to my dorm, except he took me to his dorm room instead. Once we got to his dorm room he proceeded to undress me and penetrated me. I was on my period at the time so I had a tampon in.

**Anonymous '23**

Story #16

Freshman year, a guy friend kept making advances on me, but I kept saying no. We were drinking one night with a bunch of friends and I blacked out. I woke up the next morning, feeling very hungover and just awful. I saw him in lemon where he laughed at me and asked if I had remembered what happened the night before. It was then he told me we had sex, etc. He said he barely drank at all. Even though it was obvious I couldn’t remember anything he never apologized and kept making jokes about it to me over the next few months.

**Anonymous '22**

Story #17

I was so drunk that I threw up in his bed, while on my back, with him inside me. I was so shocked by what had happened and so drunk that I fell asleep in his room. When I woke up, he grabbed my neck and forced his penis in my face, holding my head down so I couldn’t breath. He supposedly hid my underwear and bottom so I couldn’t dress myself to leave. I ended up pulling my shirt down as low as I could to cover myself and run to my room. My tampon was lodged horizontally inside of me and I spent the next morning crying while trying to get it out.

**Anonymous '23**
I took him to my sorority formal and we had a fun time. Afterwards, we hung out for a while and eventually started hooking up. Pretty quickly I realized I wasn’t into it at all and asked him to stop twice. He told me to turn over so he could finish. I remember feeling paralyzed. He didn’t even notice me crying as he raped me. I remember feeling paralyzed. He didn’t even notice me crying as he raped me. He clearly doesn’t think he did anything wrong.

ANONYMOUS ’19

I invited him over to work on a religion project. He was our “brother team” at scu. I had to see him at every practice for another four months and had a panic attack every single time.

ANONYMOUS ’23

My freshman year I tried to help a friend that lived in my dorm building and was very drunk find his room. In the stairwell, he tried to choke me, pulling me towards him to try to kiss me, but he was drunk and stumbling so I was able to step back and fall up the stairs to get away. He grabbed my wrists to pull me back towards him, breaking my bracelets, and when I tried to turn away up the stairs he pulled my ponytail so hard it became undone.

ANONYMOUS

He fell backwards and I was able to run into the hallway, where a friend of ours saw me and offered to help. I told my CF about the experience, and also found out that there were several girls in our dorm that had been harmed or sexually assaulted by this boy, some even living on his floor. I received mandated counseling, and he got a single disciplinary meeting, or what I call his warning to not choke or sexually assault any more women, because a handful in our dorm alone is enough.

ANONYMOUS
Story #21

“Freshman year I drank too much at a darty in fall quarter. I met a guy and he asked to see my dorm room so I brought him back. I told him when we got there that I did not want to have sex with him, and that we couldn’t do that. He proceeded to put himself inside me anyway. I was drunk, shocked, and did not want to fight him off so I didn’t stop him. After he was done I told him that I had been a virgin and he said “oh wow really?” and then left.”

Anonymous ’23

Story #22

“I was raped in a bathroom of an apartment on Bellomy my freshman year. I did not know him and I do not know if he was an SCU student. It was my understanding that the Title IX office would not hear my case because it happened off campus. I felt helpless and resorted to denying what had happened to me for months instead of searching for help.”

Anonymous ’21

Story #23

“"It was my sophomore year and I had hooked up with a guy twice. I always told him that I wasn’t comfortable going farther than making out and made that clear each time. Then one night I was drunk and he brought me back to his room (he was sober) and took me to his bed. He asked me if I wanted to have sex but I said no which he replied by saying “that’s lame”. He then proceeded to take off all my clothes and forced himself on me. I remember feeling so helpless and had to cover myself so he wouldn’t force himself into me. The next day I bawled in Benson because I felt so vulnerable and scared. I now am terrified to run into him.”

Anonymous
Finding a Place:
Involvement in College Social Justice Organizations and its Impacts

By
Mika Abe, Megan Imai, Judith Li and Brooke Rose

ABSTRACT. In this research, we aim to answer the question: How does being involved in social justice organizations at SCU impact students' experience in higher education? We were interested in this because we are also students at SCU, and we wanted to be able to provide knowledge to our peers about the benefits of being involved. Involvement in student groups is often encouraged in college, and we wanted to learn more about the specific benefits of participation. We conducted eight interviews and eight observations at Santa Clara University using convenience sampling to collect the data. We find that being involved in social justice organizations has a positive impact on students' experience in higher education by developing their sense of identity and a sense of community. We also find that our results correspond to the sociological theories of Robert Merton's theory of manifest and latent functions, Emile Durkheim's social solidarity, and Pierre Bourdieu's social capital. This study is not only important to understand the direct benefits that students attain but also implies that institutions of higher education should invest in student organizations for the improvement of their communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, we present an overview of some modern studies which have researched similar or related topics to ours. Cantor and the co-authors (2002) explored the relationship between college students' involvement in student groups and their exploration of self-identity. For one component of the study, the researchers interviewed 165 leaders of student organizations at University of Michigan (Cantor et al. 2002). This is a data collection process similar to what we will be doing, but on a larger scale. While they utilize mixed methods and it is a technically and conceptually complex psychology study, their results inform our hypothesis of positive influence on personal experience of "self-definition" which "enables personal exploration within the context of a network of stable social relationships" (Cantor et al. 2002:177). They also find that "individual goals interact with group structure in shaping the nature and extent of group engagement" and conclude that "successful resilience of self is a reflection of balance in life task participation, in which individuals integrate personal self-development with maintaining social connections" (Cantor et al. 2002:177). Echoing the results of this study, we
hypothesize that student leaders in social justice groups gain a better sense of their identity, including shaping career interest and development. Additionally, this study identifies different types of student groups and the different reasons for joining these different types of groups, including “intrinsic interest groups”, those we might consider defined by a shared passion which we analyze in our results, “instrumental groups” which have to do with career and social life and have a strong sense of personal identification and group cohesion, and “identity groups” which include shared experiences (Cantor et al. 2002:180). This demonstrates that our investigation is adding to the existing literature on involvement in student groups.

Another study researches an activist student organization, Local to Global Justice (LTGJ) and finds that involvement with LTGJ benefits students “in the development of scholar-activism, critical thinking, applied learning, career and professional development, leadership development, and community engagement and activism” (Farago et al. 2018:154). The sample they choose, LTGJ, is located at a large, public university in a historically politically conservative state in the southwestern U.S. LTGJ pays attention to multi-issues ranging from “Justice for Women, Justice for All,” “Food Justice,” “Water Justice,” to “Racial Justice.” These organizations work on specific areas and social justice initiatives respectively. The samples we chose are at a small, private university in a historically politically liberal state (Farago et al. 2018). By comparing our findings to theirs, we can understand whether there are some generalized themes in college social justice organizations regardless of their differently concerned issues and political background (Farago et al. 2018). Though we are researching a similar topic to these studies, by employing a different lens and conducting our research in a different population, we are able to contribute to the evidence for the benefits of involvement in student groups.

Somewhat similarly, Cintron and colleagues studied how living and learning communities (LLCs) impacted Black male achievement at a Primarily White Institution (PWI). These LLCs provided academic resources and experiential activities that promoted success during higher education as well as post-secondary opportunities. The researchers used latent growth curve analysis to evaluate the change in GPA over two years between the groups they studied: Black males who participated in the LLC and those who did not. Their results were consistent with other studies that those who are involved in these kinds of communities have positive outcomes related to academic achievement and career success when compared to those who are uninvolved (Cintron et al. 2020). This is important because our study was also conducted at a PWI, and while we did not interview black men in particular, a lot of our participants were people of color. Although we did not ask about academic achievement and the direct purpose of the organizations, we studied is different, our study adds to the literature on how being involved, including as a minority student at a PWI, is beneficial in many ways. Related to motivations for joining activist organizations, Winston’s (2013) research finds that school and work commitments, career goals, and friends and faculty influence students’ decisions on attending which activist group. The role of efficacy is a dominant theme when students make decisions. They consider resources and social network factors, choosing to “participate in activist groups with measurable, concrete goals and
those that allow for individual contributions to meaningfully affect organizational objectives" (2013:425). In this research, students tend to have a clear understanding about what they want to gain from the experience of participating in social justice organizations (i.e., efficacy). However, it does not address whether there are members in these organizations who do not have a clear plan before they join, and whether the experiences in social justice organizations bring them any new changes.

Another journal article that addresses a more distantly related topic used qualitative methods (an interview and focus groups) to investigate how National Health Insurance is implemented in South Africa. It observes the roles of social solidarity, collective action, and understanding of human rights in how groups were able to mobilize to pressure the government. Social solidarity and collective action are important concepts for us to understand in connection to groups, and since this study has to do with human rights, it is informative on findings for outcomes in social justice context related to groups. This study focuses on reaching a goal of the movement for human rights and healthcare, but with a focus on the perceived role of trust, altruism, and reciprocity in collective action. Though this particular study is not closely related to our research question, these key concepts are interesting and informative and can to some extent be applied to our analysis of the function of student groups (Douwes, Stuttaford, and London 2018).

One of the things we were initially curious about was whether the COVID-19 pandemic would negatively affect students’ experiences with their groups in terms of how connected they felt, or whether these groups would help them feel more connected during the pandemic. In our early thoughts about this, we also linked the importance of feeling connected with Durkheim’s concepts of social solidarity and anomie. A recent article explored this topic, arguing that social solidarity, especially mechanical solidarity, is necessary in the pandemic to create collective conscience which contributes to bridging social distance and mitigating health risks (Mishra and Rath 2020). Although the pandemic’s effects did not become one of the primary focuses of our research findings, this study was interesting and helps to indicate the significance of our research on social groups and communities especially during this time. As mentioned previously, the connection to Durkheim’s theories - whether related to the pandemic or not also provides a sociological frame or significance of our findings. For example, involvement in student organizations can be framed as a way to foster social solidarity (largely mechanical in this case) to prevent anomie for students who have a hard time transitioning into new social norms at SCU, and according to this article, modern collective effervescence can form despite geographical distance (Mishra and Rath 2020).

We have looked at a range of sociological and other social scientific research to gain background knowledge and understanding about student groups, social justice, extracurricular involvements, and social solidarity, among other things. Through this literature review, we illustrate that our study confirms, specifies, and furthers existing findings and ideas about the effects of being involved in social groups, specifically social justice groups on college campuses. Additionally, we used our preliminary research to help us write our interview protocol addressing themes we thought would be important
based upon our intuition and our reading of some of the above sources. While we did this background research, we engaged in an inductive approach, allowing our findings and conclusions to emerge from the data we collected. Read on to find out our methods, findings, and the implications of our research.

METHODS

To collect qualitative data to answer our research question, each team member interviewed two people and conducted two observations, for a total of eight interviews and eight observations. All interviews and observations took place over Zoom, as the majority of organized social justice discourse at SCU is currently being held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sampling

Our research population for the interviews was current SCU students who hold a leadership position in a social justice initiative at SCU, with the intent of gathering “people who, taken together, display what happens within a population affected by a situation or event” (Weiss 1994:17). We got access to our research population through convenience sampling. Brooke, one of our researchers, had the most connections to those involved in social justice organizations so she created an anonymous list of potential respondents, from which team members chose which respondents they were most interested in interviewing. All introductions and scheduling of interviews took place over text or email. Each of our respondents held at least one current leadership position in a social justice organization, though the majority held multiple. There was a great variety in the kinds of organizations they were involved in, including cultural organizations, service organizations, student government, and SCU centers of distinction. We chose to use convenience sampling because we wanted to utilize the connections we already had in order to save time on sending cold emails and a predicted lack of responsiveness. Since Brooke had personal connections with the respondents, it was highly likely that the respondents would either agree to be interviewed or reply with a quick no. One downside to our convenience sampling is that it is not as diverse as a random sample would have been. For example, only one of our respondents identifies as a man and there was considerable overlap between some organizations (four of our respondents are involved in one of the centers of distinction, and three are in leadership for the same social justice organization).

Data Collection

During the interviews themselves, rapport was built by talking to the respondents before the recording started, generally saying hello, asking how they are doing, or catching up if the interviewer and respondent had an existing relationship. Smiling and nodding to demonstrate attentive listening during the interview helped to keep up the relationship
comfortable and natural. We also expressed gratitude at the end of the interviews for their time and for sharing their experiences with us. Establishing good rapport paid off for us because it made it easier for us to gain access to their group meetings for our observations. To ensure validity in our interviews, we made the protocol as clear as possible by asking questions that were jargon-free, single-barreled, and open-ended.

Regarding observations, the majority of our team members chose to observe club meetings. Four of the observations were normal general meetings, one was a guest speaker event, one was a town hall, and one was a board meeting. The one observation that was not a club meeting was held by a center of distinction and had various professors discussing environmental justice and spirituality. Brooke chose to observe this event to get a perspective on how social justice spaces led by faculty members are different from those led by students, to attend an event that was not centered around identity-based social justice (since almost all organizations of our respondents had this focus), and to get more data on this center that four of our eight respondents are involved with. Some of the events attended were publicly available through emails sent to students by the school or on the Get Connected webpage. Most observations were more private, and we had to ask our respondents for permission to observe the meeting and to obtain the Zoom link. For the observations where we disclosed our identity, we established field relationships by giving a brief introduction of our research to the participants. After that, the observation continued based on the desires of those facilitating the meetings. For example, Megan was an active participant in both of her observations, participating in break-out rooms and keeping her camera on for the duration of the meetings. In contrast, Brooke was asked by the facilitators of one of her observations to keep her camera off after introducing herself in order to have minimal impact on the flow of the meeting.

**Ethical Considerations**

One of the biggest ethical challenges we were confronted with was confidentiality and anonymity. Because all of our respondents belong to very specific organizations, we had to figure out how to anonymize the organizations without losing what the organization itself was about. For example, if we were researching intramural sports it would be easy to substitute volleyball for basketball. However, changing an organization from being centered around the black experience to the Asian experience brings about challenges because the kinds of issues that black students are concerned with may be different than what an Asian cultural group focuses on. In writing this paper, in cases where we did include the names of the organizations, we omitted the specific position they held. In other places where the organization was not named, leadership positions may be named. All of the names used for respondents are pseudonyms. Another ethical challenge we faced occurred during our observations. Mika had to make ethical considerations when doing her observations, as one of her respondents asked her to send an observation request form and a brief summary of the research objective. She sent over a short description of the research topic and one or two points that she would be looking at during the observation, also stating that she will be taking notes.
throughout the meeting. Though she was initially worried that this disclosure before the observation would impact student behavior, it ended up being easier for her to be part of the meeting because the members knew she would be there beforehand.

In our research project, reflexivity, or reflecting on our own subjectivity, was important because it allowed us to recognize how our personal experiences and attitudes can influence our approach to the project at every step (Peshkin 1988:17). This includes how the research question is framed, how our interview questions are phrased, what each of us takes notice of during observations, and how we analyze our data. Our research topic is looking at how being involved in student groups for social justice affects students’ college experiences overall. In this case, we are insiders to the community we are observing. Being an insider can be beneficial in some ways because it is easy to gain access to and relate to your respondents, and you have a deeper understanding of the subject already (Lofland et al. 2006:41). For this particular study, because we the interviewers are the same age and status (students) as our correspondents, building a mutually respectful relationship and connecting with each other did not pose a problem. This was beneficial to our data collection because we were able to build a casual and comfortable interviewing environment which allowed us to have access to the respondents’ honest thoughts. On the other hand, there are also drawbacks to the insider perspective. The main issue is that since we are college students with our own current college experience, we already had preconceived ideas about the topic before we started the research. Because of this, we had to ask questions in our interview protocol that sought to uncover perspectives that were different from our own. We also made considerations about demonstrating our competence in the subject matter (SCU and social justice), as presenting a certain degree of incompetence benefitted the data because it helped us avoid projecting our preconceived ideas or expectations about answers (Lofland et al. 2006:69-70). Another potential benefit of being insiders is that we will have similar worldviews because we are the same age and have the same educational background. This fact coupled with good rapport helped us gather authentic data from our participants that researchers in outside groups (ex. administrators, students from other universities, etc.) may not have been able to receive (Collins 1986:25).

Data Analysis

After we conducted our interviews, we transcribed them using Zoom software and personal editing. We each uploaded our transcripts to Taguette and began the process of open coding individually. This first round of open coding was especially important because our research question was fairly broad and qualitative research itself demands an inductive process. We did our open coding independently, and did so in a way that was “without regard for how or whether ideas and categories will ultimately be used, whether other relevant observations have been made, or how they will fit together” (Emerson et al. 2011). Doing so allowed us to let the data speak to us, focusing on themes and processes that were emerging, rather than going in with fixed ideas and trying to make it fit into causal explanations. Once we completed our open coding, we created a team codebook with six shared focus codes that helped guide us into what
were the most important themes that arose from our data. In our focused coding, we wanted to decide on the core themes that we found in our interviews and begin connecting data and subthemes that would be important for our analysis. After creating the team codebook, we individually re-coded our transcripts with the team codes in mind.

A similar process occurred with the fieldnotes. We all conducted our observations between February 24 and March 3, 2021 and wrote our field notes separately, and then used the team codebook to code our notes for the most important themes. We discussed the findings of our observations and if there were any new themes that emerged or any data that supported what we found in our interviews. After conducting our interviews and observations, we found very similar data across both processes which supports the validity of our data through triangulation. For both our interviews and observations, we engaged in the process of memoing. In these memos, team members began to develop theories, reflect on their own subjectivity and responses during data collection, and write down any new questions or ideas they wanted to bring to the team. Memoing was a very helpful component of this research project, as it aided us in getting us from our data, topics, and questions to our final findings and conclusions (Lofland et al. 2006:211).

RESULTS

We will focus on two primary themes that emerged in the data to organize our discussion of the effects of being involved in social justice groups in college: a sense of identity and sense of community.

Sense of Identity

One pattern of being involved in social justice organizations is the development of the sense of identity. Personal transition, driving forces, and career preparedness are three embodiments of the development of the sense of identity. Although it is too early for participants to say that their experiences in social justice organizations are a turning point in their life, their narratives display their personal transition of gains and growth, challenge, and rewards as being involved in the organizations. One respondent, Lily, from Undocumented Students & Allies Association (USAA) said, “I've always been scared to jump into activism, and stand up for things because (of) a lot of fear of not knowing enough… That summit was my first challenge to just jump into the process.”

This migration justice summit was her starting point of joining USAA. Feeling supported in this organization, she began to trust herself, getting the confidence to speak to the public and stand up for things she cared about: “being involved with them has helped me at some points to be like ‘whoa I need to just be quiet and listen right now, but at other points to say just like standing up and just saying something and trusting myself and my knowledge, and just knowing that this community is so supportive and they will catch you when you fall.” Her personal transition comes from inclusion in the

1 Quotes from respondent interviews are edited for clarity and readability.
community, which helps her become a better self, brave enough to express her passion and care. Another respondent, Alicia, explained her gaining of confidence from a different perspective. In addition to not “feeling judged” in the community, the position she took encourages and requires her to reach out and speak in public:

“I think being on ASG (Associated Student Government) has given me a little more confidence in terms of approaching people because you're forced to speak in public. If you're taking on certain positions, you kind of have to be accountable for your actions, so I think it's giving me confidence in the sense that I can, I feel more comfortable approaching people. Even if I don't know them too well, regardless of the issue, I think it's just given me more confidence to reach out to people, and to really, you know, feel free to share my thoughts without feeling judged.”

Not only did being involved in these organizations provide Lily and Alicia a comfortable space to be accepted and recognized by other members, which gave them the confidence to speak in public, it also encouraged them to go beyond their comfort zone and cognition about their abilities.

The experiences in the social justice organizations do not merely bring them progress in abilities, but also give them opportunities to understand social issues from a new perspective. For Miranda, the transition of cognition came from her self-reflection. From her high school, she learned about how students could also make an impact on social justice, which gave her faith in love and care for the community. Working with other minority ethnic groups, experiences in the Multicultural Center became a window of opportunities for her to reflect on the privilege she had and what she could do to help raise the voice of underrepresented student groups. She gradually realized that raising the voice of underrepresented student groups is not only about speaking for them. The privileged people should “step up” for them, but also “stand back and ensure that I am not taking up all of this space.” Her understanding of social justice evolved from awareness and helping others to reflect on herself and then leaving space for underrepresented groups. Her experiences in the Multicultural Center (MCC) expanded her recognition boundary and constructed her knowledge of racial justice through her reflection. Personal transition implies a dynamic process of the sense of identity that our respondents experienced in the organizations. Through this process, they have a different cognition about their abilities and themselves.

In addition to personal transition, the driving forces that our respondents speak of in the interviews also help us understand how they view themselves, their passion, and the work they are doing as they participate in the organizations. The starting points of being interested in a particular aspect of social justice vary among respondents. Some just give it a try and then find their people and their communities after joining an activity of the organizations. Some are passionate about certain issues long before attending college, and being involved in these organizations gives them an opportunity to continue their interest. For example, in the interview with Jess, she related why she felt connected to the people and groups she works with as a volunteer to her own identity...
through her family history and hometown, and upbringing. However, it was also clear that the groups she worked with were linked to her career interest in teaching. A passion for social justice and a need to find her people in a new place freshman year also make up some of her driving forces.

Respondents’ driving forces are strengthened as they stay longer in organizations, which motivates them to apply for leadership positions to contribute to the positive aspects of the organizations for others. Andrew said, “The friendships, the conversations, the stories that I had in MCC definitely encouraged me the most to be a leader for the MCC. Because I saw what it did for me, and I saw the special thing, the wonderful things that the MCC could do. And just as I had that feeling, I want to ensure that other people also have the ability to get that same feeling out of MCC” His identity within the MCC community transformed from a recipient who received support and benefits to a participant and leader who wants to pass down warmth to others.

Becoming a leader also means more responsibilities and more challenges, whereas these responsibilities and challenges do not weaken their driving forces but confirm their belief in the meaning of their work. One common challenge throughout organizations is getting funding. Miranda and Andrew both described the process in that they tried to convince the college administration to pay more attention to the students of color. They felt upset and “demoralized” when the administration did not directly answer their needs, but this challenge did not halt their efforts to make the organization a better place. Miranda said:

“They (cultural centers) are supposed to be serving more than half of the student body and it’s supposed to be a place where they feel safe and yet, we barely have the support necessary to make that happen, and of course they're always putting the onus on students to create the diversity…for example with Unity Night, that's something that they put on the students specifically within the Multicultural Center to show off what Santa Clara is like to admitted high school students, and I feel that's the only time that they really care is because they might be making a profit, and it's so sad to see that.”

Similarly, Andrew used “hit a wall” to describe the conversations with the administration, feeling that they were not heard. However, their negative moods did not last long. They then turned to new work that could address this problem. Miranda expressed her commitment in “finishing the work that needs to be done instead of prolonging it” and Andrew began a project of collecting stories from students of color to prove the usefulness of more funding.

Under the context of COVID-19, our respondents face more difficulties in innovating the types of activities, drawing attention, and maintaining attendance of their activities. However, they do not give up facing these difficulties; on the contrary, successfully overcoming these difficulties reinforces their driving forces and makes them value their friends and community much more. One difficulty for Clara was that regular events such as service placements could not be held in person. She also needed to find new ideas
on how to attract people, since the old method of free food for college students was not feasible virtually. But she and her teammates were not stuck in these challenges. They came up with a social media campaign, reaching out to people personally. Clara supposed that they received such a high turnout because “people realized that they were not involved enough, and something was missing.” Their social media campaign bridges people who want more college involvement and their goals of promoting feminist justice. Overcoming this challenge is one of Clara’s fulfilling moments that strengthen her driving force. A lot of the positive emotions have to do with the feeling of purpose or pride that comes with making a difference through involvement in these groups. Many times, positive feelings are accompanied by negative emotions such as stress and disappointment. Clara found it so “overwhelming” to work on Zoom because she needed to organize and coordinate everything online and answer questions in the emails. But at the same time, she felt she was learning and growing: “they count on me to do that, and know I'm trustworthy to do that, so I guess it's also kind of rewarding, having so much more stuff to do is also like... I'm becoming an adult. I do think, you know?” Her feelings resonate with our other respondents’ answers. Mixed emotions are present here because rewards and accomplishments always come after overcoming a challenge. COVID-19 brings them unexpected challenges but also opportunities for them to discover a more capable self.

We also find a pattern that these driving forces not only motivate them to participate within the college boundary but also inspire them to explore or confirm their career interests. Our respondents expressed their willingness to continue pursuing social justice after graduation. Some respondents have a clear plan for future careers, and experiences in social justice organizations help them confirm where their passions are. Gained from the MCC community, the abilities to listen and be empathetic were internalized into Andrew’s experiences and helped him qualify for his dream job:

“Being [a leadership position in the MCC] has definitely, not so much shifted me to what I want to do in the future, but kind of confirmed what I want to do in the future… I want to work in a nonprofit organization that is focused on economic inclusion… (In the MCC,) we focus a lot on hearing people’s stories. I'm advocating and amplifying. I would say amplifying people’s voices. I'm providing the resources needed for people to thrive and again fostering community as well.”

Being involved in the MCC helps him find his passion, and being a leader in the MCC helps him confirm his commitment to helping others, by providing a platform to foster the community.

For some respondents who have not decided on their career path, their experiences in social justice organizations also shape their considerations. Sarah wanted to take some time off after graduation and become a volunteer or teach English to people in Ecuador or somewhere else in South America. One thing she was sure about was “whatever I do in order for it to be meaningful to me. It has to be not just for myself, but for my community and for other people, and through USAA I really have found joy in helping
others and educating others.” Similar to Sarah, Clara also saw service as her “sole focus”:

“I've always said when I was looking at careers. I want to do something to help others. I've looked at different possibilities of how can I, if I go in this path, how can I help others… I wouldn't feel fulfilled if I didn't do that and I wouldn't be happy in my career. So, I think it's going to be the center of my decisions when looking at future careers.”

Their commitments to service in their future careers reflect their strong driving forces, as well as their inside explorations of what they truly love and where they want to contribute to their life.

_Sense of Community_

The other main theme we will be addressing is the sense of community, mostly through the sub-themes of shared passion and creating a safe space. We observed that a lot of students developed a sense of community in the social justice groups they were a part of, which for many students was intertwined with their identities as well, whether that be a shared passion for similar issues or a shared cultural identity or experiential background. This became clear through our interviews, especially for students who identified with ethnic minorities. It is important to have a shared passion and be able to socialize and interact with those who share this passion. Jess put it well: “I think our club is just very like people, especially in this difficult year, like people have just been really kind to each other, and I think people are really looking for that sort of connection while also feeling they were doing something that was meaningful for them in their life path and mission.” It is a combination of a safe space through kindness, connection through a shared passion, and feeling a sense of purpose that creates a sense of community for Jess. The themes she articulates here came up throughout our interviews and observations.

Gaining a sense of belonging through these groups was a crucial part of some respondents’ transitions into college: “I think my first year I was kind of struggling with finding my place on campus, just coming into a new environment. It was definitely challenging to like find your people, I think we all kind of experience that, but when I first got involved with them that's when I felt like I belonged at Santa Clara and I felt like I've found my place in my role and everything.”(Lily). The idea of “finding one’s people” also came up in many of the interviews we conducted, indicating that a sense of belonging and connection with group members through some shared experience or passion was important to reaping the social/mental/emotional benefits of being in one of these groups. Involvement in community groups helped a few of our respondents overcome feelings of isolation in their first year of college. Multiple students referred to their first-year selves as having a difficult time, but “finding their people”, in other words gaining a sense of community significantly improved their overall mental wellbeing and college experience. Another quote which demonstrates this exceptionally well is: “I think my sense of community, just like skyrocketed. I felt like super super comfortable with who I was and empowered that other people wanted to do some of the same things that
I wanted to.” Sharing a passion with others “skyrocketed” both Jess’s sense of self and sense of community.

It is also worth noting that some of our data suggest that the social justice agenda itself was part of how people created a sense of community as well as why this was important. For example, one respondent reported:

“And during that week we just got a bond a lot and to me being able to meet other folks through our love of helping others and being able to come together, because we want to in some way just make the world a better place, I know that sounds really cheesy and very broad but that’s really what was like our driving force, and it was that love, love for others and love and care for community and so for me that experience just showed me how powerful we as students are really because we were tackling some really challenging topics.”

This quote illustrates shared passion through a determination to change the world as well as highlighting the power of addressing challenging topics that come with social justice as a group. Additionally, in one of our observations, a guest speaker who has worked in immigration justice at the US-Mexico border for many years described how he would not be able to do what he did without a community behind him. The difficult nature of social justice work necessitates a sense of community in order to continue doing the work.

Another component we found was important in developing a sense of community was how the groups created a safe space or environment in their meetings. Using a combination of activities that allowed socialization or getting to know other group members, self-care activities like mindfulness, and just generally putting effort into trying to foster a place where people could feel safe were common descriptions in our interviews. We could see this in our observations in the form of having peer-led meditation or reflection sessions, icebreaker conversations in breakout rooms, and reactions on Zoom, such as clapping emojis and supportive comments in the chat during group meetings and events. It seemed that this helped make people feel supported and connected with others. Although this could have been a result of members knowing each other well or already having a strong relationship or bond in the group, this was also observed in a very new group on campus which has only been active for a few months. This exemplifies strategies that groups or group members use to create or foster a sense of community, as well as make sure it remains a safe space for its members over time. Another of our respondents highlighted this as well, saying “So for me, community space is a place where I could be 100% myself, a place where I could enjoy and have conversations, and hear people’s stories. I think that’s a very special part as well. And lastly, just a place where I feel supported, where I feel safe.”

This feeling of safety and the ability to be oneself while connecting with others embodies how students with a strong sense of community feel. In an observation of a meeting which included members of two different ethnic or cultural clubs, Judith observed that participants trusted each other. They spoke out their personal experiences without scruple, because they knew other community members understood them or even shared similar feelings or experiences. Opportunities to express their
emotions and feel resonated with and supported did not happen often in their daily lives, especially at a predominantly white institution. Such communities provided them a place and time to release and be fully themselves. Again, this demonstrates the importance and positive effects of creating a sense of community through safe spaces.

Another notable finding of creating safe community space is the role leaders play in it. In multiple of our observations, we noted the way leaders interacted with the other group members to make them feel comfortable. For example, one instance of this was one leader in a group complimenting, agreeing with, and adding on to another club member’s comment during a breakout room activity. In another observation, the president of the group showed a strong effort in making comforting and uplifting comments to the members, and the other members would also agree and make their own positive comments to each other. This helps the students express their emotions and thoughts more easily, comfortably, and freely. Since they were all very open and evidently enjoying their meeting, they seemed to have no hesitation when asking questions or addressing their concerns and issues and were receptive to feedback from other members. This openness facilitated by the president and echoed by the rest of the group contributes not only to the sense of community, but also allows more tasks for the club to get done and includes more members in the action because people are more comfortable raising their concerns. Additionally, when one respondent was asked about what drew her to become a leader in her community, she responded:

“...being a good leader is like showing people how important they are to the organization and like to whatever group they’re a part of. That's, that's the part I really enjoy about leadership, I think, like if I get in any kind of position of leadership I have, like... just want to be there to uplift people, and show them how good they are. Because I think a lot of people don’t see that, in themselves, which is really upsetting. So I kind of want to like, undo that, and show people like ‘hey you’re doing a really great job! I think you're doing amazing.’ and could say 'I want you to take on leadership, because you have the potential for it and stuff.' So yeah.”

To this respondent, her favorite part of leadership was playing a role in building a community where people felt supported and personally encouraging others to see their self-worth and take on leadership roles themselves. Again, this demonstrates the importance of having a safe space. This is one way that leaders ensure the continuation of the group that is important to them while also making sure people are nurtured by their experiences within the group. This ties back to the theme discussed with connection to sense of identity, that participants in student social justice organizations experience the reciprocal process of benefitting from the group and helping others, whether that be other club members or the recipients of their service efforts.

Finally, it is important to consider as well that our research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. We suspected that the pandemic and having to move academic and extracurricular interactions online would have a negative effect on students’ experiences in their social justice groups including their sense of community. However,
overwhelmingly, our respondents reported that they were still able to feel connected with their groups. While they certainly acknowledged both logistical and social challenges that the pandemic brought on, even their negative experiences were described with mixed emotions as they were grateful for what they were able to do during this time. Some respondents even described that if anything, the pandemic had brought them closer together with other members of their group and made them even more productive. One example from a respondent is: “at first, I thought the pandemic was going to be very difficult... well it has been difficult, but I was just scared to see how the different organizations on campus were going to overcome this. But I'm surprised to see how resilient everyone has been and really, I think people with the pandemic they're just putting in a little more effort than we would have in-person”. This is definitely an area that warrants further research. We suspect that because our respondents were leaders in their groups, they are more committed or attached to them than other members may be. It would be interesting to take a larger sample of students who are both leaders and general participants to test this hypothesis. Additionally, there has been a big push for social justice this year which could be a contributing factor to the increased or steady involvement in social justice groups. Regardless, this was an interesting finding because we were expecting different results related to the pandemic's effects.

**DISCUSSION**

Our research showed that students’ participation in social justice organizations at SCU plays a significant role in their personal transitions and cultivating their sense of belonging. The student-led organizations provide an environment for students to find peers with similar passions, enhancing their communication and cooperation skills that lead to career readiness, influencing their post-graduate plans, and fostering social solidarity among students in and outside of the organization. All of the respondents in our research expressed strong commitments to their organizations and to pursue social justice activism after graduation by continuing their academic journey in law, education, or social work-related career paths.

In relation to existing sociological theory, we introduce the following possible framings for our findings in the literature review: Robert Merton’s manifest and latent functions (Merton 1949/1968), Durkheim’s social solidarity (Mishra and Rath 2020), and Bourdieu’s social capital (Portes 1998). One lens is through Robert Merton’s manifest and latent functions, exploring that students joining social justice organizations have both expected and unexpected gains and rewards. Manifest functions are “those objective consequences contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of the system which are intended and recognized by participants in the system,” while latent functions are those objective consequences that “are neither intended nor recognized” (Merton 1949 1968: 105). The importance of applying manifest and latent functions in our research is that it helps us see how interactions between participants and organizations and interactions among participants influence themselves and their views on their experiences. First, our findings can be presented as an exploration of the functions of social justice organizations on college campuses. While the manifest functions may
include working with other communities through service to advance certain social justice issues and creating a place where students with similar interests can come together, latent functions may include gaining a greater sense of one’s own identity, gaining career related skills and connections, and developing friendships. However, in groups which center around a certain ethnic or other identity, we suggest that strengthening identity and community are more manifest functions.

Another is through a Durkheimian lens, viewing campus social justice groups as a way to foster social solidarity. Durkheim’s theory of social solidarity is used to essentially explain what holds society together. In his work, The Division of Labour in Society, Durkheim differentiates mechanical solidarity, which comes from sameness and is generally associated with more traditional societies, from organic solidarity, which comes from interdependence in modern societies with a focus on difference with the division of labor. The importance of social solidarity to Durkheim was that it prevented individuals from anomie, or normative disconnect from society (Mishra and Rath 2020). Our study suggests that being a part of a social justice group is one way to create social solidarity on college campuses. Durkheim’s work is especially helpful in explaining why joining these groups helped many of our respondents overcome a sense of isolation and discomfort, or anomie, when they first arrived on campus. We saw more evidence of mechanical solidarity through the prominence of shared passions and experiences among group members, but organic solidarity is also present, such as in specific tasks connected to leadership roles and group members relying on one another to get things done.

The third sociological concept we recognized as being related to our research is that of social capital. Originating with Pierre Bourdieu and widely used in sociology today, social capital is an idea that calls attention to the tangible advantages that come with social ties. Bourdieu highlights the interplay of social capital, cultural capital (special knowledge and skills), and economic capital (monetary), how each can be used to gain the others (Portes 1998). This relates particularly well to our investigation of how being involved in social justice groups can contribute to career preparedness and other opportunities through social networking. Respondents reported gaining cultural capital through learning new skills in their organizations, as well as social capital in the form of relationships with other students and career networking opportunities. Building career preparedness through social and cultural capital subsequently leads to opportunities to gain economic capital, through securing a job (whether immediately or after gaining more social and cultural capital in graduate school). These theories display that colleges as a micro-society also share the patterns of the macro-society that sociologists have distilled. These three concepts provide different ways for us to analyze our results and apply them to existing sociological theory.

The findings from this study are not only important to understand the direct benefits that students attain, but to understand how participating in social justice organizations further influences individuals, institutions (colleges), and communities. The data we retrieved from the students involved in social justice organizations at SCU can be thoroughly examined using Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) socio-ecological theory. The
respondents found improvement in their social atmospheres, their personal transitions, and mental well-being while simultaneously stimulating personal flourishing in other members as a group. Following these breakthroughs of each individual student, the higher confidence and motivation will increase their engagement in more organizational and outside activities. This is the initial ecological transition from the individual to the microsystem (interpersonal), which brings the student’s (individual) leadership skills into classrooms, constructs rigorous learning environments in and outside of the organization, and creates more opportunities through networking for themselves and their peers (Bronfenbrenner 1979). The more students are active and succeed in their social justice organization and outside activities, the higher the possibility of attracting more students to participate, potentially resulting in increases in institutional funding for student activities. We believe that the activeness of students and the benefits that come along with it, encourages improvement in the mesosystem (organizational)—regardless of whether those changes are direct or indirect. When higher education institutions recognize the significance of students’ participation in social justice organizations, they will foster a better relationship between the school and organizations through increased funding or collaborative events. We suggest that not only will the students benefit from more academic or networking opportunities, but students’ social justice organizations and institutions could advance their partnerships or exchange knowledge with communities of their serving population. Building off the extensive work among student organizations and institutions, the longitudinal effects of their advocacy, social service, and commitment to social justice activism would influence changes in the macrosystem (society). This may include policy changes, an increase in government funding for education, social welfare, and human service organizations. Closely paralleling Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) human development theory, our research confirms the long-term and comprehensive impact of involvement in social justice organizations. Furthermore, we find that students can continue to evolve personally, academically, and spiritually, whilst uplifting peers outside of their organizations, their institutions, and to the greater society. Most importantly, students can provide more support and knowledge to those in need.

We have recognized the positive impacts and significance of students’ involvement in social justice organizations on individuals, micro, meso, and macrosystems throughout our research. Although these organizations can be time-consuming and students oftentimes grapple with balancing schoolwork and extracurricular activities, most, if not all, college students participating in any student organization hypothetically undergo a similar experience as our respondents. We suggest that our research outcomes are reliable because they illustrate a strong connection between students’ self-development and group engagement, which has been similarly seen in the previously mentioned psychology study at University of Michigan (Cantor et al. 2002), among others. These consistent positive outcomes on students can be generally understood that students who partake in student organizations will be highly likely to experience personal development and build a solid sense of community, along with better career preparedness and interpersonal skills. These inferences can guide future research to explore deeper on this current research and gather extensive data on the different behaviors that students have depending on their organization’s objectives (e.g.,
intramural sports, arts, Greek life, etc.). Our findings demonstrated the trends of students in social justice organizations. It would be intriguing to investigate the similarities and differences in self-transformation and social connectedness among students that participate in non-social justice organizations. Our research also raises the question on how students’ distinct identities within an organization will be more likely to construct an individualistic or collectivist identity, or the combination of the two (Becker et al. 2012). We understand that social groups build social solidarity among students. It would then be important to continue a further analysis on whether the individualistic or collectivist sense of identity and community within an organization will lead to different outcomes. In other words, how might the operations and effectiveness of an organization be different if students had a stronger motive to achieve personal transitions for their own sake, than for their peers and group, or vice versa. Are students involved in organizations more self-conscious of their identities they present or the actions they take? To conclude, our current study and findings have shown the various ways in which it could be further tested in future research topics. Above all, our research has greatly demonstrated the significance of student-led social justice organizations and their powerful influences on participating students and beyond.

REFERENCES


Sustainability at Jesuit Institutions:
How are we teaching the next generation to care for our common home?

By
Brooke Rose

ABSTRACT. As environmental degradation becomes harder and harder to ignore, institutions are beginning to take notice and put into place specific steps to take action. The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) is offering a way for higher education institutions (HEIs) to promote sustainability through participating in the Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS). This report evaluates the participation in the STARS by the eight Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) schools that have an unexpired STARS rating and submitted information under STARS version 2 or later. Using publicly-available STARS data, I analyzed the scores of the AJCU institutions in the sample as well as conducted a content analysis on the descriptions of the main programs under each category in which schools are ranked.

The findings are organized by the different categories of the STARS report: Academics, Engagement, Operations, and Planning & Administration. In each section, I provide a data visualization of how each Jesuit institution in my sample compares to the others. Some standouts are Santa Clara University's sustainability research, Loyola Marymount University's campus engagement programs, Gonzaga University's water efficiency, and Boston College's commitment to diversity and affordability. Key recommendations include encouraging more Jesuit institutions to participate in the STARS program to indicate a commitment to sustainability and transparency, as well as investing more into academic programs with a sustainability focus.

INTRODUCTION

The climate crisis is imminent. In order to mediate its effects, individuals, organizations, and governments need to be taking strides towards sustainability as soon as possible. One way to start going in the right direction is to provide measurable goals, rewards for success, and avenues for transparency and accountability. These are the objectives of the Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS) created by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's (AASHE).

AASHE is one of the leading organizations in promoting sustainability within higher education. STARS is its central program, offering a self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to assess their sustainability performance. As of November 2021, 1052 institutions have registered to use the STARS Reporting Tool, of which 677 have earned
a STARS rating at some point during the running of the program. This report will focus specifically on colleges that are a part of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) and that have submitted STARS reports. Many Jesuit values and teachings include ecological justice and care for the environment, but how many Jesuit institutions have actually taken action to advance sustainability? This project includes a meta-analysis of available AJCU STARS reports with the purpose to illuminate areas of excellence and difficulty in reaching sustainability goals at the organizational level, as well as make recommendations for these institutions to put their ecological values into practice. The recommendations may also be useful for Jesuit schools that have not yet attempted to obtain a STARS rating.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**AASHE and STARS**

The STARS system created by AASHE is regarded as one of the best ways for higher education institutions (HEIs) to regularly monitor and report their commitment and initiatives in regards to sustainability. This has been verified by research. A study conducted by the University of Saskatchewan identified five focus areas among campus life to improve a university’s sustainability performance (education, research, operations, governance, and community engagement) and then undertook an investigation to determine which sustainability benchmarking tool would be the best to holistically evaluate campus sustainability in all of these areas (Kamal and Asmuss 2013). After investigating four different benchmarking tools, STARS was the highest rated tool. This assessment demonstrates that STARS is the most effective tool for assessing and tracking sustainability across the breadth of campus life.

Kamal and Asmuss (2013) were not alone in their assertion of STARS as a superior tool for those interested in sustainability and higher education. Other researchers have praised STARS for its comprehensiveness (Alghamdi, den Heijer, and de Jonge 2017). Shriberg (2002) outlines the most important attributes of an ideal assessment tool (identifying important issues; emphasizing comprehensibility; and ease of comparability and calculability), and AASHE’s STARS meets all of these criteria. STARS also meets a need amongst HEIs for a uniform rating system. According to survey research, STARS is the best-known system amongst stakeholders (88%) and also the most supported as being the ideal system (60%) (Margarakis and van den Dobbelsteen 2013). Perhaps most importantly, participating in STARS’ self-reporting system is associated with greater sustainability outcomes. Results from Minutolo, Ivanova, & Cong (2021) suggest that STARS reporting and STARS scores have a positive impact on the reputation,
finances, and environmental performance of the HEIs. All of these reasons demonstrate that STARS reports are a credible and holistic way to evaluate sustainability at HEIs and provide sufficient data to conduct my analysis.

**Jesuit Teaching and Care for Our Common Home**

The Catholic Church has recently placed an emphasis on the importance of environmental stewardship. Pope Francis, the first Pope to take his name after the patron saint of animals, has made ‘caring for our common home’ central to his vision for the Church, perhaps most notably in his encyclical *Laudato Si*’. He has aimed to expand the Church’s teaching to include the unique place of humans in an interconnected web of life. The climate crisis is affecting humankind and the planet at unprecedented rates, especially threatening those that are most vulnerable. Catholic teachings demand reverence for nature and active sustainable living since creation is a sign of God’s presence, and the degradation of ecosystems disproportionately inflicts greater hardships on those that followers of Jesus are called to care most about.

Catholic Jesuit universities have a role to play in the transmission of this ecological vision. A notable example is the Jesuit Superior General, Rev. Arturo Sosa, S.J.’s, announcement of four Universal Apostolic Preferences for the Society of Jesus. The latter two are the most relevant to my study: “to accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future” and “to collaborate in the care of our common home” (Sosa 2019). With 193 colleges and universities globally, the Society of Jesus as a religious order has recognized its favorable position for establishing programs and research in sustainability that reach the next generation of global citizens (Polito 2019). Suppose HEIs are able to center ecological concerns now. In that case, the beliefs and ideas of individuals and societies can be changed now to produce social change in favor of our common home. And there is a strong desire of young people to participate in this change -- a survey by Amnesty International (2019) indicates that climate change is the most important issue facing our world today. According to Fr. Sosa, it will be young people who "construct a new narrative of hope," and Jesuit schools can offer them the tools "for opening up a new path" (Roewe 2021). AJCU, the national organization that represents Jesuit higher education, is perfectly situated to facilitate sustainability education among the next generation of leaders and encourage care for our common home among the young people who are going to inherit the planet. My analysis will help to determine how well AJCU HEIs are meeting their Jesuit ecological mission and encourage those that are not currently reporting to AASHE to join the sustainability movement.
METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Sampling

The data used in my sample were gathered from the STARS reports for all AJCU institutions that have an unexpired STARS rating and submitted information under STARS version 2 or later. There are a total of 28 AJCU schools across the United States, but my sample consists of only the eight schools that meet the aforementioned criteria. These schools are Boston College, Creighton University, Gonzaga University, Loyola Marymount University, Loyola University Chicago, Saint Louis University, Santa Clara University, and Seattle University. One potential limitation of this sample is that only 28.5% of AJCU schools are included in my analysis, which is a smaller sample size than desired. Additionally, HEIs that care about sustainability are more likely to submit a STARS report, so the data analyzed here may indicate that AJCU institutions have more sustainability efforts than they really do.

This sample of institutions has representation for the West Coast, East Coast, South, and Midwest regions. There is also substantial diversity in the types of locale, campus area, endowment, and acceptance rate (see Table 1). There is some consistency in the cost of tuition (all ranging between $55,000 and $75,000) and undergraduate enrollment, with all the schools landing in the medium-size category according to AASHE. The information for endowment, total campus area, and locale were submitted to the STARS report. The rest of the data was gathered from each respective institution's website (collected in November 2021).

Table 1. Characteristics of institutions in sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Endowment</th>
<th>Total Campus Area (acres)</th>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Undergraduate Enrollment</th>
<th>Acceptance Rate</th>
<th>Cost (before aid)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boston College</td>
<td>$2,400,000,000</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>Urban fringe of large city</td>
<td>Newton, MA</td>
<td>9,639</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>$75,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creighton University</td>
<td>$525,582,000</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>Large city</td>
<td>Omaha, NE</td>
<td>4,405</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>$56,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzaga University</td>
<td>$294,720,414</td>
<td>192.74</td>
<td>Mid-size city</td>
<td>Spokane, WA</td>
<td>5,237</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>$62,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola Marymount University</td>
<td>$480,000,000</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>Large city</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>6,557</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>$70,446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to conduct the analysis, it was necessary to become familiar with the STARS data of each individual institution and the broader methodology behind calculating STARS scores. When an institution submits a report to STARS for rating, there are five possible ratings they can receive: platinum, gold, silver, bronze, or reporter (Figure 2). The majority of participants land in the silver or gold category, with very few reaching the prestigious platinum-level -- only 10 out of 361. The reporter designation refers to institutions that elected not to publish scoring information and/or pursue a rating.

When an institution submits a report, they provide information for 60-70 credits in five categories: Academics, Engagement, Operations, Planning & Administration, and Innovation & Leadership. For the first four categories, the percentage score is calculated by dividing the number of points received out by the number of points total. This results in the first part of the STARS score. The next component of the score comes from Innovation & Leadership points, which essentially act as “extra credit.” For
example, if an institution has a percentage score of 50, and has received 2 Innovation & Leadership points, their final score would be 52. The final score is used to determine which recognition level an institution will receive (Figure 3).

For the purpose of this report, Innovation & Leadership points will be excluded from individual analysis as there are 50 different credits for which an institution could apply for and it would be unfair and difficult to compare points across different kinds of credits.

To conduct the analysis, I compiled the quantitative data from each institution’s STARS report into one spreadsheet. I divided the data into the appropriate categories and subcategories defined by AASHE and created charts in Google Sheets to visually represent the differences in ratings between the HEIs in my sample. All data, quantitative and qualitative, in the findings sections comes from the publicly available data in each institution’s STARS report. Citations for these reports can be found in the appendix.

FINDINGS

Total STARS Points

The first analysis compared the sample institutions' scores and ratings listed from highest to lowest. This step was crucial to understanding the general distribution of AJCU institutions.

Table 3. Sample institutions’ STARS points and ratings.
As depicted in Table 3, of the eight institutions in my sample, five have received a gold rating, one has received a silver rating, and two have received a bronze rating. Santa Clara University (SCU) is the highest-rated AJCU institution and Saint Louis University (SLU) is the lowest. The average score across these institutions was 63.33, which receives an overall silver rating. While total STARS points are a good metric of overall sustainability at an HEI, each STARS category will also be assessed to determine areas of strength and weakness among these Jesuit institutions, broadly and also individually.

**Academics**

The Academics category is divided into two subcategories: Curriculum and Research. The Curriculum subcategory addresses topics like sustainability course offerings, sustainability literacy, and sustainability-focused programs. The Research subcategory assesses the institution's sustainability research, whether it has programs that encourage sustainability research, and if it facilitates open access publishing.
While Seattle University has the greatest amount of Academic points, SCU has a perfect score in the research subcategory (amongst all reports in this sample there are only three instances of a perfect score to a credit). 19.8% of employees that conduct research are engaged in sustainability research, and 82.5% of departments that conduct research are engaged in sustainability research. SCU offers student sustainability research programs, including the Miller Center Fellowship (formerly Global Social Benefit Fellowship) and Environmental Ethics Fellowship, and faculty sustainability research programs, like the Sustainability Grant Fund. The SCU library also houses Scholar commons, which is a service to archive and offer access to intellectual work produced by faculty, students, and staff at Santa Clara University.

*Engagement*

The Engagement category is divided into two subcategories: Campus Engagement and Public Engagement. Campus Engagement evaluates credits such as peer-to-peer sustainability outreach and education, sustainability outreach campaigns, assessment of campus sustainability culture, and professional development. Public Engagement examines community partnerships to advance sustainability, advocating for public policies that support campus sustainability, and the collaboration with other HEIs to support the campus sustainability community.
Though SCU has the highest overall engagement, Loyola Marymount University (LMU) has a near-perfect Campus Engagement score (20.31/21.00). LMU has many opportunities to engage students, from programs like the Green LION which introduces new students to the concept of sustainable living as a means to improve our society, to the national recycling competition Recyclemania. They also keep employees and students informed about the various projects being done on-campus as well as a platform to talk about different issues that the university should examine and potentially implement through their bi-weekly Green LMU Newsletter.

**Operations**

The school with the most points in the Operations category is Loyola University Chicago, though what is important to note about this category is that two institutions have achieved a perfect score in the Water subcategory -- LMU and Gonzaga. The Water subcategory has two credits: Water Use and Rainwater Management. Both schools significantly decreased their potable water use from their established baseline year using a variety of methods. Gonzaga improved their water efficiency by installing low-flow showerheads, low-flow aerators on faucets, and low-flow toilets where applicable. LMU decreased their water usage by removing 210,000 square feet of turf on their campus (which saved an estimated 1 million gallons of water) and having students gather condensate from HVAC equipment on the roof of the Life Sciences Building and use it to irrigate nearby plants.

**Planning and Administration**

The Planning and Administration category is divided into four subcategories: Coordination & Planning, Diversity & Affordability, Investment & Finance, and Wellbeing & Work. This broad category covers topics from sustainability coordination, support for underrepresented groups, sustainable investment, and wellness programs.
Though it does not have the highest overall Planning and Administration score, Boston College (BC) has the best Diversity & Affordability score of the sample (9.19/10). One part of the reason for this high score is the fact that all students, faculty, and staff have completed cultural competency training. BC also has policies and programs to make it accessible and affordable to low-income students, such as practicing need-blind admissions and committing to meet full demonstrated need. The Montserrat Program aims to assist students at the highest level of financial need to actively participate in and experience a Jesuit education by offering holistic guidance and support to students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because STARS is such a widely recognized sustainability standard, outside organizations have used STARS reports as a way to determine what makes a university more sustainable and the steps students can take to create a sustainable college environment. Some of their broad suggestions include: offsetting carbon dioxide emissions, academic programs centered on sustainability, joining environmentally-minded student groups, and using student government to petition for institutional policy for sustainability initiatives (recycling, energy consumption, ethical food sourcing, etc.) (Best Colleges 2021).
Addressing Academics: Best Practice Research

A particular area that is in need of recommendations according to my analysis is academics. An example of academic excellence in sustainability can be seen by Stanford University, one of the ten schools with a Platinum STARS rating. Stanford University recently announced that it was forming a new school focused on climate and sustainability. The school, which will absorb several of the university’s existing units and departments and add others in the future, will begin operations in fall 2022. It will help establish Stanford at the forefront of universities recognized for excellence in the study of global climate challenges and solutions, which President Tessier-Lavigne named as humanity’s “top priority” (Nietzel 2021). The establishment of this school is both a symbolic and physical investment in the creation of a more sustainable future and of actively nurturing sustainability in the next generation.

Grant Application Recommendation

To achieve greater academic excellence in sustainability, HEIs can apply to grants, such as the Environmental Education grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. This opportunity is a good funding source because it seeks to "support environmental education projects that promote environmental awareness and stewardship and help provide people with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment" (EPA 2021). All of these are in line with the goals of STARS and Jesuit values regarding care for our common home. Colleges and universities are specifically encouraged to apply, so schools that especially need to improve their Academics rating should look into receiving funding.

CONCLUSION

As humans, we have a responsibility to protect this planet that we have been endowed with. This call to action is especially present in Jesuit spirituality, and Jesuit HEIs need to answer.

Through my analysis of AJCU institutions with valid STARS reports, some schools are doing better at meeting this call than others. While many schools in the sample have received a gold rating, there have been great discrepancies in success between the schools in areas such as academics. Additionally, the small number of AJCU institutions that have participated in the STARS program may indicate a lack of prioritizing sustainability initiatives or a faltering in transparency. Investigating the differences between the STARS reports has demonstrated the need for the AJCU to have a more united front in regards to sustainability, which is especially imperative for institutions whose values demand a commitment to both socio-ecological justice and stewardship of the next generation of Jesuit-educated leaders.
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Improving Student Services:  
A Study of Disabilities Resource Offices at Jesuit Institutions  

By  
Josh Huizar  

ABSTRACT. Colleges and universities are seeing an increasing number of students with requests for accessible education assistance. Many offices dedicated to serving these students have some difficulty doing so due to not having enough staff, resources, or time. The purpose of this project was to compare the disabilities resource office websites of seven comparable Jesuit universities and colleges to provide recommendations for areas of improvement. Content analyses were conducted on the websites of each of the schools. Each website was looked at systematically to find as much information as possible. After data was input on a spreadsheet, memos about overall impressions were written, and the data were analyzed by comparing the schools in categories of interest. Results indicated that some of the most important factors were the number of staff members each school had and the outside resources that offices provided on their websites. Santa Clara University had the fewest staff members (two) and no outside resources linked. Other universities such as Seattle University had a list of information on disabilities, local doctors and clinics, employment help, as well as more staff members with specialized roles. The findings from this research can be used to make recommendations for disability resource offices, along with including a campus accessibility map, a program similar to University of Denver’s Learning Effectiveness Program, and Landmark College’s policies and academic paths.

INTRODUCTION  
This research is focused on comparing the resources and accommodations available at disabilities resource offices at different Jesuit colleges and universities. The purpose of this research is to better understand how to improve the resources and accommodations available at universities as a whole, especially Jesuit universities. With direct comparisons to other schools and recommendations given based on those comparisons, this research will help administrators know how to best allocate resources to better serve their students in their academic journeys.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Disability can be defined both from a medical perspective and a social perspective. According to Goering (2015), the medical view sees disability as coming from an individual’s body and their impairment(s). It is a problem to be fixed or treated, and the disadvantages they face are due to those impairments. The social perspective on the other hand views disability, or how we think of it, as resulting from what a society thinks of as a “normal” person. Any disadvantages faced are a result of physical and structural exclusion from buildings and opportunities offered to others, not from impairments themselves. Taking both perspectives into account is important for disabilities resource offices, as their goal is to help their students gain access to the academic opportunities they would not be able to otherwise.

The number of students with disabilities in higher education has increased in the last few decades (Lombardi et al. 2018, Toutain 2019), which has impacted the offices that are dedicated to serving those students as they struggle to keep up with their college workload. The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted in 1990 to ensure that students with disabilities in postsecondary education were protected and given accommodations to allow them to succeed academically, however, the implementation of the ADA varies from school to school. Additionally, mental health disorders can fall under a disability, which increases the number of students that need accommodations and resources to succeed (Lombardi et al 2018).

Barriers in Higher Education

Barriers to students with disabilities is a common problem in higher education and the reason that disabilities resource offices exist. An initial barrier can be feelings of shame for having disabilities, which can cause students to not disclose their disabilities to their professors or other faculty, putting them at a disadvantage (Lombardi et al 2018). Additionally, even if students do receive accommodations for their disability, they may not even use them because they do not want to be labeled or stigmatized by their peers or faculty at school (Toutain 2019). Students may also not know what accommodations or resources are available at their school, and sometimes are only made aware of the disabilities resource office after not doing well in school for a period of time (Toutain 2019). This can be due to the fact that college students with disabilities are not given the same degree of protection middle and high school students have, so they must be more proactive in seeking resources and helping themselves (Jackson 2014).

Faculty themselves can pose a barrier to students, as they might not understand what support is needed for their students, and the attitude of faculty towards students with disabilities can hinder or facilitate their learning (Rosario 2021). Some faculty may not be empathetic or put the needs of a class above the needs of a disabled student, acting to the academic detriment of that student. On the other hand, faculty that are empathetic and positive can be a big help to their students, as they might feel more
encouraged to do their work and do well academically. Simply being concerned about their student is helpful and can create more trust and better communication between the professor and student. Proper assistive technology can be very helpful for students and could promote autonomy and independence, which allows faculty to provide more individual attention to those students (Rosario 2021). However, it may be difficult for some faculty to make changes to their curriculum, how the class is structured, or to the materials to fit the needs of disabled students, on top of their regular workload (Rosario 2021). For example, it might be hard to make entire PowerPoint lectures that were already prepared accessible to a blind student if the professor is overworked with their other classes. Faculty may also not know how to use technology and software that makes it easier for disabled students to succeed academically (Rosario 2021).

Another issue for students with disabilities is the accessibility of university websites, as it may be difficult to navigate for a variety of reasons (Rosario 2021). It may be hard to find information about accessibility resources on the universities website and can be too complicated or take too long to find starting from the homepage. Having to resort to clicking around or making a search and hoping their search is correct can be frustrating and time-consuming for students, and links might have to be scrolled down to or be hard to see due to being small or at the very bottom of the page (Jackson 2014).

Barriers can also come when registering with their disabilities resource office and asking for accommodations. The documentation they are required to submit may lack information about the impact of symptoms on a student's learning, social interactions, or work performance, as well as not having information on their functioning across different settings, as in the case with students diagnosed with ADHD (Weis 2019). This may prevent them from receiving the proper accommodations they need, leaving them at a disadvantage. The accommodations they want may also not be available at their school for a variety of reasons, and even if they do receive their accommodations, they may not be functional or helpful for a student (Toutain 2019).

Disabilities Resource Offices

Disabilities resource offices (DROs) are dedicated to helping the students with disabilities at their school get accommodations, but are often hindered from being able to do so properly. Offices are structured differently depending on the school, which prevents a standardized way of organization that can be used as a guideline for offices that are looking to expand or change the way their office is run. Some offices meet with any student that asks for an appointment, while others give their staff a dedicated set of students they work with and may be assigned other students (Scott 2017). However, many offices are understaffed and have staff work overtime from their homes so that everything can get finished (Scott 2017, Toutain 2019). Another problem related to understaffing is that there are often too many students per advisor or staff member, which prevents them from dedicating the needed amount of time to each student (Scott 2017). Offices can also have variable responsibilities for the same role due to different needs and staffing, so directors do not have a standardized list of responsibilities, and in many offices, the responsibilities are fluid so that whoever is available is able to work on what is needed (Scott 2017).
Effects of COVID-19

The effect the pandemic has had on disabilities resource offices and its students has led to many frustrations from both parties. There has been an increase in anxiety, depression, and other mental health-related requests made to DROs, and it is harder to get mental health care in private schools (Scott 2020). It has also been harder to communicate about accommodations and provide the necessary documentation from students to DROs (Scott 2020), and harder to access everything needed for remote learning, such as wi-fi, equipment, needed technological support, health services, and many other things (Scott 2020). Registering and getting accommodations became more difficult as everything was forced to be online (Scott 2020).

COVID-19 brought additional problems in how courses were offered and delivered to students. Teachers suddenly did not know how to accommodate some of their students in addition to converting their classes to an online version. Online courses cannot be treated the same way as in-person courses when it comes to their accessibility, and so need a new approach to ensure that the content is inclusive, engaging, and accessible (Guilbaud, Martin, and Newton 2021). Common challenges for instructors are that they do not have enough time to properly transition or modify their courses to be online, or take the necessary training to do so. Their workload also causes many to take a reactive approach to challenges rather than a proactive approach, making it harder for them to properly accommodate students (Guilbaud et al. 2021). For instructors that have to quickly transition their courses due to changing regulations and COVID surges, it is challenging to make their content fully accessible without help from their school.

Staff in DROs also experienced difficulties getting the resources and technology they needed to do their jobs properly (Scott 2020), and had to deal with more students registering and asking for accommodations, while also not having the staff and resources to be able to properly help all of them in a timely manner (Scott 2021). However, as COVID progressed things were better for DRO staff and students overall, and burdens were lessened as processes for registering and getting accommodations became smoother (Scott 2021).

METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Content Analysis of Websites

This study utilized content analysis of college websites to compare DROs. The reason for looking purely at websites was due to both time restrictions and because from the viewpoint of a student, having that information easily accessible without having to contact the office would be helpful when registering with the office or when needing to know more about the office. The websites for DROs should have comprehensive information that is representative of what their office offers.

Sample
The sample consisted of six Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States in addition to Santa Clara University, mostly based on the West Coast, with two schools in other areas of the country for additional comparison. The West Coast schools were Gonzaga University, Seattle University, University of San Francisco, and Loyola Marymount University. The other two schools were Boston College and Creighton University. There was a focus on schools in the West Coast because of a higher similarity to Santa Clara University in location, culture, and number of enrolled undergraduate students.

Table 1. Location, founding date, and undergraduate population, Data gathered from the US Department of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>City/State</th>
<th>Founding Year</th>
<th># of Undergrads (Fall 2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santa Clara University</td>
<td>Santa Clara, CA</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>5,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston College</td>
<td>Chestnut Hill, MA</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>9,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzaga University</td>
<td>Spokane, WA</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>4,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle University</td>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>4,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of San Francisco</td>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>5,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creighton University</td>
<td>Omaha, NE</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>4,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola Marymount University</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>6,673</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/

Table 1 includes data about each of the schools analyzed along with Santa Clara University. All of the schools were founded at around the same historical time period and they have similar undergraduate student populations. Boston College had the highest at 9,780 students and Seattle University had the fewest with 4,244 undergraduate students in 2020.

METHODS

After choosing the sample of schools to look at, open coding was used to create an initial list of categories starting with a non-Jesuit school that was not in the final sample. Case study methodology (Yin 1994) was used in conjunction with the University of Denver as an example to develop a procedure on how to progress through web pages and look for more categories for the full analysis. The reason for using Denver as an example was because it is a campus that is known for having a model DRO with a unique complimentary program and having a similar undergraduate student body as the schools would be studied. The website was also previously looked at in preliminary research, and it stood out for being thorough with the information it provided and how it was formatted. Santa Clara University was also used to develop more categories due to greater familiarity with the website but was still part of the main sample. After these initial reviews, the emergent codes were put in a spreadsheet.

For each of the six remaining colleges in the sample the following procedure was used: after arriving at the homepage of each school, a 30-minute timer was set to provide a similar time limit for information gathering at each school in the sample. The information on the front page of the DRO website was looked at first, with the different tabs
following in order, being as thorough in clicking links as possible. Once a code that was listed on the spreadsheet was found, it would be noted down with the relevant information. After looking through all of the tabs and links, any missing information on the spreadsheet would be looked for through the website again to see if it could be found. After filling in the information for each school, memos were written down on the overall impression from the website and if there were things that stood out and could be adapted into the SCU office.

Almost all of the categories after the first seven were developed when looking at either the University of Denver website or Santa Clara’s, with the exception of the campus accessibility map, which emerged when analyzing Boston College. Two categories were dropped in the middle of data collection due to not being as relevant to the current study as initially thought, those being if there was information specific to online learning and if there were user guides available.

LIMITATIONS

A main limitation of this sample is that it is only Jesuit institutions mostly focused on the West Coast. Other non-Jesuit institutions may have a different approach to disability services that would be worth researching. Another limitation is that the data are limited to the website only and other methods such as interviews were not used. Further, the website may not be fully updated due to various circumstances, such as understaffing, which is a prevalent problem in disabilities resource offices across the country. While a website for an office should provide sufficient information about itself, just because it does not provide it does not mean that the office is not run well or effectively.

ANALYSIS

After collecting data, the spreadsheet was organized into a more condensed table that was easier to read and pick out differences from. This included removing unnecessary categories that did not have major differences between the schools or would need additional information that was not available on the websites. Among these categories were the name of the office, how accessible the physical office is, the average number of clicks it took to get to the website from the school’s main page, and their goal or mission statement. The remaining categories were looked at across the different schools, looking at how they compared to each other and adding any new notes at the very bottom. The most important ones then were picked out based on the notes written and how big the differences between schools were. They were converted into individual tables that were further simplified for clarity, such as combining categories under staff and adding checkmarks where appropriate. These categories are discussed in the findings.

FINDINGS
Number of Staff

One of the main findings was the difference in the number of staff between the schools. Out of the West Coast schools, Santa Clara University has the least number of staff members at two, with the next lowest being Gonzaga and San Francisco with five staff members each. Creighton University also has two staff members, while Boston College does not have a dedicated page to its staff, with references to a Director and Assistant Director being the only information available. Gonzaga University, Seattle University, and Loyola Marymount University have additional uncommon staff not shown in Table 2. Gonzaga has a Program Assistant, Seattle University has a Senior Director and a Media and Access Technology Coordinator, and Loyola Marymount University has a Graduate Assistant. The higher number of staff members allows the schools to have a wider variety of roles, such as Seattle’s Media and Access Technology Coordinator.

Table 2. Number and type of staff at each disability resource office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number of Staff</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Associate/Assistant Director</th>
<th>Disability Specialist/Accommodation Coordinator</th>
<th>Administrative/Office Coordinator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santa Clara University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston College</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzaga University</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle University</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of San Francisco</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creighton University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola Marymount University</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outside Resources Linked

Another finding is the type of outside resources that are linked on each school’s website. Santa Clara University’s and Creighton University’s don’t have outside resources linked, while Gonzaga University and Boston College have a few resources available. Seattle University has the most outside resources available, with lists of community resources, practitioners, and clinics available, along with additional resources for parents and instructors. Loyola Marymount University’s list of opportunities also stands out with the scholarship and job opportunities that they gather and present to their students.

Table 3. Resource links provided by each school’s disability resource office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Resources Listed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santa Clara University</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Boston College | Note taking strategies handout

Gonzaga University | Books and links for parents

Seattle University | Community resources such as testing, clinics/agencies transportation, employment, education, and individual practitioners with more detailed information, articles for parents, various resources for faculty

University of San Francisco | Mindfulness resources, various online resources for people with disabilities

Creighton University | None

Loyola Marymount University | Several links for more information on disabilities and opportunities such as scholarships and jobs

### Presentation of Information in Non-Text Formats

The variety in how information was presented was an additional interesting finding. Only Santa Clara University and Loyola Marymount University had both pictures and videos on their website, explaining how to register and apply for accommodations. Seattle University, University of San Francisco, and Creighton University had a few videos on registering with the office and videos for faculty but had no pictures.

Table 4. Variety of information presented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Pictures</th>
<th>Videos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santa Clara University</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston College</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzaga University</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle University</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of San Francisco</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creighton University</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola Marymount University</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Campus Accessibility Maps

A final main finding was which schools had campus accessibility maps. These maps show where accessible entrances are in different campus buildings, as well as what those accessibility options are. Boston College, Seattle University, and University of San Francisco all had some sort of campus accessibility map. Santa Clara University, Gonzaga University, Creighton University, and Loyola Marymount University only had regular campus maps with no accessibility options.
Table 5. Campus Accessibility Maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Accessibility Map</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santa Clara University</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston College</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzaga University</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle University</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of San Francisco</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creighton University</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola Marymount University</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OTHER FINDINGS

There were several other small findings that were school specific that should be mentioned. The University of San Francisco had a long document with all the types of accommodations that they provide and a description of each one. Seattle University has a glossary of disability related terms, and Boston College has a list of various disabilities and impairments with explanations that is aimed at educating faculty so they can better help their students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, hiring more staff is one of the top recommendations for DROs, though it may be self-evident already. With more staff, offices would be able to meet with students in a timelier manner and look at expanding the office with different projects and programs, rather than having to focus most of its time on appointments with students so that they can get accommodations. Additionally, building a list of outside resources for students would help them better navigate their time at their school and know of some potential places to turn to for issues that may be outside the scope of their school’s DRO. Some smaller recommendations that can be implemented are an accessibility map of campus, which shows where there are accessibility options in the different buildings, as well as what type of accessibility it is, such as elevators or powered doors. Adding more videos and pictures explaining various processes would be helpful for both students and professors wanting information from the website, and having more detailed information about accommodations, disability terms, and disabilities/impairments can help professors who are not used to accommodating students be more empathetic towards them.

Best Practices Recommendations
Universities looking to improve their DROs might also want to explore the two programs discussed below.

*Learning Effectiveness Program at University of Denver.* Along with the usual Disabilities Services Office, the University of Denver has an additional program for neurodivergent students, where they get individualized help each week. It specifically helps students with Specific Learning Disabilities, ADD/ADHD, on the Autism spectrum, or who have had a history of learning differences. The Learning Effectiveness Program provides its students with weekly academic counseling, subject-specific tutoring, executive functioning support, social skill building resources, peer mentoring, college transition support, and other resources. Students have to apply to the program separately from the Disabilities Services Office, and there is a quarterly fee if accepted. However, scholarships are available for students, so even those that may not be able to afford the program are still eligible for it. Students are encouraged to visit the office of the program to find if it would benefit them.

*Landmark College.* Landmark College is a college specifically for students with learning disabilities, which makes it much more sensitive and innovative in how they help its students succeed. It offers various educational paths so that students can take classes at their own pace and in a way that suits them best, along with diagnosis-specific support. It helps students learn about their learning disability in their first year so that they can better advocate for themselves, and has a variety of research labs focusing on learning disabilities. Their Neurodiversity Hub prepares students for careers in a way that best supports neurodivergent students, and they provide support to their students throughout their whole time at the college, rather than having a traditional disabilities resource office.

**CONCLUSION**

The needs of students with accessible education requests will only increase over time. This project provides specific examples of how universities can prepare for this reality. The websites for disabilities resource offices of seven Jesuit institutions were compared on a variety of categories to determine practices and programs that can be adapted. Hiring more staff members and providing a list of resources outside of the DRO are among some best and simpler steps offices can take to better serve their students in an impactful way. Additional things that can be added to websites are campus accessibility maps; videos and images for tasks such as registering; and more information about disabilities, impairments, and accommodations. For more in-depth changes to how offices are structured and inspiration for new programs, the University of Denver’s Learning Effectiveness Program and Landmark College provide examples of what can be done. With these practices, DROs can provide better support for its students and for the faculty that teach these students, especially as many still face the new challenges that were brought with COVID-19.
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Challenging the Conflict Paradigm, A Ted Talk Reflection

By

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ABSTRACT. This reflection brings various sources into dialogue to demonstrate the variety of ways religion and science may be interpreted to interact. It primarily utilizes a Ted Talk by Bryan Enderle on the compatibility of science and religion to discuss the inadequacy of the conflict paradigm for explaining the interaction of science and religion.

In this reflection, I present the message from a Ted Talk as a starting point to a critique on the conflict paradigm and secularization theory in the scholarship of science and religion. Utilizing a Ted Talk as the basis for reflection is helpful because Ted Talks carry authority in our culture by presenting experts' findings and ideas. In this case, this gives insight into current interpretations of an ages-old debate: are science and religion compatible or in competition with one another in society? This Ted Talk is about how the speaker, Bryan Enderle, views science and God as integrated and dependent on one another for a more complete understanding of the universe. He presents a few theories that use scientific explanations to make God's existence seem more plausible. The central theme of this Ted Talk is the possibility of coexistence and complementarity of science and God. This is relevant to the sociological scholarship of science and religion because it brings into question whether science and religion are contradictory as the conflict paradigm, which is pervasive in our culture, suggests. Enderle's Ted Talk points to a limitation in Peter Berger's theory of religion as a "sacred canopy" (Berger 1967) because it provides an explanation that illustrates science and religion as two complementary and mutually reinforcing, rather than conflicting, logics to understand the world.

In his Ted Talk, Enderle explains how he believes science and religion are both important ways of knowing that can support one another. More specifically, he presents three modern scientific theories: probability, relativity, and entanglement, that parallel mysteries about God: miracles, omniscience, and omnipresence. He explains that since there is a small probability for even highly unlikely events, "we should not be surprised" if God can conduct miracles (4:46-4:48). Since time does not move at the speed of light, God, who is often symbolized by light, may very well be all-knowing across time. Since entangled molecules can communicate with each other across great distances, who is to say God cannot be present all across space at once (Enderle 2013). These phenomena provide a scientific explanation for how God can be God, which may help scientists and others strengthen their faith. He also asks the question "why is this water
boiling?” (10:57-10:59) and provides both the scientific explanation and the practical one: wanting to drink some tea. This analogy serves to support the idea that we can use “both the science explanation and the deeper meaning explanation to get a fuller picture of reality” (Enderle 2013, 11:53-12:00), supporting his view that science and faith in God are not only compatible but both important to a holistic perspective of the universe.

Seeing as the main principle of this Ted Talk is the connection and compatibility of science and religion, it can act as data or evidence against the conflict paradigm and secularization theories. My use of the term “conflict paradigm” refers to the common thread in a discourse of religion and science that these ways of knowing intrinsically conflict with one another. Secularization theories are sociological theories that explain the decline of religion as society progresses. They support the conflict paradigm by presenting science as an agent of rationalization that challenges religious authority by offering alternative explanations to social and scientific phenomena and influencing a decline in religious practice and belief (Tschannen 1991). One of the sociological theories in secularization literature is Peter Berger’s concept of religion as a “sacred canopy” under which people organize their knowledge (Berger 1967). In this concept, religion is constructed by humans as a framework through which to view the world, and thus influences other social institutions and areas of life. In other words, religion is the overarching logic of life and everything else falls under it. The rationalization that is linked to science and industrialization is a secularizing force that begins to permeate social institutions and culture (Tschannen 1991). Under this theory, science acts as an alternative and conflicting canopy, so if more people use science to explain their worldview, this replaces religion and “the realm of the sacred” shrinks (Tschannen 1991:406). Instead of religion dominating education, the state, and other institutions in society, science begins to be the guiding force. Enderle’s perspective refutes this worldview by conceptualizing both science and religion as interconnecting parts of a canopy so to speak, as evidenced by the boiling water analogy I explained above. Enderle uses scientific theories and evidence to rationalize religion and fortify his belief in God, not weaken or replace it as the sacred canopy theory suggests.

Thus far, my goal has been to demonstrate that Enderle’s view of the science and religion interface provides a way for us to embrace both, therefore challenging secularization theory and conflict paradigms. In addition, however, I wish to illustrate that this is not the only way to conceptualize this challenge. For example, in another Ted Talk, Michael Dowd shares his way of understanding science and religion: what he calls sacred realism. In this concept, God essentially is reality. He sees scientific evidence as scripture and scientific discoveries as divine revelations (Dowd 2014). Enderle sees things a bit differently. He does not equate God and reality like Dowd does, but instead considers God or religious or spiritual explanations to be part of the full picture of reality. Evidence is not how God communicates with the world, from this view, but there is scientific evidence that parallels and makes more plausible the great mysteries about God. The main difference here is that Dowd sees science and religion as one, but Enderle sees them as two ways of knowing that can and should be considered as two parts of a whole. This variation among interpretations of how science and religion can interweave in an individuals’ beliefs or worldview sheds light on the complexity and
personalization of reconciliation between science and religion in the face of the conflict paradigm.

Enderle’s and others’ perspectives dispute the opposition of science and religion to some extent, but do not explain on its own whether science has a secularizing effect overall as it acts in society. What I mean is that even though Enderle and other individuals have demonstrated that science does not have to discount religion, this does not mean that the general population in some societies will see it that way. Sociologically, the social construction of the conflict paradigm as part of a culture, even if its principles are incorrect, can have an impact on people’s perception of the compatibility of science and religion. Thus, religiosity may decrease as a result of science, depending on the views of the people in question. For example, in a study of Italian scientists, their religious devotion changed in different ways. Some scientists turned away from religion, others experienced a change in their religious beliefs and practices, and some even experienced an increase of religious involvement (Ecklund 2010). This study more directly challenges the notion of the secularizing effect of science, demonstrating that whether religiosity decreases depends on how religiosity is defined and how science’s role in this is measured.

This study, as well as the comparison of the two Ted Talks in the previous paragraph, reveals that the impact of science on religiosity is nuanced. These various efforts to reconcile religious beliefs with science are an example of rationalization, disputing the idea in Berger’s theory that rationalization is in opposition to religion. This nuanced relationship leaves room for further sociological study, but also demonstrates that the conflict paradigm is much too narrow to capture the full picture of how people perceive the science and religion interface.

Enderle’s conception of the interconnectedness of science and religion demonstrates that these are not inherently incompatible ways of knowing, going against Peter Berger’s secularization theory of religion as a “sacred canopy” and the rationalization in science as a necessarily opposing alternative. This Ted Talk is valuable because it brings into question the assumption of the conflict paradigm that science and religion are contrary to one another. It provides one scientist and theologian’s perspective that can be used to challenge the conflict paradigm and foster dialogue with other explanations of compatibility. It can also inspire further research questions about how other people view the connection between religion and science. For example, how do people reconcile their beliefs in both science and religion? Does this differ across faith traditions? Across scientific disciplines? These are just some of many next questions to answer in the research on the interface between science and religion.

REFERENCES


Mental Health Stigma in the U.S. Military

By
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ABSTRACT. Predominant military ideology, which perpetuates hegemonic masculinity by purporting emotional and physical discipline at all times, is not conducive to fostering a culture that readily accepts mental health diagnoses resulting in increased stigma and barriers to care. Prevention tactics, institutional changes, military ethos, statistical data on yearly suicide rates by service members, and perceived barriers to care were compiled and analyzed. A review of related scholarship found that particular demographics increase the risk that service members and veterans sustain mental health disorders. Additionally, a service member’s intersecting identities play a role in the compounding levels of mental taxation they face, which is discussed specifically for women and people of color.

INTRODUCTION

The final draft for the U.S. military took place in December 1972, just before the end of the Vietnam War. Since then, America's Armed Forces have remained an all-volunteer force (Denning, Meisnere and Warner 2014). Despite the voluntary nature of our military system, many service members experience involuntary psychological trauma. This paper provides an overview of the military structure and its dominant cultural norms to outline the trauma that can manifest from such organization and ethos. In this paper, I focus on hegemonic masculinity as a cultural influence in the military context, with a brief contextual summary of the perceptions and stigmatization of people with mental health disorders (PWMHD). After examining the interaction between the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity and the military as a social institution, I analyze the compounding mental health effects these ideals have on two groups: women and people of color. These analyses lead to a broader discussion of mental healthcare as a necessity for military personnel, concentrating on access to care and the mental health needs of the enlisted and veterans. This paper seeks to provide civilians insight into the lives of military personnel and the struggles they face to access mental health care.

MILITARY STRUCTURE, CULTURE, AND TRAUMA
It is essential to understand the military’s structure and the culture it promotes to grasp the institution’s control over its personnel. There are five branches of service in the United States military: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard; each of these branches contains a reserve and active component. Active members are full-time service members engaged in both combat and non-combat situations. Members in the reserves serve part-time (generally, two weeks per year); they are tasked with being equipped to fill an active duty position immediately in the case of a national emergency. A concrete hierarchical system is imperative for the military as a means of control and regulation. Thus, the military works based on a system of ranks of which there are three: enlisted (e.g., private, corporal, sergeant, seaman, etc.), officers (e.g., lieutenants, captains, majors, colonels, etc.), and warrant officer. Enlisted services members perform the day-to-day and managerial tasks that keep the military up and running. They fix equipment, patrol the streets, manage paperwork, etc. Officers derive their authority from the President and are confirmed by the U.S. Senate. These members are responsible for commanding, directing, and coordinating their units to achieve a given operation. Alternatively, warrant officers do not hold the authority to instruct units. Instead, they are tasked with possessing technical expertise in a specified area (e.g., maintenance, computers, aircraft, etc.) (Denning, Meisnere and Warner 2014).

As gathered from the overview depicted above, a chain of command and organization is critical for an institution as substantial as the military. Undoubtedly, such order aids in carrying out successful missions and mitigates confusion concerning lines of authority and responsibility. In addition to this universal value denoting organizational efficiency, each branch has a prescribed set of values. For the Army, these include loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. For the Navy and Marine Corps: honor, courage, and commitment. The Air Force recognizes integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all they do. Finally, the Coast Guard outlines honor, respect, and devotion to duty in their core values (Denning, Meisnere and Warner 2014). While all of these values work toward carrying out successful operations and ensuring institutional organization and upkeep, they simultaneously encourage normative views of courage (e.g., feats of physical strength and stoicism) to be carried out. That is, they perpetuate notions of hegemonic masculinity; they encourage this predominantly male profession to carry out roles that are characteristic of logical, intelligent, and unemotional thinking. In turn, these characteristics are used to rationalize male authority and control. For personnel who identify as masculine, honoring notions of hegemonic masculinity fosters a rigid way of performing identity. Of course, the personnel that makes up the U.S. military go far beyond strictly men whose identity aligns with their gender assigned at birth based on sex. In turn, in embodying the values ascribed to the branch of service they’re engaged in, all service members must internalize and perform, at least in part, society’s patriarchal ideals that protect and promote hegemonic masculinity.

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY IN THE MILITARY CONTEXT
One team of researchers stated, “Service members are expected to be disciplined in their actions and words and to maintain control of their emotions and their physical selves at all times” (Denning, Meisnere and Warner 2014:10). Expecting anyone to maintain control of their emotions “at all times” is a weighty demand; further, expecting such discipline from service members who, on a daily basis, endure grief, loss, hyperactive pumps of adrenaline, a lack of sleep, uncertainty, and more, is extremely dangerous as it has the potential to foster an environment where suppressing one’s true emotions is looked down upon in favor of upholding a facade of uniformity and a narrow understanding of bravery.

As understood in the context of the United States’ military agenda, bravery is tied to invulnerability, self-reliance, and success that is largely bound to physical strength. This specific notion of bravery is imposed on service members by the military institution. One former Royal Marine, Aldo Kane, said that the thing he takes away from the corps is not the technical skills but rather the Commando Spirit, “courage, determination, selflessness, cheerfulness in the face of adversity” (Men's Health UK 2020) to which his peer, Jason Fox (Special Forces veteran) explains that members are, in essence, brainwashed by this spirit. Fox goes on to say that the military tries to build a culture around the Commando Spirit that engrains these values into the minds of military personnel so that in the midst of a challenge, members can rely on this spirit they have tucked away in their back pocket and think to themselves, ‘all I need right now is a bit of courage.’ The institution drills this into members’ heads by not only repeating it time and time again but also by plastering it on signage in spaces frequently visited by the enlisted (Men's Health UK 2020). Highlighting the grave disregard the military has permitted for psychological disorders, one team of researchers notes, “The military has a mission-first approach, and the mental health of their service members is an afterthought. In fact, the DoD [Department of Defense] did not begin keeping a record of service member suicides until after 9/11” (Games and Theargood 2021). Despite the institution’s neglectful stance, it’s also important to note civilians’ role in shaping how bravery is perceived within the military culture.

The Invisible Wounds of War Project found the following societal stigmas create barriers to care: “my friends and family would respect me less; my spouse or partner would not want me to get treatment; my co-workers would have less confidence in me if they found out; my commander or supervisor has asked us not to get treatment; my commander or supervisor might respect me less” (Acosta et al. 2014). Of course, each of these barriers had varying response rates, but the sheer fact that service members held these concerns implies that society has a much more significant role to play in perpetuating stigma among people with mental health disorders than we may recognize. Civilians understand little about the intricacies of service members’ daily life; what is understood comes largely from military propaganda and sensationalized slogans such as “land of the free because of the brave.” This skewed understanding of the military and its personnel lead civilians to falsely accept and preserve a military ethos that asserts members should pride themselves on their mental toughness, resilience,
strength, and self-reliance. When bravery is discussed in the military context, these adjectives resonate with what is considered the cultural norm. As members are inducted into this social institution, these descriptors are automatically ascribed to their person; any deviation from these norms, such as seeking help, would thus imply weakness (Charrys 2021). In this way, the conservation of these cultural norms, all characteristic of hegemonic masculinity, are upheld not only by the military institution but also by civilians’ understandings of mental health and bravery in the military context, as well as their perceptions of military personnel as soldiers whose duty it is to fight for our country versus citizens who also experience emotional turmoil and mental taxation.

**PERCEPTIONS AND STIGMATIZATION OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS**

Negative connotations of mental illness and the devaluation of people with mental health disorders begin early in life. Once someone is officially labeled as having a psychological condition, the label becomes personally relevant, and the individual enduring social prejudice may internalize the negative societal associations with the label (Acosta et al. 2014). Some studies suggest that the military’s firm emphasis on fulfilling one’s military duties influences the stigmatization and discrimination of people with mental health disorders (Gibbs et al. 2011; Barrett 2011). Stigma is created in multiple contexts. Four key contexts include the public, institutional, social, and individual contexts. A service member’s social context encompasses the primary relationships they have with other people (e.g., command leadership, peers, and family). The institutional context is cultivated via the policies and systems under and through which they operate, and their public context is comprised of the military norms and culture that service members navigate daily (Acosta et al. 2014). Each of these contexts may produce a different outcome for the individual experiencing the stigmatization. Four immediate outcomes have been empirically linked to stigma—coping mechanisms (e.g., withdrawing), interpersonal consequences (e.g., fluctuations in self-esteem), attitudes toward treatment-seeking, and intentions to seek treatment. In thinking of these contexts, it is important to note the dynamic nature of stigma—stigma can fluctuate daily, even hourly, based on changes in context and relationships (Acosta et al. 2014).

Stigma affects service members differently. Military demographics particularly favor young men, thus, research has shown that men receive greater stigma associated with treatment-seeking behavior than women do (Vogel, Wade and Hackler 2007) because they are expected to be stoic, self-reliant, and controlled (Hammen and Peters 1978). Conversely, women in the military suffer disproportionately from military sexual trauma and assault, increasing the risk that they sustain psychological disorders and increasing their probability of seeking mental health care (Turchik and Wilson 2010). People of color serving in the military also face unique circumstances concerning stigmatization as many have spoken out on the deep-seated racist culture they encounter upon entering
the military. Despite bringing attention to this toxic environment, many people of color in the military feel they have nowhere to report these occurrences as the military’s judicial system lacks a category for hate crimes (Stafford et al. 2021). Understanding why there are discrepancies in perceptions of people with mental health disorders is vital. Variation in stigmatization occurs because it focuses on the recipient rather than the perpetrator of the discrimination; this validates the idea that there is something wrong with the population or individuals being discriminated against rather than those enabling the stigma (Acosta et al. 2014).

**WOMEN IN THE MILITARY**

Previously discussed characteristics of hegemonic masculinity and mental health stigma contribute to 70% of military personnel nursing concerns about being labeled as having a mental health disorder (Charrys 2021). Due to the military’s large male population, young men are especially susceptible to obstructive beliefs regarding mental health and treatment-seeking behavior (Vogt 2011). However, women in the military endure their own unique, compounding discrimination and stigmatization based on the hypermasculine ideals purported by the military institution. Hypermasculinity is defined as “an extreme form of masculinity based on beliefs of polarized gender roles, the endorsement of stereotypical gender roles, a high value placed on control, power, and competition, toleration of pain, and mandatory heterosexuality” (Hunter 2007). For women in the service, this manifests primarily in the form of Military Sexual Trauma (MST), which refers to “any instance of experiencing sexual assault or threatening sexual harassment during the duration of the service members’ service period and is associated with increased odds of a mental health diagnosis” (Charrys 2021). One paper cited that “The reported rates of sexual assault in the military are as high or higher than those reported by civilians, but taking into account that the rates only include sexual assaults that took place during one’s military service, the rates are very high” (Turchik and Wilson 2010). Turchik and Wilson (2010) went on to clarify that while 18% to 25% of American women report experiencing either an attempted rape or completed rape in their lifetimes, between 9.5% and 33% of women report experiencing an attempted or completed rape while serving in the military. Another study found that 43% of all female service members and 12.5% of all male service members have reported an incident of MST (Katz et al. 2012).

The military works as a total institution. That is, the military is a place of work and residence that is cut off from the broader society; it has its own code of conduct, legal system, police, courts, education, research facilities, and medical system (Turchik and Wilson 2010). Along with these, the military also has its own set of norms and values that are engrained into recruits during their training. As mentioned previously, many of these norms are distinguishable by their representation of hypermasculinity which, despite being in place to train service members to be effective, may contribute to the promotion of sexual violence (Turchik and Wilson 2010). Sexualized and violent
language, the general acceptance of violence, the learned ability to objectify others, and consuming obedience to the chain of command along with the structure of the military as a male-dominated institution in which men assume a greater number of leadership roles, all shape service members’ beliefs that sexist and violent behavior is acceptable. The military uniquely nurtures violence; in some ways, the emphasis on violence is outright, like killing in combat zones. In other ways, this emphasis is much more discrete, such as within common slang used among military personnel. Regardless, rationalizing the government’s use of violence as a means to an end may increase the number of individuals who then legitimize this technique for themselves, ultimately increasing the risk of sexual victimization within the military context (Turchik and Wilson 2010).

Hypermascullinity adds to the decreased extent to which the military is an inviting environment for women; it has also been shown to increase the likelihood that men hold rape-supportive attitudes and commit acts of sexual aggression (Turchik and Wilson 2010). Studies have also found that institutions that profess hypermasculine values typically have higher sexual harassment and assault rates than other organizations (Turchik and Wilson 2010). The hypermasculine values embodied by this institution thus, compound the vulnerability of women serving in the military. These values increase the likelihood that women sustain military sexual trauma, thereby also increasing the risk women in the military face in combating mental health disorders.

**SERVICE MEMBERS OF COLOR**

Like female service members, people of color serving in the military may also be at a heightened risk of experiencing compounding factors that further drive them to suppress mental health issues. A study on Americans’ public opinion towards the military based on differences in race stated that some historically marginalized communities view the military as more of an egalitarian organization than society at large. In turn, for people of color, the military is often regarded as a means for achieving a “way out/up;” it provides stable food, housing, education, and the possibility for upward economic mobility and workplace promotions that are not commonly available for those without higher education in civilian society (Leal 2005). Thus, for people of color who rely on the military for opportunities unlikely to be provided in civilian society, there is a greater pressure to uphold a facade that aligns with the military ethos.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 gave U.S. military recruiters the same access to high school students as college recruiters, including access to the personal contact information of high schoolers around the country. The United States remains the only Western Nation to allow military recruiters such access to the educational system (Miralao 2020). Though military recruiters have equal access to students across geographical lines within the U.S., they utilize this information disproportionately. Military recruiters use this information to exploit students based on their financial and social situations. One study found that recruiters made ten times as many school visits to a
predominantly low-income school as they did to a nearby affluent one. At the more affluent high school, where only 5% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, recruiters visited a total of four times throughout the 2011-2012 academic year. In a nearby low-income school, where nearly half of the student body qualified for free or reduced lunch, U.S. Army recruiters made more than ten times as many visits during the same year (Kershner and Harding 2015).

The previously stated findings capture the inequality present in military recruitment in high schools around the nation. The military may have proved critical to "leveling the playing field" for all Americans in the late 1960s when Black men were first fully integrated into the armed forces (Wilcox, Wang and Mincy 2021). Still, after 60 years, more societal progress is necessary. Black men are significantly overrepresented in the armed forces compared to the civilian labor force (Reeves and Nzau 2020); however, when they enter the force and experience discrimination, they often find few parameters in place to bring justice to their experiences. Numerous interviewees spanning across all branches of the military have described “a deep-rooted culture of racism discrimination that stubbornly festers, despite repeated efforts to eradicate it” (Stafford et al. 2021). Additionally, there is no distinct classification for hate crimes within the military’s judicial system, making it nearly impossible to quantify such occurrences. Finally, despite processing more than 750 complaints regarding discrimination by race or ethnicity in the 2020 fiscal year alone, people of color serving in the military commonly face court-martial panels composed of all-white service members, which some experts argue leads to harsher punishments (Stafford et al. 2021).

Prevailing characteristics of hegemonic masculinity within the military context can complicate any service member’s experience. Facing racial discrimination while simultaneously being bombarded with messages to remain valiant and in control of one’s emotions constitutes an environment defined by toxicity. Further, despite any harm brought on by one’s surroundings, said environment may feel inescapable given the unique opportunities for service members of color, which may be unavailable in civilian society. As a society branded with notions of meritocracy, the considerable lack of resources service members of color possess amid instances of racial injustice is preposterous.

MENTAL HEALTHCARE NEEDS AND ACCESS TO CARE

The current process utilized by the military to assess the psychological health of their service members includes three main categories: universal screening, psychological health integration, and self-assessment procedures. Universal psychological health screenings of service members occur at four different stages of a member’s military experience: entrance into the armed forces ("accession"), pre-deployment, post-deployment, and reintegration. Additionally, the Department of Defense (DoD) is working to improve early recognition and intervention strategies by implementing structural interventions to support psychological health integration. The DoD seeks to achieve this goal through three primary efforts: Re-Engineering Systems of Primary
Care Treatment in the Military (RESPECT–Mil), embedded mental health providers, the Patient-Centered Medical Home, and self-assessment (Denning, Meisnere and Warner 2014).

RESPECT–Mil provides primary care-based screening, assessment, treatment, and referral of active-duty personnel diagnosed with PTSD or depression. Since the integration of this service in early 2007, it has provided screening for depression and PTSD at every visit to a primary care provider and further evaluation for those who test positive. “Embedded mental health providers” is an effort by the DoD to bring psychological health professionals closer to service members to decrease accessibility dilemmas. This effort also strives to improve communication between psychological health care professionals and operational unit leaders. In 2008, the DoD adopted the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH). This team-based model provides “continuous, accessible, family-centered, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally sensitive health care in order to achieve the best possible health outcomes” (Denning, Meisnere and Warner 2014).

Self-assessment is the final tool relied on by the military to improve preventative care and early intervention. There are two main self-assessment tools. Military Pathways is a series of questions that creates a holistic picture of how an individual is feeling and aids in determining whether or not that service member could benefit from speaking with a professional. Military Pathways is free, anonymous, and available over the phone, online, and at select in-person special events. Depression, PTSD, generalized anxiety disorder, alcohol use, and bipolar disorder are all addressed via the questionnaire. After an individual completes a self-assessment, they are provided with referral information, including services provided by the DoD and Veterans Affairs. Clinical practice guidelines are the other primary method of self-assessment. These guidelines are developed and updated by representatives from the DoD and VA; they “document evidence-based procedures for screening, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of adults who are seen in any DOD or VA clinical setting” (Denning, Meisnere and Warner 2014). Although these clinical guidelines are better implemented than not, it should be noted that the representatives working to create and enforce them know that these guidelines alone cannot ensure that service members receive optimal evidence-based care (Denning, Meisnere and Warner 2014).

The disturbing reality is that these measures alone are not sufficiently supporting military personnel in their process of acquiring psychological help. The DoD’s Annual Suicide Report for the 2020 calendar year confirmed that 580 service members died by suicide. The report also verified that the suicide rate for the Active Component statistically increased from CY 2015 to CY 2020 (U.S. Department of Defense 2021). Many factors affect treatment-seeking accessibility; therefore, the Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and military leaders must use several different tactics to encourage treatment-seeking behavior and psychological health care retention. The RAND Corporation, a nonprofit organization that conducts research on the armed forces, also promotes the simultaneous implementation and use of various tactics as a way to mitigate criticisms of one approach; implementing numerous complementary
practices that all attack different barriers to care would facilitate structural change more permanently (Acosta et al. 2014). Methods must cater to reducing mental health stigma in the military, changing military norms that encourage self-reliance, emotional control, and narrow definitions of power and bravery. They must also fight misperceptions about the effectiveness of care, which often lead service members to believe their families and friends can help more than service providers. Along with these approaches, military peer and leadership support need to be addressed—military personnel in every branch and at every ranked level need to be educated about mental illness, symptoms, and available resources, including logistical and administrative resources such as transportation, cost, and provider availability (Acosta et al. 2014).

Stigmatization within the military culture is systemic and directly related to martial traditions, which, in turn, influence the attitudes and beliefs that service members hold regarding mental health. The culture upheld by the military thereby inhibits service members from seeking professional help (Charrys 2021). If the military environment is not conducive to normalizing the pursuit of mental health services, access to care will always be obstructed. Access to mental health care should be as readily available and accessible as access to physicians. If a service member sustains a physical injury, they are immediately ushered to see a doctor; the process should be no different for so-called “invisible wounds of war.” Many scholars invested in bringing the issue of mental health care in the military to the forefront of society’s attention demand that, should the military wish to prove their belief in the importance of mental health, they need to begin by increasing the number of employed psychologists as well as the salaries of these professionals. Lieutenant D’Arienzo, a Doctor of Psychology, calls attention to the discrepancy in pay between military physicians and psychologists, noting that the overall salary for a Navy-employed psychologist is nearly half that of a Navy physician (Dingfelder 2009).

In addition to the insufficient number of employed mental health professionals and the unsatisfactory salaries they receive, one task force commissioned by the Department of Defense in 2007 found two other prominent barriers to care. The Task Force on Mental Health found that the cohort of professionals employed is not sufficiently accessible to service members. And significant gaps remain in the continuum of care which inhibit the enlisted and their families from accessing mental health care during peace and conflict. The primary recommendations of this task force were for the military to ensure they participate in cultivating a culture of support for psychological health and provide a full continuum of care for military personnel (including sufficient resources). The task force also encourages military leaders to act as advocates for not only mental health broadly but specifically for their units’ mental health (Denning, Meisnere and Warner 2014).

An evaluation of access to mental health care in the DoD in 2020 found that the DoD did not consistently meet access to care criteria for active duty service members according to law and applicable DoD policies. The evaluation also resulted in a finding that states an average of 53% of all active-duty service members and their families identified as needing mental health care and who were referred to a specific health care system did not end up receiving care. The Military Health System claimed not to know
why this gap in care occurred. The evaluation noted that the Department of Health
Agency failed to publish consistent and clear access to care policies and did not have
visibility of patients who endured a failed attempt at obtaining mental health
appointments in the purchased care system. Both of these inadequacies contributed to
the DoD’s inability to meet access to care standards (Inspector General U.S.
Department of Defense 2020). Based on this evaluation, fourteen recommendations
were made to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs and the Defense
Health Agency (DHA) director to improve access to mental health care. Of these, seven
recommendations were resolved, including the DHA director agreeing to update the
“TRICARE Policy for Access to Care” 2011 Memorandum and to remove the eight-visit
limit for outpatient mental health care. The DHA director denied the suggestion to
develop standardized mental health care access measures for both active duty service
members and their families. Subsequently, the proposal to track the reasons referrals
went unused was dismissed. This recommendation was denied on the basis that it
would require invasive questioning of service members, thereby increasing

While the DoD’s commitment to increasing mental health care accessibility and
awareness is commendable, it should continue to seek alternative actions that could
evade the stigma surrounding mental health, which was noted above as a significant
reason particular recommendations were not implemented. One of these potential
solutions was reintroduced into Congress in June 2021 as the Brandon Act (Stewart
2021). The Brandon Act was named after a Navy Seal trainee, Brandon Caserta, who
committed suicide in 2018 after enduring perpetual hazing and bullying. Brandon’s
parents, select policymakers, and individuals from the military community and civilian
force alike are pushing Congress to enact this piece of legislation that would allow a
service member of any branch to casually mention the Brandon Act. Mentioning this act
would trigger a confidential referral for mental health treatment and enable service
members to receive care without notifying their command. The chain of command in the
military is understandably necessary for organizational success. However, bypassing
the bureaucracy is sometimes required; a week before Brandon died, he slipped a note
seeking help under his Command Officer’s door, which went ignored (Favakeh 2021).
Due to the secrecy engrossed in the Brandon Act, the measure would not abrade the
mental health stigma that is systemic within the military culture. However, it would
provide confidentiality and assure service members that they would be free of questions
and repercussions—both of which allow for the potential to develop standardized mental
health care access measures which could contribute to structural and systemic changes
within the military.

CONCLUSION

Given the unique structure and makeup of the military, we know that particular
demographic factors (i.e., younger age, male sex, and non-white race) are related to
increased stigma and barriers to care (Pietrzak et al. 2009). Additionally, a service
member’s intersecting identities play a role in the compounding levels of mental taxation they face, as discussed for people of color and women in the military. In turn, these compounding levels of mental strain heighten the risk that particular individuals will sustain a mental health disorder.

When defining mental health stigma in the military context, certain unique characteristics of the organization must be addressed. The primary point of interest is the function of the military as a total institution. Service members’ home and work lives are far less separated than their civilian counterparts. The military’s broad governance over its personnel, including service members’ access to military mental health service providers, may inflate the perception that leadership will find out if a service member is diagnosed with a mental health disorder compared to those working in the civilian sector (Acosta et al. 2014). The norms and values of unit culture and military culture, more broadly, influence service members’ public context in a unique way. The context that military personnel must navigate on a daily basis is construed based on notions of a shared mission, leaving no soldier behind, the commando spirit, and a plethora of other verbal and written messages engrained into the minds of soldiers during recruitment and training.

As examined throughout this paper, predominant military ideology is not conducive to fostering a culture that readily accepts mental health diagnoses. The military must normalize the use of mental health services for service members within every branch of service and regardless of a service member’s rank. Failing to normalize such services will continue to result in the inability of service members to properly use and gain access to psychological help (Games and Theargood 2021). Service members who wish to pursue counseling or any other type of mental health care need to be met with unwavering support rather than scrutinized for seeking help— the lives of our service members depend on this shift in awareness.

The military must funnel more money into providing higher quality and quantity of psychological services. There need to be easily accessible, concrete data on how much the armed forces spend on psychological services compared to the amount spent on staffing physicians to promote accountability and transparency. Further, tracking what aspects of mental health care provided by the military are most helpful to veterans and the enlisted will aid in creating a more comprehensive and proactive response to mental health disorders. Barriers to care need to be tracked by the military, despite the stigma that may loom among the forces, to ensure no veterans, service members, or their families fail to access or receive the psychological services they need. Certainly, the military must create a more inclusive environment for individuals with intersecting, historically marginalized identities. This paper does not provide comprehensive solutions to precisely how the military should restructure its allocation of money and other resources to fulfill these needs. However, it does provide insight into the mental health stigma faced by service members and veterans in an effort to bridge the gap between the intricacies understood by military personnel and their families, and civilian society.
REFERENCES


Immigration Status as a Social Determinant of Health:
An Analysis of an East San José-Based Community Farm

By
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ABSTRACT. The state of California is home to more immigrants than any other state. Local community-based organizations and public health nonprofits are essential in both meeting and advocating for the needs and rights of immigrant populations. Prior research has documented the several social determinants of health and significant barriers to good health faced by immigrant communities, including higher rates of power, generally lower rates of health insurance, utilization of services and treatment, as well as a greater number of negative experiences within the healthcare system. Immigrant communities additionally often experience discrimination and racism which can further contribute to health disparities. This study examined various factors important for achieving good health including location of health service utilization. Furthermore, this study assessed the role of local nonprofits in being able to understand their clients and how to best serve and meet their needs. To do this, spatial data related to an East San Jose nonprofit was analyzed. Findings make clear the essential role of community health centers in providing low-cost, high-quality care.

INTRODUCTION

This community farm is a public health nonprofit located in East San José, California that aims to connect people from diverse backgrounds and build community through food and farming. This community farm offers a wide variety of programs to engage the East San José community while also offering organically grown produce at a low price. The community farm primarily serves low-income residents of East San José, many of whom are undocumented immigrants. Recently, this community farm has become a certified enrollment site for CalFresh and has assisted clients in applying for CalFresh benefits. Employees at the community farm intend to extend their assistance to include other government aid programs as well, such as WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) and Covered California programs like Medi-Cal. However, the community farm has faced significant barriers in registering clients for government benefits, with the two main obstacles being fear and ineligibility due to citizenship status. Following the Trump
Administration’s Public Charge Rule, which has since been vacated nationwide, the undocumented immigrant population has expressed great concern in applying for government-sponsored aid programs, out of fear that their residency status may be compromised. Additionally, undocumented immigrants are often unable to receive the same amount and type of government benefits as citizens. Specifically, for Medi-Cal, California’s Medicaid, undocumented immigrants are unable to receive full coverage and can only receive coverage for emergency or pregnancy-related services.

In this way, employees at the community farm have been made aware that a vast majority of the East San José community, more than they can provide for, are not only poor and lack access to healthy and fresh produce, but also struggle in receiving government benefits as undocumented immigrants and are often left uninsured. This project will consider the historically documented long-term health outcomes of immigrants as compared to citizens as well as the characteristics and general health of immigrant communities, including the general sense of fear and mistrust. The purpose of the project is to identify the health-related consequences of immigration status and health insurance coverage and assess whether current social programs and policies in the State of California are sufficient in ensuring the health of all community members, including undocumented immigrants, and if not, to identify and recommend necessary changes.

This study utilizes spatial data using Google Earth mapping. All emergency rooms, hospitals, medical centers, urgent cares, and health clinics or community health centers were identified and mapped using Google Earth in the East San Jose area surrounding the location of the community farm.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The state of California houses more immigrants than any other state, about 11 million, or 25% of the entire nation’s immigrant population (Johnson, Perez, and Mejia 2021). In 2019, 27% of California’s population consisted of foreign-born immigrants, more than double the percentage in any other state. The majority of California immigrants reside in five counties: Santa Clara, San Mateo, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Alameda (Johnson et al. 2021). In these five California counties, foreign-born immigrants make up at least one-third of the population. Additionally, half of California children have at least one immigrant parent (Johnson et al. 2021). While the majority, 53%, of immigrants in California are documented, the state is still home to more than 2 million undocumented immigrants, constituting about 6% of the entire state’s population (Hayes and Hill 2017). The term “undocumented” is given to refer to those who enter the U.S. without legal permission or with a legal visa that is no longer valid (Ornelas,Yamanis,
and Ruiz 2020). It is also important to consider that most undocumented immigrants in California immigrate from Latin America and Mexico (Hayes et al. 2017). The majority of undocumented immigrants, specifically 66%, are now long-term residents, having lived in the U.S. for ten years or more. Yet despite the large immigrant, both documented and undocumented, population in California, and specifically in the Bay Area, state and local programs and policies have not been sufficient in reducing disparities, particularly health disparities between undocumented foreign-born immigrants and U.S.-born residents. The existing literature on Latinx/Hispanic undocumented immigrants in the U.S. highlights the physical and psychological dangers associated with migration as well as common barriers to good health. Additionally, research reveals and explains the “healthy immigrant" paradox and the generally better health outcomes of immigrants as compared to U.S.-born citizens.

Migration

Voluntary migration is often the result of an economic or financial crises as well as a lack of educational and professional opportunities (Ornelas et al. 2020). Others migrate to escape “political instability, persecution, war or violence" or entrenched poverty and hunger (Ornelas et al. 2020). Even when escaping persecution or poverty, immigrants are not deemed “refugees" and are not granted asylum, meaning they are still at risk of being detained or deported (Gamblyn and Teague 2017). Evidence exists that links traumatic and stressful pre-migration living conditions with poor mental health and a higher risk for depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (Ornelas et al. 2020). Immigrants experience physical and mental exhaustion, specifically those who attempt the journey to cross the U.S.-Mexico border (Ornelas et al. 2020). Commonly encountered hazards include dehydration, extreme heat, and wild animals (DeLuca, McEwen, and Keim 2010). In the Tucson, Arizona sector of the U.S.-Mexico border, 100 immigrants die each year from heat-related injuries (DeLuca et al. 2010). Stricter regulation and surveillance of the U.S.-Mexico border due to policies that have sought to deter and criminalize immigration has resulted in the rise of deaths and injuries of immigrants attempting to cross the border (Androff and Tavassoli 2012).

Those attempting to cross the border often pay for guides and are susceptible to different forms of trauma, including extortion, drug trafficking, and abandonment by guides (Ornelas et al. 2020). Immigrant women are specifically vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse while border-crossing (Ornelas et al. 2020). Immigration detention has also become a significant risk to those crossing the border. In 2018 alone, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detained 400,000 people, making immigration detention the “fastest-growing form of incarceration in the United States, and immigrants… the fastest-growing population in federal prisons" (Ornelas et al.
2020). A report from the U.S. Civil Rights Commission found multiple human rights cases of abuse including verbal and physical abuse, a lack of medical care, a lack of access to legal counsel, and the separation of parents and children within detention centers (Misra 2015). The various factors relating to migration, including dangerous, traumatic, and even abusive journeys through the border as well as possible detention in horrid conditions all increase health vulnerability (Migration Data Portal 2021). Without access to adequate medical care, nutrition, or basic hygiene and sanitation while on the journey and within ICE detention centers, immigrants are more likely to face health challenges (Migration Data Portal 2021). In fact, the longer immigrants are detained, the more likely they are to develop severe mental disorders and psychosocial issues (Migration Data Portal 2021).

**Barriers to Good Health**

While undocumented immigrants are likely to face difficulties during their migration that can negatively impact both their mental and physical health, it is not until they are settled in the U.S. that they are met with unaccommodating social and political factors that act as barriers to good health. Undocumented immigrants are twice as likely as the general population to experience food insecurity and have poverty rates three times higher than the national rate of 13.5% (Gamblyn et al. 2017). Poverty is so high among undocumented immigrant populations because of limited job opportunities as well as the ability of employers to pay unfair wages to employees without legal status. Undocumented immigrants pay billions of dollars in taxes and contribute to California’s economy through their work in several industries, yet they are often subjected to not only low or unpaid wages but also inadequate working conditions and threats from their employers (Costa 2018). Without the right to employment and fair wages, the median household income of undocumented immigrants is almost $20,000 lower than the median household income of the nation, at just $36,000 (Gamblyn et al. 2017). Poverty in itself acts as a social determinant of health by limiting access to adequate nutrition and healthy foods, safe shelter, parks and recreational spaces for play and exercise as well as access to clean air and water, all of which can have significant impacts on health (AAFP 2015). Poverty is associated with an increased likelihood of poor health outcomes and lower life expectancy. Research of income and mortality data of 1.8 billion de-identified tax records and Social Security Administration death records from 2001 to 2014 found a gap in life expectancy of over 14 years between the richest 1% and the poorest 1% (Chetty, Stepner, Abraham, Lin, Scuderi, Turner, Bergeron, and Cutler 2016).

Undocumented immigrants are also significantly more likely to be uninsured and face barriers to accessing quality medical care and treatment. The Migration Policy Institute
found that 71% of undocumented immigrants lack health insurance, compared with 40% of lawful permanent residents, 17% of naturalized citizens, and 15% of U.S.-born citizens (Capps, Fix, Van Hook, and Bachmeier 2013). Without insurance coverage, it is difficult for undocumented immigrants to access healthcare and medical services. In a 2014 to 2017 study that sampled documented and undocumented Hispanic/Latino immigrants as well as citizens with high cholesterol, hypertension, or diabetes aged 18-74 years in the Bronx, New York, Chicago, Illinois, San Diego, California, and Miami, Florida, undocumented and documented immigrants reported significantly lower access to “a usual health care provider” and insurance coverage (Guadamuz, Duarzo-Arvizu, Daviglus, Perreira, Calip, Nutescu, Gallo, Castaneda, Gonzalez, and Qato 2020). The study also found that undocumented immigrants had significantly lower treatment rates than documented immigrants and naturalized citizens (Guadamuz et al. 2020). A 2007 study that compared access to and use of healthcare services for Mexicans and Latinos by citizenship and immigration status similarly reported that undocumented immigrants had fewer physician visits and were less likely to have a usual source of care (Ortega, Fang, and Perez 2007).

Undocumented immigrants are generally ineligible for many federal insurance plans and public benefits programs. Specifically, undocumented immigrants do not qualify for Medicare, and their access to Medicaid is limited to emergency or pregnancy-related services (AAFP 2015). Undocumented immigrants are likewise ineligible to enroll in the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and are ineligible for healthcare subsidies under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and cannot purchase unsubsidized health coverage on ACA exchanges (The Hastings Center; National Immigration Forum 2018). Undocumented immigrants cannot receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as CalFresh, but they can apply and receive benefits for their children who are U.S. citizens or legal residents and they are eligible to receive benefits through Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (National Immigration Forum 2018). Federal policies excluding undocumented immigrants were found to be among the most commonly cited barriers to healthcare among undocumented immigrants (Hacker, Anies, Folb, and Zallman 2015). Without health insurance and exclusion from most public benefits, undocumented immigrants often avoid healthcare and wait until their situation becomes critical before seeking services (Hacker et al. 2015). Undocumented immigrants are also more likely to report negative experiences within the healthcare system (Ortega et al. 2007). These negative experiences include cultural incompetency or the lack of healthcare providers able to communicate with patients in their native languages as well as the general feeling of not being able to communicate with healthcare providers because of patients’ inability to speak English (Hacker et al. 2015). Undocumented immigrants also reported feeling
that emergency room physicians did not believe them (Chandler, Malone, Thompson, and Rehm 2012).

Immigrant communities are also often targets of discrimination and racism which creates high levels of stress and fear, both of which can have significant health implications. The Trump Administration's immigration policy that aimed to deter and strictly regulate immigration has created “resounding levels of fear and uncertainty” within immigrant populations (Artiga and Ubri 2017). Specifically, among undocumented immigrants, there is extreme concern about being deported and separated from their children (Artiga et al. 2017). Following the Trump Administration's immigration policies, everyday life has become so stressful for undocumented immigrants that many of them leave their house only when necessary, limit their driving, and have stopped participating in recreational activities (Artiga et al. 2017). The impact of chronic stress includes major disruptions of important body systems, like the immune, digestive, cardiovascular, sleep, and reproductive systems (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). Persistent stress can additionally contribute to chronic health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes as well as depression and anxiety (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

General Health of Immigrant Populations

While it is clear that undocumented immigrants face significant barriers to good health, the existing literature has not explicitly established poorer long-term physical health outcomes among undocumented immigrants as compared to documented immigrants (Ro and Van Hook 2021). In fact, it has been difficult to observe any significant health differences between documented and undocumented immigrants (Ro et al. 2021). In a study that examined data from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) from the years 2000 to 2004, 2008 to 2010, and 2014 to 2015, it was found that incidence rates of chronic conditions and musculoskeletal pain were lower among undocumented farm workers than documented farm workers (Hamilton, Hale, and Savinar 2019). Additionally, twice as many documented farm workers reported a lifetime diagnosis of at least one chronic condition as compared to undocumented farm workers (Hamilton et al. 2019). Some scholars refer to this as the “healthy immigrant” phenomenon or the idea that “healthy people are more likely than unhealthy people to engage in risky activities such as undocumented labor migration” (Ro et al. 2021). In other words, the “healthy immigrant” phenomenon, also known as the “immigrant paradox,” or “immigrant advantage,” is the theory that immigrants have better health and health outcomes than U.S. citizens (Hall and Cuellar 2016). This phenomenon may be exacerbated by the “salmon bias,” a theory of emigration selection when immigrants often return to their home country after becoming ill or disabled whereas healthy immigrants stay in the host
country (Hall et al. 2016). With significant evidence documenting barriers to good health, researchers have attempted to explain why their findings have not supported physical health disparities by citizenship status. For instance, undocumented immigrants have, on average, spent less time in the U.S. as compared to documented immigrants, and longer time in the U.S. is associated with worse health outcomes (Hamilton et al. 2019). Thus, the previous literature hypothesizes that “deteriorating health and chronic disease development” is associated with time spent in the U.S. (Hall et al. 2016). A 2013 study that utilized data from the 2002 Mexican Family Life Survey and the 2001 to 2003 National Health Interview Surveys similarly found that U.S.-born Mexicans reported worse health outcomes than Mexican-born immigrants. Research also highlights that the undocumented immigrant population in the U.S is rapidly aging, and lacks access to care for chronic illnesses (Wiltz 2018). Instead, undocumented immigrants, even seniors, avoid preventative care, thereby worsening their chronic conditions (Wiltz 2018). In their underutilization of healthcare services, undocumented immigrants also often have to combat untreated mental health issues (Hacker et al. 2015).

Immigration-related stressors, including fear of deportation, institutionalized racism, the effects of the social determinants of health, distrust of governmental institutions, and isolation act as risk factors for mental health problems (APA). The previous literature makes clear that U.S. immigrants, particularly those who are undocumented, experience disproportionate rates of mental health problems as compared to the general population (Cohut 2020). Specifically, a study from 2017 reveals that undocumented Mexican immigrants are significantly more likely to develop depression or anxiety than the general population (Garcini, Pena, Galvan, Fagundes, Malcarne, and Klonoff 2017). Even more so, the children of Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Latinx immigrants have higher rates of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder as compared to children of white European immigrants (Kim, Nicodimos, Kushner, Rhew, McCauley, and Stoep 2018).

**METHODS & ANALYSIS**

This study includes a map that identifies and pinpoints the location of nearby hospitals, emergency rooms, urgent care, health clinics, and medical centers in the area surrounding the community farm in East San José as well as in the four zip codes most frequently identified in a survey among community farm participants.

*Google Earth Mapping*
Google Earth was utilized on October 31st, 2021 to map and pinpoint hospitals, emergency rooms, urgent cares, and medical clinics in the East San José area surrounding the community farm as well as in the most frequently documented zip codes highlighted in a survey of community farm participants. The distribution of these facilities was analyzed in order to assess the accessibility of healthcare services in East San José. Particular attention was paid to the type of facility, whether it be a clinic or emergency room, in relation to its geographical location.

**FINDINGS**

*Google Earth Mapping & Healthcare Accessibility*

Following the process of identifying and mapping healthcare facilities on Google Earth, it became apparent that the vast majority of facilities in the East San Jose area are health clinics. Unlike hospitals, emergency rooms, and urgent cares, clinics provide primary care services including preventative and outpatient care as well as provide medical attention for those who are sick.

![Figure 1. Map of local healthcare facilities.](image)
The area known as East San José is outlined in red and health clinics were pinpointed in blue, urgent cares in purple, medical centers in brown, emergency rooms in red, and hospitals without an emergency room in orange. The community farm’s location was marked with a green star. Marked by a white pinpoint are the four most common zip codes among survey participants. The entire East San José community contains only one emergency room, in the northeast corner of the map. Under federal law, hospitals that receive federal funding are required to provide emergency care for all individuals, regardless of immigration status (County of Santa Clara Health System 2019). Federal and California state laws protect patients’ medical records and patients will not be asked about their immigration status when receiving care (County of Santa Clara Health System 2019).

Although a variety of health clinics exist, it is most important to consider community health centers, which are clinics supported by the Federal Government’s Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA). Community health centers are located in high-need areas and provide comprehensive care services based on an individual’s ability to pay. These clinics are required to offer transportation, translation, case management, and health education services in order to reduce barriers to high-quality care. According to the HRSA, there are a multitude of community health centers located within five miles of the community farm (Figure 2). Some of these locations were unidentifiable during the Google Earth mapping and identification process.

Figure 2. Community health centers within five miles of the community farm.

(Gathered from the HRSA Data Warehouse site searching for all centers within five miles of 647 S King Rd, San José, CA 95116) (https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/).
One nearby community health center includes the Overfelt Neighborhood Health Clinic, marked by the “A” pinpoint, which serves over 5,400 low-income individuals and families each year within its six locations throughout the Bay Area. The Overfelt Clinic provides primary care and behavioral health services as well as offers health education and insurance enrollment program. Another is the Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI) Clinic, marked by the “B” pinpoint, which provides health services regardless of an individual’s insurance coverage, their ability to pay, or their immigration status.

Healthcare Coverage

The consequences of lacking health insurance are well-documented and understood. Gaps in insurance coverage are responsible for at least 18,000 annual preventable deaths (Institute of Medicine Committee on the Consequences of Uninsurance 2003). The uninsured are more likely to go without needed health services because of cost and are more likely to report poorer quality care (Schoen, Doty, Collins, and Holmgren 2005). Uninsured patients are less likely to have a usual source of care, meaning chronic conditions are less likely to be properly addressed and managed (Doty, Collins, Holmgren, Davis, and Kriss 2006; Osborn, Schoen, Huynh, and Holmgren 2006). Without medical insurance, patients are forced to spend significant out-of-pocket expenses that can create financial strains and even result in bankruptcy (Schoen et al. 2005). This is exacerbated by the presence of chronic conditions, as uninsured patients with chronic conditions are twice as likely to use emergency rooms and inpatient hospital services than insured patients with chronic conditions (Doty et al. 2006).

While many groups of immigrants do qualify for health coverage under the Affordable Care Act including lawful permanent residents, lawful temporary residents, those fleeing persecution, those granted protected status as well as those on worker or student visas, undocumented immigrants do not qualify for a health plan under Covered California (Covered California). Undocumented immigrants also do not qualify for Medicaid or Medicare (Norris 2021). Although undocumented immigrants cannot buy health plans in the exchange, some states provide coverage for undocumented immigrant children and pregnant women (Norris 2021). Children under the age of 19 are eligible for full Medi-Cal benefits regardless of immigration status as long as all other eligibility requirements are met (California Department of Health Care Services 2021). Undocumented immigrants may additionally qualify for Medi-Cal if younger than 26, are a DACA recipient, or are currently or recently pregnant (Covered California). Medi-Cal has recently been expanded to include low-income Californians over 50, regardless of immigration status as well (Gutierrez 2021).
Some undocumented immigrants report fear of their residency status being discovered when applying for government benefits. The responses also indicate concern that applying for benefits will somehow render immigrants and their families unable to change their residency status in the future. This may stem from ex-President Donald Trump’s 2019 Public Charge Final Rule that defines “public charge” as a non-citizen who receives one or more public benefits for more than 12 months within any 36-month period (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 2021). Under this rule, non-citizens seeking admission to the U.S. or seeking to adjust their status to that of a lawful permanent resident would be unable to do so if during their application it is likely that they would at any time become a public charge (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 2021). However, this rule is no longer applicable and was vacated in November 2020. However, it is clear that the harmful effects of public charges still remain. These responses additionally indicate the lack of understanding about the qualifying requirements for government benefits. It is important to consider the extent of this fear and lack of knowledge and how it affects immigrant populations in accessing important benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research must seek to understand the long-term health consequences of immigration status. Specifically, future research should attempt to identify the differing experiences of documented and undocumented immigrants in the U.S. and how this contributes to health outcomes. Future studies might utilize longitudinal data in order to study how U.S. social and political factors specifically affect the long-term health of immigrants, specifically undocumented immigrants. The previous literature is relatively new. It was not until the late 1970’s and 1980’s that immigrants from Mexico and Latin America began to arrive en masse to the United States (Budiman, Tamir, Mora, and Noe-Bustamante 2020). Thus, foreign-born immigrants today are relatively young, with the largest age group being 40 to 44 as of 2018 (Budiman et al. 2020). As immigrants, particularly undocumented immigrants, begin to age, barriers to health, like lack of insurance coverage and access to consistent, quality preventative care, and healthcare services, will become more prominent, especially as this population begins to develop chronic illnesses. Future research must explore the aging undocumented immigrant population and observe how barriers to health converge to worsen health outcomes among older immigrants.

Best Practices Recommendations
While this community farm has a number of programs that are utilized frequently by its many clients, the research findings suggest that to better assist them with health-related concerns, the community farm should implement a community initiative program that disseminates information and resources about government aid, health insurance, and mental health services. Specifically, the community farm should educate its clients on how to apply for government aid programs and the qualifications necessary to apply, how to receive health insurance, and connect them with one of the vastly important and nearby community health centers. The community farm might consider implementing educational group workshops or informational sessions to address these various points. It is important that the community farm additionally works to ensure that its clients have access to consistent and quality healthcare services, especially mental health services. The following program models and grant recommendations may also be of interest for utilization at the community farm.

**Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) & California Food Assistance Program (CFAP)**

The Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) and the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) are both California state-funded programs created with the intent to support immigrant families following the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, also known as the Federal Welfare Reform Act of 1996 (California Immigrant Policy Center Public Benefits). CAPI provides monthly cash benefits to aged, blind, and disabled non-citizens who are ineligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or State Supplemental Payments (SSP) because of immigration status (California Immigrant Policy Center Public Benefits). The Welfare Reform Act of 1996 made SSI/SSP benefits available only to citizens and specific legal non-citizens, like those granted asylum, admitted as a refugee, granted conditional entry or those lawfully admitted for permanent residence, largely restricting undocumented immigrants (Social Services Administration 2019). In order to qualify for CAPI, a person must meet the eligibility requirements for SSI/SSP except for immigration status, be aged, blind, or disabled, be a resident of California, and have resources below the limit of $2,000 for an individual or $3,000 for a couple (Kimberlin, Mesquita, Schumacher 2021). An applicant must also apply for SSI/SSP and show proof of their ineligibility status, which must only be due to immigration status, to qualify for CAPI (Kimberlin et al. 2021). Thus, CAPI has made cash benefits available to many who otherwise would not have access to the already existing programs.

The California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) is a California supplemental nutritional program that provides state-funded food stamp benefits to qualified immigrants who are ineligible for federal food stamps (California Immigrant Policy Center Public Benefits).
These benefits are equivalent to Cal-Fresh, or California’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Undocumented immigrants are ineligible for Cal-Fresh benefits, which is a key resource ensuring families have access to food (Kimberlin et al. 2021). CFAP has provided food stamp benefits to Californian undocumented immigrants who otherwise would be rejected from receiving Cal-Fresh benefits (Dangor 2021).

**Medicaid Expansion**

California Governor Gavin Newsom just recently expanded Medicaid eligibility to include undocumented residents over the age of 50 (Dangor 2021). This law, which will go into effect in 2022, has made Medi-Cal, California’s Medicaid, available to 235,000 low-income undocumented Californians, ensuring their access to critical healthcare services, including preventative services, long-term care, and in-home support services (Office of Governor Gavin Newsom 2021). This expansion program is essential, given the aging population of undocumented immigrants in California. Additional Medi-Cal expansions in California have made children and young adults under the age of 26 eligible for benefits regardless of immigration status (Office of Governor Gavin Newsom 2021). These separate Medicaid expansion programs have aimed to guarantee healthcare benefits to undocumented immigrants at various ages, with the hope to one day achieve universal healthcare in California (Dangor 2021).

**California Laws Protecting Undocumented Workers**

Between 2013 and 2017, the State of California has passed seven laws to protect workers from discrimination based on their immigration status (Costa 2018). California’s AB 263 from 2013 prohibits employers from using threats or retaliating against employees based on their immigration status (Costa 2018). California’s SB 666 from 2013 makes it easier for immigrant workers to sue employers for damages after facing threats or retaliation (Costa 2018). California’s AB 524 from 2013 expanded the definition of “criminal extortion” to include threats based on immigration status (Costa 2018). California’s SB 54 from 2017, also known as the California Values Act, made courts and government buildings more accessible to undocumented immigrants through decreasing risk of ICE detention when pursuing workplace violations (Costa 2018). California’s AB 450 from 2017, also known as the Immigrant Worker Protection Act, requires employers to notify employees within 72 hours when ICE requests to review an employee’s immigration paperwork as well as when employers receive information about ICE audits (California Immigrant Policy Center Protecting Workers Rights). These worker protection laws have helped ensure that immigrant workers, particularly undocumented immigrant workers, can work and receive equal pay for their work.
California Laws Protecting Immigrant Civil Rights

California has additionally enacted laws aimed at protecting the civil rights of immigrants. Specifically, California’s Transparent Review of Unjust Transfers and Holds (TRUTH) Act makes sure that local law enforcement agencies provide those in their custody with basic due process and information about their rights if federal immigration authorities attempt to make contact with them (State of California Department of Justice Office of the Attorney General). Additionally, California’s Racial and Identity Profiling Act requires California law enforcement agencies to collect and report data about complaints that assert racial or identity profiling (State of California Department of Justice Office of the Attorney General). This law also expanded the definition of racial and identity policing and requires all law enforcement agencies to collect demographic information on the people they “stop” as defined by the law. California’s Immigrant Victims of Crime Equity Act requires state and local officials to certify the “helpfulness” of immigrant crime victims in assisting the investigation or prosecution of a crime and protect immigrant victims and family members from deportation (State of California Department of Justice Office of the Attorney General). Immigrant victims must also have access to their crime reports. Lastly, California’s Transparency and Responsibility Using State Tools (TRUST) Act details that if local law enforcement wishes to comply with an ICE detention request, the individual in question must be convicted of specific crimes or meet “criminal criteria” (State of California Department of Justice Office of the Attorney General). Previous California legislation signed by Governor Newsom allows undocumented immigrants to serve on government boards and commissions, bans arrests for immigration violations in courthouses and expanded California’s college student loan program for Dreamers, or young immigrants brought to the country illegally as children, to be eligible to earn a graduate degree at the University of California and California State University schools (Willon 2019).

California Organizations Fighting for Immigrant Rights

Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project is a project of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles (Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project). Based in Los Angeles, this organization has a community education program that works to educate immigrants about their rights and forms of relief and resources available to them. Esperanza additionally works with lawyers to provide pro-bono representation of immigrants in need, including unaccompanied children and detained adults (Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project). Esperanza hosts immigration law training as well as utilizes volunteers to better engage the Los Angeles area.
Founded in 1969 in Oakland, Centro Legal De La Raza provides legal services and assistance to low-income immigrants, Black, and Latinx communities through legal representation, education, and advocacy (Centro Legal De La Raza). Centro Legal operates various immigration clinics around the Bay Area and also offers pro-bono legal representation to vulnerable community members, including undocumented immigrants. This organization additionally advocates for the rights of immigrant community members. By working with various local and national partners, Centro Legal participates in a multitude of advocacy efforts, like providing data and legal support for the City of Oakland’s lawsuit against a business that defrauded immigrants. Recently, Centro Legal has been at the forefront in preventing unjust deportations and keeping families together (Centro Legal De La Raza).

The Unity Council, another nonprofit with a long history in Oakland, offers free services, tools, knowledge, and resources to community members in need (The Unity Council). Unity Council owns and manages three affordable housing and apartment properties, has a career center that helps clients with job searches and applications as well as holds cover letter and resume writing workshops. Unity Council additionally distributes prepared meals weekly, runs a multicultural senior center and preschool program, and runs a farmer’s market multiple times a week that accepts WIC, SNAP, and EBT cards. Unity Council’s youth programs offer jobs, internships, and culturally competent mentoring opportunities for young adults at any stage of their educational or professional careers (The Unity Council).

Grant Funding Recommendation

The California Wellness Foundation funds equity in access and particularly supports universal coverage and access to care, the radical transformation of the healthcare system, and securing healthcare access for priority populations (The California Wellness Foundation). Specifically, the California Wellness Foundation funds organizations that defend immigrants’ rights, protect access to healthcare services, and create positive change in immigrant communities. Even more so, the foundation funds organizations that make an effort to better connect individuals to needed health and social services and public benefits programs. The California Wellness Foundation also funds organizations that focus on community well-being, specifically those that prioritize equitable access to parks and outdoor spaces as well as those that make an effort to empower underserved communities through community organizing, leadership development, and technical assistance and training (The California Wellness Foundation). This grant would be used to help provide quality healthcare to underserved and marginalized communities, particularly immigrant communities. This grant could be used at the community farm to create a program or hire individuals to advocate for the
health needs of community farm clients and help them navigate the healthcare system. This grant could also be used to bolster the public assistance program at the community farm and help give more clients access to information and resources and help them apply for government benefits. Lastly, this grant could be used to give the community farm the resources to address environmental conditions that significantly affect East San José community members and advocate for more just and equitable environmental policies.

CONCLUSION

This report examined immigration as a social determinant of health and assessed the relationship between immigration status, health insurance coverage, frequency and quality of health-related services, location of health service use, the prevalence of chronic conditions, the existence of fear and distrust of government, and the general sense of confusion surrounding government aid programs. Additionally, this report pinpointed the location of various healthcare facilities, including community health centers, near the community farm’s East San José location and highlighted the importance of these facilities among the survey population.

This report highlighted that those without health insurance are considerably less likely to utilize healthcare services as frequently as those with health insurance. Additionally, it was found that those without health insurance are more likely to utilize health-related services at community health clinics and emergency departments as compared to those with health insurance who often receive services at hospitals or medical centers. Those without health insurance also reported receiving significantly lower-quality medical care than those with insurance.

The implications of lacking health insurance are important to consider, specifically within immigrant populations where individuals often lack access to insurance. Additionally, survey responses highlighted the sense of fear of the institution of government and a lack of knowledge about qualifying for government aid programs. This must be addressed in order to ensure immigrant communities have access to much-needed aid. Organizations like this community farm that serve in-need immigrant communities must educate their clients and debunk the myths surrounding government aid programs and ensure their populations have information and resources about health insurance as well as access to quality medical care through the various community health centers in the Bay Area. Although federal and state social policies and programs must be altered to allow immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, to receive the same level and quality of benefits as U.S.-born citizens, the Bay Area should serve as a model for various other high-need, immigrant communities. Not only has the State of California
expanded legislation to include social service benefits to undocumented immigrants, but the expanse of Bay-Area based organizations, like this community farm, and the abundant presence of community health centers have proven able to adequately care for impoverished immigrant communities while at the same time have continuously advocated for the rights of immigrants across the U.S.
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Summer 2021 Survey
Capstone Survey

Thank you for taking this survey. This information will help us address needs in the community.
Gracias por realizar esta encuesta. Esta información nos ayudará a abordar las necesidades de la comunidad.

* Required

1. Do you have health insurance? / ¿Tienes seguro médico?

   Mark only one oval.

   - Yes / Sí
   - No
   - I’m not sure / No sé

2. How often do you see a doctor or other healthcare provider? / ¿Con qué frecuencia visita a un médico u otro proveedor de atención médica?

   Mark only one oval.

   - More than once a month / Más de una vez al mes
   - Every couple months / Cada dos meses
   - Once every six months / Una vez cada seis meses
   - Once a year / Una vez al año
   - Less than once a year / Menos de una vez al año
   - Other: _________________________________
3. Where do you most frequently utilize healthcare services? / ¿Dónde utiliza con más frecuencia los servicios de salud?

*Mark only one oval.*

- [ ] Hospital / Medical Center / Hospital / Centro médico
- [ ] Emergency Department / Departamento de Emergencia
- [ ] Health Clinic / Clínica de salud
- [ ] Urgent Care / Atención de urgencias
- [ ] None / Ninguno
- [ ] Other: ____________________________

4. How would you describe the quality of your medical care? / ¿Cómo describiría la calidad de su atención médica?

*Mark only one oval.*

- [ ] Poor / Pobre
- [ ] Adequate / Adecuado
- [ ] Good / Bueno
- [ ] Great / Excelente
- [ ] Other: ____________________________
5. Do you have any of the following conditions? Mark all that apply. / ¿Tiene alguna de las siguientes condiciones? Marque todo lo que corresponda.

Check all that apply.

- Alzheimer's or other dementias / Enfermedad de Alzheimer o otras demencias
- Arthritis / Artritis
- Asthma / Asma
- Cancer / Cáncer
- Chronic kidney disease / Enfermedad renal crónica
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease / Enfermedad pulmonar obstructiva crónica
- Depression or anxiety / Depresión o ansiedad
- Diabetes
- Heart disease / Enfermedad del corazón
- Heart failure / Insuficiencia cardíaca
- Hepatitis
- High cholesterol / Colesterol alto
- Hypertension / Hipertensión
- Osteoporosis
- Stroke / Accidente cerebrovascular médico
- None of these / Ninguno de esos

Other: [ ]

6. How often do you participate in Veggielution events? / ¿Con qué frecuencia participa en eventos de Veggielution?

Mark only one oval.

- Once a week / Una vez por semana
- Once a month / Una vez al mes
- Once every few months / Una vez cada pocos meses
- A few times a year / Algunas veces al año
- Other: ____________________________
7. What is your zip code? / ¿Cuál es su código postal? *

______________________________

8. Were you born in the U.S.? / ¿Nació en los EE. UU.?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes / Sí

☐ No

Thank You!!! Gracias!!!

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Google Forms
REFERENCES


Capps, Randy, Michael Fix, Jennifer Van Hook, and James Bachmeier. 2013. “A demographic, socioeconomic, and health coverage profile of unauthorized


The California Wellness Foundation. *Apply for a Grant.* (https://www.calwellness.org/money/apply-grant/).


The Unity Council. *Get Services.* (https://unitycouncil.org/services/).


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