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Letter from the Editor

It is with excitement and purpose that I begin my tenure as the new Editor-in-Chief of *Social Dialogue*. Previous Editors Dan Poole and Sophia Lynn Nathenson have left very large shoes to fill, and I hope to be able to continue the tradition of using this forum to present thought-provoking undergraduate research of local, national and global import.

The articles in this issue address a wide variety of topics, all of which speak to the key political, social, cultural and demographic concerns of the 21st century. Michelle Densley uses primary data to determine how well the average person understands the implications of President Obama's Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (spoiler alert: not very well). Tyler Yagi reviews the literature on the challenges associated with caring for individuals with Alzheimer's Disease, a topic that is becoming increasingly relevant as the Baby Boom generation approaches retirement. Nicole Talbot uses local liquor laws to examine the various pathways through which policy can both promote and inhibit economic growth. Yesenia Valenzuela presents mandatory voting as a potential solution for several of the ills afflicting the American electoral process, including bipartisan polarization and extreme rhetoric. Finally, Coco James examines how popular music's presentation of gender identity and sexual preference has evolved over the last 50 years.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *Social Dialogue*. Our goal has always been to create dialogue between undergraduate students, graduate students, professors and community members with regard to local and global social issues. To contribute to the dialogue, send comments to socialdialogue2014@gmail.com or consider submitting at paper to *Social Dialogue* for our next edition!

Tom Quinn
Editor-in-Chief
June 10, 2013

sophie.nathenson@soc.utah.edu

How Well Do We Understand the Affordable Care Act?
Michelle Densley, University of Utah

ABSTRACT

The newly established Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) was designed to ensure that health care benefits will be more accessible to Americans while keeping the overall cost of health care down. There has been considerable debate regarding the extent to which the PPACA is capable of achieving these aims, particularly in the area of cost control. Supporters tend to argue that increased health care coverage would contribute to a generally healthier population, thus leading to a decrease in overall health care costs, but detractors disagree.

We performed an exploratory study with three aims: first, to assess average Americans' current knowledge and understanding of the PPACA legislation, second, explore respondents' perceptions of how the PPACA will affect them and third, determine if they believed costs would rise or fall with an increase in availability and use. Using primary survey data collected from a small sample, we found that the majority of respondents were privately insured. Regarding the overall cost of the legislation to American families, there is widespread belief that full implementation of the PPACA will ultimately increase the amount of money that the average American family pays out-of-pocket for health care. This finding is particularly interesting in light of the fact that a plurality of respondents indicated that they would not see the doctor more often even if they enjoyed greater health care coverage.

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, per capita health care spending in the United States topped $7,000, a figure that is nearly twice the average of other developed countries (Seshamani, 2009). Equally problematic is the fact that health outcomes in the United States lag well behind those of comparable nations. In hopes of combating this overspending and expanding health care access to more Americans, President Barack Obama's Administration conceived and passed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which is colloquially (and somewhat derisively) known as Obamacare. This legislation outlined a plan that included reducing long-term growth of health care costs, protecting families from health care debt, ensuring consumers a choice of physicians and coverage, increasing access to preventative services, improving and quality of care, guaranteeing affordable coverage during times of change and/or job loss and prohibiting discrimination based on pre-existing conditions.

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the PPACA into law. Obama's philosophy centers on "the core principle that everybody should have some basic security when it comes to their health care" (Iglehart, 2010, page 362). The notion that everyone has a right to a certain level of health care resonates with many Americans, but the feasibility—particularly in terms of fiscal expenditures—of realizing such a lofty goal within the framework of our existing healthcare system is debatable.

And thus we find ourselves at a crossroads. Although there is general agreement that rising healthcare costs have made our current system unsustainable, there remains considerable debate as to what course of action should be taken. Possible options include full implementation of the PPACA,

increased privatization of existing government programs and a transition to some sort of a single-payer system, to name a few.

Current government programs such as Medicare (insurance for the elderly) and Medicaid (insurance for low-income Americans, children and qualifying individuals with disabilities) have proven to be highly vulnerable to fraud and waste at the hands of healthcare providers and the government itself. Furthermore, without some sort of corrective action, millions of Americans will lose what few affordable insurance options they have by 2019, and that number will grow each year thereafter. It is estimated that by the year 2017, the Medicare trust fund will be exhausted. Regarding efforts to keep the program financially solvent Pizzi (2009) wrote:

"The Trustees said 'substantial' changes would be necessary to ensure an uninterrupted provision of services to Medicare beneficiaries and the program's solvency...The HI (Health Insurance) Trust Fund could be brought into actuarial balance over the next 75 years by changes equivalent to an immediate 134 percent increase in the payroll tax (from a rate of 2.9 percent to 6.78 percent) or an immediate 53 percent reduction in program outlays or some combination of the two... Larger changes would be required to make the program solvent beyond the 75-year horizon."

Because this is a multi-faceted, complex piece of legislation, one of the key questions regarding its implementation is whether the average American understands the legislation in terms of how it may affect him or her both individually and as a part of society. A second question centers on the opinion of the American public as to whether the overall cost to families will increase as a result of extending coverage to millions of previously uninsured individuals.

In designing this small-sample, exploratory survey, we expected that most people would come to the conclusion that an increase in health care coverage would ultimately yield a happier, healthier population by facilitating access to preventive care and lessening reliance on pricey, ad-hoc services. As a result, overall health care costs would decline as access increased.

This research is important in that it seeks to determine the extent to which the average American understands the extent and scope of the changes mandated by the PPACA. With this knowledge, we will be able to isolate areas in which understanding is particularly weak and direct focused education to such areas in hopes of heightening the awareness of the law and how this will affect the nation as a whole.
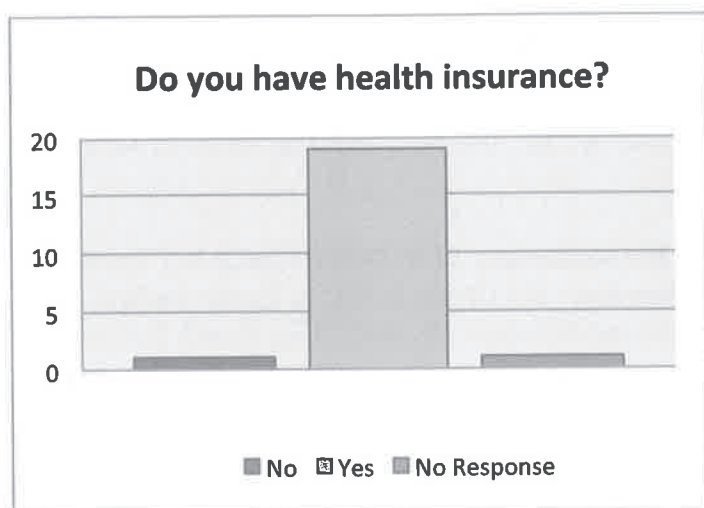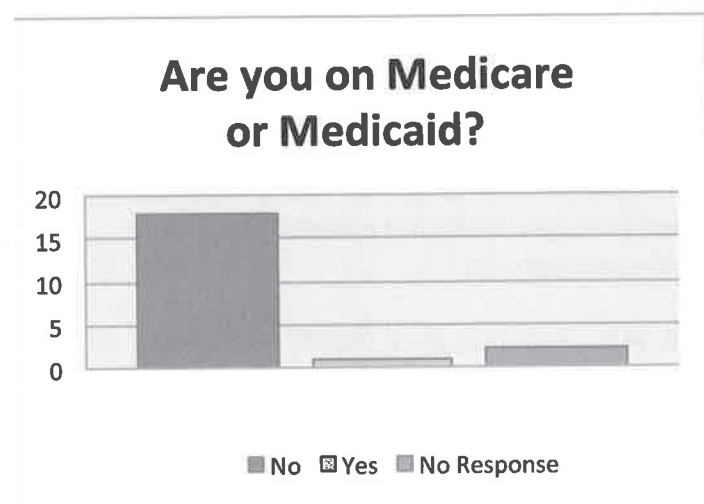
METHODS

Participants: Twenty one (21) adults were asked to participate in a brief survey to assess their current knowledge of the health care system and the future proposals under PPACA. The participants were all at least eighteen (18) years old with no predetermined upper age limit. The participants included all races, ethnic backgrounds, genders and social classes. Furthermore, all relationship statuses (married, single, cohabitating, etc.) were also included in this study. All participants were drawn from the Greater Salt Lake Area. The majority of participants were employed, with most working at least forty (40) hours per week. Overall, however, the sample was heavily male, educated and within middle to upper middle class.

Design: Although the sample used in this study would likely be considered a convenience sample by most, especially in the sense that it was not drawn at random from a specified sampling frame, every effort was made to ensure that the participants were more-or-less representative of the general population.

The Survey: The survey utilized in this study was composed of several multiple choice questions. The questions dealt primarily with either the demographic characteristics of the respondent and his/her understanding of the American health care system and the PPACA. The questions having to do with health care were designed to assess the participants' understanding of the current system and proposed changes to health care under the PPACA legislation. Demographic questions were utilized to identify subgroups of the population where additional explanation of the health care plan may be needed. The survey format was chosen to create ease of use for the respondent and to analyze the responses by quantitative method.

Procedure: The survey was distributed via electronic means (i.e. e-mail), and simple distribution of hard copy surveys with immediate collection. For the in-person distribution, additional questions from the
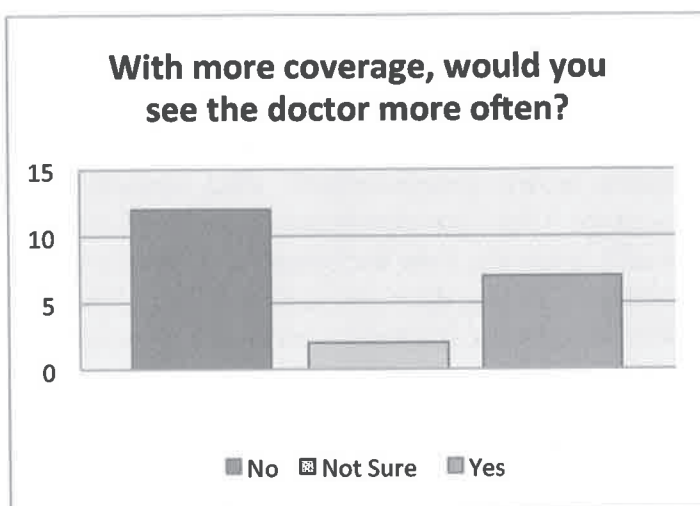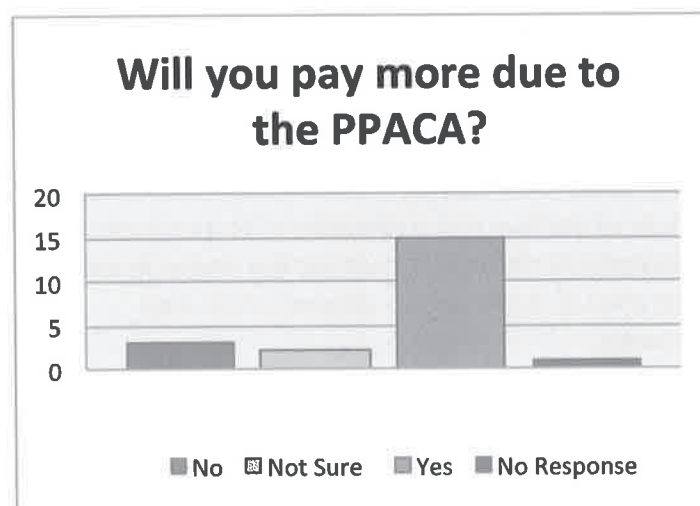
Figure 1

Do you have health insurance?

(No | Yes | No Response)

Figure 3

With more coverage, would you see the doctor more often?

(No | Not Sure | Yes)

Figure 2

Are you on Medicare or Medicaid?

(No | Yes | No Response)

Figure 4

Will you pay more due to the PPACA?

(No | Not Sure | Yes | No Response)

participants were not answered by the research team member. This was to ensure quality of the answers from the participants to document their understanding of the question given, and that additional explanation from the research team member would not contaminate the results.

SELECTED RESULTS

As Figure 1 shows, the majority (19) of the respondents had some form of health insurance. One respondent was uninsured, and one declined to answer. This sample therefore is composed of fewer uninsured individuals than there are in the general population.

As Figure 2 shows, the majority of the sample is privately insured. Only one respondent obtained his or her health insurance via Medicare or Medicaid, compared to 18 who are insured privately or two who declined to answer.

As Figure 3 shows, the majority of respondents would not utilize medical services any more often even if they enjoyed increased access to said services. It is unclear, however, whether or not this fact would be an indicator of an overall healthier population or merely continuation of current habits.

Finally, as is evident in Figure 4, nearly three-quarters of the respondents believe that they will ultimately pay more for medical care as a result of the PPACA despite the fact that they don't plan on using any additional services. Subsequent studies would do well to examine the respondents' media consumption

as a way of determining how this opinion was formed.

DISCUSSION

This study examined Utahns' attitudes and beliefs regarding the PPACA, particularly in terms of the financial burden on consumers. Our research team wanted to answer three questions. First, what does the average American understand about the affordable care act? Secondly, how do respondents foresee this legislation affecting them and their families? Finally, do they believe that healthcare costs will increase as a result of increased availability of care?

Based on these results, there is some evidence that the average citizen may not be fully informed regarding the goals of the PPACA. We may also conclude that the participants are unclear as to how this legislation will affect them and the American public in general. Regarding the overall cost of the legislation to American families, there is widespread belief that full implementation of the PPACA will ultimately increase the amount of money that the average American family pays out-of-pocket for health care. This finding is particularly interesting in light of the fact that a plurality of respondents indicated that they would not see the doctor more often even if they enjoyed greater health care coverage.

CONCLUSION

Of course, much of this discussion is purely academic, as it will be all but impossible to truly evaluate the effects of the PPACA before it is fully implemented. There is, however, evidence to support our hypothesis that people are not well educated regarding the changes and the proposed plans under the PPACA legislation. These findings must be considered in the context of several limitations. Due to our small sample size and rudimentary sampling techniques, these results may not be representative of the opinions held by the American public. A larger, more diverse research study will be required to identify the understanding of the public of how PPACA will affect individuals and the society.

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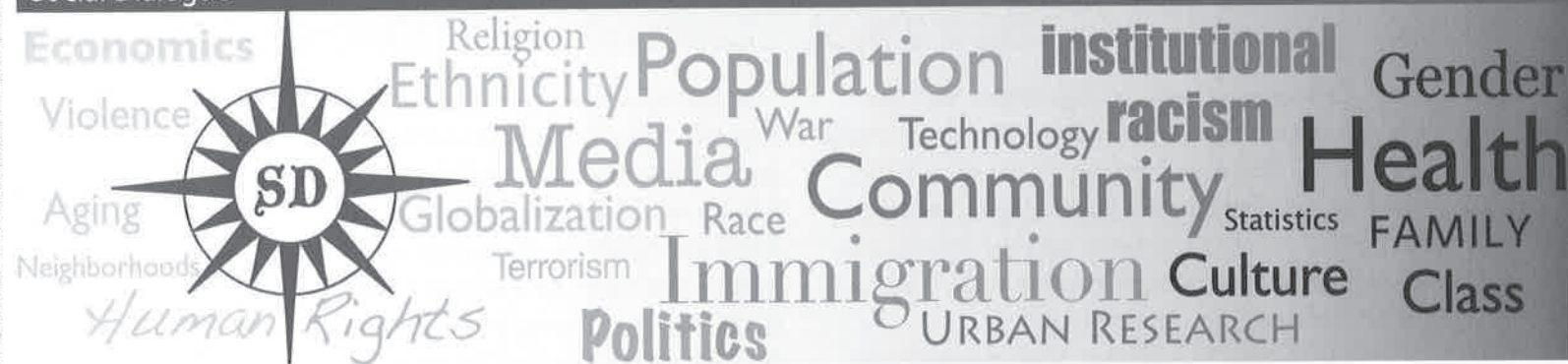
The Caregiver's Burden
Tyler Yagi, University of Utah

INTRODUCTION

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 25 percent of the American population is over the age of 65. This segment of the population will only grow as the atypically large Baby Boom cohort approaches retirement age. As a result of this rapid population aging, hospitals, nursing homes and other long-term care facilities are facing a dramatic increase in demand for their services in the very immediate future, a fact that will place additional strain on staff and administrators as they adjust to their new patient demographic.

Furthermore, the graying of the American populace will likely result in increased incidence of Alzheimer's disease and similar forms of dementia. Many individuals experiencing such disorders will be cared for at home by a family member, who may experience a variety of physical, emotional, financial and social burdens associated with the caregiving role.

This review article seeks to examine in detail the factors affecting such burdens and the ways in which caregivers deal with said burdens. The literature suggests that multicomponent interventions targeting the caregiver have been shown to reduce the caregiver burden (CB), alleviate depression and delay the institutionalization of the patients for whom they are caring. Furthermore, the literature suggests that gender, knowledge of healthy coping strategies, cultural factors and race/ethnicity all influence CB to some degree.

These findings revealed that vast array of social support programs, interventions, and methods can be been designed to alleviate caregiver burden. More importantly, this research found that the effectiveness of any given intervention or coping strategy can vary wildly from one context to the next. In other words,

evidence shows that there is no "single, easily implemented, and consistently effective method for eliminating the stress of caregiving."

PURPOSE

The major purpose for this literature review is to better understand the role that caregivers play in providing care for persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and similar disorders, and to take a look at what social support programs and interventions have been designed to alleviate the burdens and stressors associated with the caregiving experience. This research will look at (a) the characteristics associated with the caregiving experience (b) the interventions and social support programs designed to alleviate caregiver burden (c) and the transition to institutionalization for persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and similar disorders, as well as to give recognition to this moment of vulnerability for caregivers.

Health care professionals and the lay public both understand that family caregivers of patients with Alzheimer's disease (AD) face extreme difficulty and stress. What is not commonly acknowledged is that caregivers represent a major and hidden part of our health care system, and that unpaid care by family members is actually a critically important but fragile part of long-term care in the United States. Research conducted by Haley, from the American Academy of Neurology, shows the significance and importance of the caregiving role. He estimates that approximately 80 percent of the care required by Alzheimer's patients is provided in the community by family members. Many of these families have little to no formal knowledge of the disease, its progression or their responsibilities as caregivers to these patients. While caregiv-

ers typically recognize that this experience will be difficult and potentially life-changing, the actual costs (i.e., the financial burden of caring for an individual, untold man-hours consumed by care-giving duties, additional stress on the individual and the family, etc.) of full-time care to a person diagnosed with AD or a similar disorder often go unrecognized.

In the case of AD, primary family caregivers whose relatives live in the community (as opposed to a long-term care facility) report spending an average of 60 hours per week on caregiving responsibilities, which is more than most people spend at a full-time job. And according to a recent, large-scale longitudinal project focusing on dementia patients and their family caregivers, the median length of in-home caregiving prior to nursing home placement is 6.5 years.

Of course, the burden associated with Alzheimer's disease is difficult to quantify solely in terms of time. As dementia progresses, caregivers become increasingly involved with self-care tasks such as bathing, dressing, and feeding. Moreover, safety becomes an increasing concern, and the incidence of problems such as patient depression, agitation and anxiety grows. Wandering is rated as the most stressful potential complication by caregivers, as it can occur unpredictably and thus require continuous monitoring.

Other stressors that develop as the disease progresses include family conflicts, strains on finances, changes in employment status and damage to one's self-concept. Evidence from the research suggests that caring for a relative diagnosed with AD or related disorders takes its toll on almost every facet of life. Most tragically, caregivers are powerless to stop or slow the progressive deterioration of the faculties of a loved one. Witnessing the decline, suffering, and death of a relative from dementia is among the most traumatic aspects of caregiving. It is therefore vitally important that specific interventions, social support groups and/or programs are designed and targeted to fit the needs of these caregivers.

The issues surrounding the care of individuals with AD will become increasingly critical as the Baby Boom generation approaches old age, a theme that figures prominently in research on the subject. Etters et al. estimate that in 2010 the number of persons with all forms of dementia surpassed 63 million worldwide, a figure that promises to grow as the global population continues to age. Research from Langa et al. also mentions that approximately 80 percent of people

with a dementia-related illness will be cared for at home by a family member. Thus, efforts to identify and reduce risks of excess caregiver burden constitute an important healthcare issue (Family Caregiver Alliance, 2006), an issue that has been studied for quite some time. As early as 1980, Zarit, Reever, and Bach-Petereson sought to better understand some of the characteristics that are associated with caregiver burden, and found that kinship ties (spouse, child, and siblings) are factors that can either moderate or exacerbate CB. Seeking to expand this area of research, Etters, et al. conducted a review of the literature to (a) identify current evidence of factors influencing dementia-related caregiver burden, (b) describe patient and caregiver characteristics associated with CB, and (c) describe evidence-based interventions designed to lessen the burden of caregiving. Etters et al. discovered through reviews of the literature that characteristics such as: gender, coping strategies, culture, and ethnicity all influence CB to some degree. The authors mention that providing effective interventions to reduce CB is a vital aspect in providing quality care to dementia patient-caregiver dyads.

Etters et al. used tools such as the Zarit Burden Interview (ZBI), Caregiver Strain Index (CSI), and the Screen for Caregiver burden (SCB) along with clinical data to help them predict those caregivers at risk or experiencing excessive burden. Multi-faceted (also known as multi-component) interventions targeting various phases of the caregiving experience demonstrated improvements in CB scores and outcomes in terms of coping skills, depression and delayed institutionalization for patients. The authors, therefore, call upon medical professionals to design and implement multicomponent interventions for caregivers of persons with dementia as a means of helping both patients with dementia and their respective caregivers.

Additional research from Connell et al. is significant in that it is part of a growing body of literature that both acknowledges the negative mental and physical health outcomes associated with caregiving and examines a broad range of positive outcomes from the caregiving experience. Some of these positive outcomes include enjoyment of the role, positive affect, feelings of satisfaction, a sense of well-being and role gain. However, Connell et al. recognizes that each individual case is different, and that each needs to be treated as unique. Therefore, Connell et al. conducted a study to (a) examine the physical and psychologi-

cal effects of providing care to a family member with dementia, (b) describe the factors that help determine the nature and magnitude of these effects (c) and to discuss several interventions designed to reduce the negative impact of this challenging role.

The findings from this study support the findings of Etters et al in that both intrinsic (internal to the individual) and extrinsic (external to the individual) factors are thought to shape the impact of the dementia experience. These factors include sociodemographic characteristics (e.g. gender, relationship to the patient, culture, race, and ethnicity), caregiver resources (e.g., coping skills, social support and availability of a companion animal), and personal characteristics (e.g., personality and health behaviors).

Due to the considerable variability in caregiver experiences, so-called "catch-all" interventions have proven elusive. Connell et al., for example, researched a vast array of social support programs, interventions and methods, all of which have been designed to alleviate caregiver burden. The findings of this research showed that virtually all programs have resulted in some level of success in achieving their goals, including high levels of caregiver satisfaction. Evidence shows, however, that there is no "single, easily implemented, and consistently effective method for eliminating the stress of caregiving."

Keeping this conclusion in mind, Connell et al. suggest that future caregiver interventions be developed according to the demographic characteristics and needs of the patient. Moreover, in the context of a highly cost-conscious health care system, more attention should be paid to determining the appropriate "dosage" of intervention required to produce the desired effect and, in the case of multicomponent interventions, which aspects of the intervention are most effective for certain subgroups of caregivers. Similarly, the "costs" for caregiver interventions should be documented and reported so that program planners can be better informed about the resources needed to replicate or adapt existing programs. In addition to personnel costs for staff hired to launch new programs, other budget considerations include staff training, program materials, recruitment efforts, and evaluation, to name just a few.

Evidence linking dementia caregiving to negative mental health outcomes among caregivers is compelling and consistent. Caregiving has been associated with increased levels of depressive symptoms and a higher prevalence of clinical depression and anxiety. Psychotropic drug use is also higher among caregivers than in non-caregivers.

Further research from NYU identified an important clinical question that has yet to be definitively answered regarding whether or not nursing home admission leads to fewer depressive symptoms and a lighter burden for caregivers. Similarly, the question of whether or not long-term counseling and support impacts the symptoms associated with caregiver burden remains open. Prior studies have shown that nursing home admission alone reduces caregiver burden and associated depression, but very little research has been conducted to test the impact and effects that counseling and support have in reducing caregiver burden and depression, as well as caregivers' desire to institutionalize.

With these questions in mind, Gaugler et al. from NYU conducted a study to determine whether counseling and support reduce the burden and depressive symptoms of spouse caregivers of patients with Alzheimer's disease during the transition to institutionalization. The aim of this study was to determine whether the availability of long-term counseling and support reduces burden (the emotional, psychological, physical, and emotional "load" of care provision) and depressive symptomatology across the institutionalization transition. The sample was composed of 406 spouses of persons with a clinical diagnosis of AD. Slightly more than 50 percent of participants were recruited through the NYU-ARDC, and the remaining participants were recruited through a number of channels, including local Alzheimer's Association chapters, physicians, public media announcements, and referring community providers. The researchers then designed a randomized, controlled trial of an enhanced counseling and support program for spouse caregivers of persons diagnosed with AD. Structured interviews were conducted at baseline, every 4 months for year 1, and every 6 months thereafter for up to 16 years.

The results showed that caregiver burden and depressive symptoms were significantly lower for caregivers who received treatment than they were for the control group, who received the usual care at the time of and after institutionalization. Furthermore, general stress and the patients' state of mind were found to be directly related to the caregiver's desire to institutionalize. This study calls to attention the fact that much of the prior research conducted has treated

nursing home admission merely as an endpoint, rather than as a period of transition. This study helps to better understand the importance of developing interventions designed to help and treat caregivers during and even beyond the patients' transition to institutionalization.

As the number of older adults in the population continues to grow, it is becoming increasingly important to identify and strengthen those resources that family caregivers and their patients rely on to handle these challenges. Stress and coping theories and related research suggest that certain caregiver resources, including higher levels of social support, cognitive appraisals of stressfulness and more adaptive coping responses are associated with lower levels of caregiver depression. Both cross-sectional and longitudinal observational studies suggest that improved social support and dampened stress appraisals are plausible mechanisms through which caregiver interventions might improve depression.

Literature on the institutionalization of patients with dementia has generally not considered possible effects associated with the quality of care provided by caregivers, which can range from highly professional to potentially harmful and/or abusive. Sun et al. sought to understand the role of quality of care in mediating between caregiving stressors and caregiver desire to institutionalize a patient with dementia. They used a sample of 612 family caregivers from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, all of whom were drawn from the baseline data of the Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health (REACH II) project.

The results showed that caregivers' potentially harmful behaviors (PHB) were positively related to caregiver desire to institutionalize their care recipients. Specifically, PHB was found to mediate the relationship between caregiving stressors and caregivers' desire to institutionalize (DTI) in the Caucasian and Latino groups.

The obvious next step is to determine how to minimize these PHBs. Gilten, et al. illustrates the significance of not only providing care for caregivers, but also the importance of maintaining that care. Results from their comparative study concluded that caregivers in the intervention group at 6 months reported improved skills, less need for help providing assistance, and fewer behavioral occurrences compared to caregivers in the control group. At 12 months, caregiver affect improved, new caregiving skills were maintained and overall behavior improved.

Yet another issue that must be addressed is whether and when to institutionalize their person with AD. This decision is complicated by social circumstances, personal preferences and cultural values. Furthermore, this difficult decision is greatly affected by caregiver stress, with higher levels being linked to greater likelihood of placing persons with dementia in nursing homes. Several studies have found that caregiver support programs can substantially alleviate caregiver burden, stress, and depressive symptoms and thereby delay institutionalization and associated costs.

Caregivers often seek advice from their primary care providers about the timing or need for NHA. Giving advice on this difficult decision could be done with better accuracy and confidence with information and tools. Research has found that Alzheimer's patients' caregivers tend to consider future institutionalization earlier than families providing care for other illnesses (Gallagher-Thompson et al. 2011).

This endorsement of thinking and planning for institutional care has been termed "desire to institutionalization" and has emerged as a powerful prognostic indicator of future nursing home admission. Additional research has shown that several factors influence dementia caregivers' desire to institutionalize. Some of these factors include demographics (e.g. caregiver employment, financial resources, and older care recipient age), as well as psychosocial and care recipient factors (e.g. caregiver burden, care recipient problem behaviors).

Spitznagel, et al. conducted a study to answer the question of why some caregivers desire to institutionalize (DI), and why some caregivers do not desire to institutionalize (No DI). They used 72 caregivers of dementia patients who completed baseline assessment measures as part of a caregiver intervention study. All caregivers resided with the care recipient and were providing a minimum of 4 hours of daily care for at least 6 months. They designed a scale called the *Desire to Institutionalize Scale* composed of a 7-item self-report inventory. This scale quantifies stages in considering nursing home placement, ranging from discussion with family or friends about placement to actually applying for placement in a care facility.

The results showed that caregivers who desired institutionalization (DI) had significantly higher burden, greater dementia knowledge, more family dysfunction, and decreased social support compared with caregivers who had no desire to institutionalize

(No DI).

While most caregivers realize the challenges associated with dementia and accept the need to place their charges in nursing homes at some point, the transition can still be difficult. Klug et al. conducted a study with the Dementia Care Services Project in North Dakota to see how caregivers in general feel about institutionalization. The study used scales to understand the caregivers' inclination to institutionalize and the point at which they are most likely to institutionalize. The findings of the research showed that caregivers admit their intention to place but balk at specifying a specific time, citing increased stress associated with such thinking. The decision to place a relative in a nursing home is complex and difficult emotionally for patients, caregivers, and families. It is a decision that impacts relationships, finances, and the health and well-being of the patient and others.

In summary, with the aging of the population, Alzheimer's disease will affect many people. We must not forget the family members who will provide daily care for these very difficult patients under extremely trying circumstances. Implementation of specific interventions targeted at caregivers, has the potential to be of great benefit for the many families who will be affected by AD or similar illnesses.

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Policy as a Help and Hindrance to Economic Growth
Nicole Talbot, University of Utah

Utah generally prides itself on being a business-friendly state, but such business-friendly policies do not extend to all sectors of the economy, particularly those that regulate the sale and shipment of alcoholic beverages. Some local businesses, for instance, have reportedly struggled to stay alive as a result of the local liquor laws. To many, it seems as though Utah is struggling to find a balance between staying true to its conservative beliefs and providing its residents with the freedom to produce and consume alcohol. A large portion of the debate surrounding Utah's liquor laws seems to be focused on the negative impact of tight regulation on businesses, regardless of where a given business falls in the odyssey that begins with production and ends with consumption of alcohol.

The effects of said laws, however, are not as simple as one might think. Abiding by the rules yields both positive and negative outcomes for small local businesses. This paper seeks to examine some examples of how these regulations have not only imposed hardships on local businesses, but also have served as the impetus for owners' developing sustainable practices--forced ingenuity, if you will. Though it may seem difficult for some to navigate through the restrictions Utah presents, it's not impossible. This paper argues that restrictive laws, whether on production, sale or shipping, help lead a community towards a more self-reliant and self-sustained place, effectively creating demand for local products and giving rise to specialized growth.

POLICY AS HINDRANCE TO SMALL BUSINESSES

Many business owners throughout the Salt Lake Valley see liquor laws as barriers that limit potential economic growth. Scott Evans, owner of Pago restaurant, has told reporters that "we need responsible changes to the laws that allow for innovation and help grow businesses" (Loftin). Obtaining a Utah liquor license is seen as a daunting task for any prospective business owner, especially for those who want to produce their own liquor or beer. Consider, for example, the hoops David Cole had to jump through when he opened Epic Brewery, a micro brewery near downtown Salt Lake City. Before Cole could get his hands on the proverbial golden ticket that is a local liquor license, Utah regulators required him to construct the restaurant in its entirety. In other words, the state forced Cole to invest large amounts of capital without any real assurance that he'd ultimately be given a license. This type of significant financial risk is an example of how some regulations deter possible growth in Utah.

The story of R.B. Edgar, co-owner of Mixx (known formerly as the Trapp Door), further illustrates the resistance that businesses have to push through to become successful in Salt Lake. In Edgar's case, this resistance was such that it ultimately made him rethink his business approach. According to the Department of Alcohol Beverage Control, the total number of licenses allowed by law is one per 7,850 people in the state, a figure that effectively limits the number of licenses available for new businesses. In 2010, for example, the state ran out of bar permits. Furthermore, the initial fee ($2,750) and application fee ($300) can serve as deterrents to entrepreneurs as well. Fortunately, the owners of Mixx found a way around not having a bar license that allowed them to stay in business. They applied for a reception center license which "allows the storage, sale, service, and consumption of liquor, wine, heavy beer, and beer for

banquet and event functions on the premises of small banquet and event venues that want to sell, offer for sale, or furnish alcohol on their premises" (DABC 2012). Of course, not all establishments are willing, able or sufficiently creative to take advantage of such loopholes. Salt Lake City's economic growth is seen by some as stunted by not allowing small businesses to reach their full potential.

EXPANDING IN SPITE OF RESTRAINTS

Owners of clubs and breweries aren't the only ones affected by Utah's stringent liquor laws. The transport of liquor over Utah's borders, for example, is strictly prohibited. And given that beer and other malt beverage products that exceed 3.2% alcohol by weight or 4.0% by volume are considered "liquor" according to the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, more beverages fall under this umbrella than would in other states.

This shipping regulation, while burdensome, effectively stimulates demand for local goods as services. If someone is unable to import beer from out-of-state, he or she is more likely to turn to a local source. As local demand rises, local employment has the potential to rise as well. Liquor laws, in other words, not only create a market for local goods but also keep jobs and capital from leaving the region. Restrictions, therefore are a trade-off. They may, in some cases, eliminate the number of choices, but they also help sustain a community. Keeping jobs from being outsourced is especially important in an age when business owners are increasingly dependent on cheap labor overseas.

In addition to restrictions on shipping liquor and other items, Utah regulates when and to whom a business can sell alcohol. In the past, Utah categorized many alcohol-friendly establishments to function as "private clubs" and required that customers be members of the "club" in question in order to get a drink. In reality, these "private clubs" were little more than functioning bars and restaurants creatively navigating their way through rigid local liquor laws. Such "clubs" typically required a minimal fee to become an annual member or offered temporary, one-time memberships for less. Many a University of Utah student likely remembers spending a few dollars for a one day membership to Fiddler's Elbow just so he or she could watch football and drink a beer on a Sunday afternoon.

As of 2009, however, Utah's liquor laws no longer pay lip-service to the somewhat laughable notion of "private clubs." With this law out of the way, clubs, bars and lounges are now permitted to charge a small entrance fee for any live entertainment or special events. Eliminating obstacles like membership fees has the potential to promote economic development amongst local businesses.

Utah laws also regulate when one would want to purchase alcohol, including high percentage beer. These items are most difficult to acquire on Sundays as all State Liquor Stores are closed. But as of late, one of Utah's local breweries has found out a way around the stringent hours. Epic Brewing Company's inventive owners created a small business within their business. The Tap-Less Tap Room, a tiny, six-seat sandwich shop, offers beer seven days a week, provided the customer is also willing to buy food as well. While Epic's business within a business model probably isn't what most people think of when they hear "economic development," it nonetheless serves as an example of growth within complex structural constraints.

EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION AND MANUFACTURING

The prohibition on shipping high point beer or alcohol across Utah's boarders has provided the perfect impetus for some new companies to open up shop. As seen in the local beer industry, brewmasters are able to reap financial benefits due to reduced transportation costs. Furthermore, many local brewers have embraced the "local" aspect of their product in the form of growing their own inputs, such as barley and hops, whenever possible. Relying on local materials and selling products in-house lowers transportation emissions, reducing the carbon footprint of local businesses. Salt Lake City's Uinta Brewing Company serves an excellent example of a small, efficient business that has flourished within the shipping regulations. Uinta's businesses practices and mission statement embrace and acknowledge that "becoming more efficient while reducing waste and conserving energy is an on-going process and a challenge we feel is worth the effort". Endeavors like these, if mimicked, can fundamentally change how businesses operate, leading the local industry as a whole toward a more sustainable modus operandi.

CONCLUSION

Some establishments are already on board with Uintah Brewing Company's mission. The Hive Winery of Layton, just north of Salt Lake City, is one of the regions newest establishments that produces and ships wine made from locally grown products. Their production relies on the local suppliers of fruit and honey. This partnership between local companies illustrates the benefits associated with running a small, efficient business by cutting out unnecessary transportation costs.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF BUYING LOCALLY

There have been many studies conducted to see what the immediate economic response of buying local has on particular communities. Iowa State Economist Dave Swenson demonstrated that if Iowans' purchasing just 25 percent of their produce from a local source would create $139.9 million in new economic output and more than 2,000 new jobs in the state. Local purchases are a powerful tool when considering how quickly they can impact communities. Furthermore, local food advocate Sarah DeWeerdt notes that "even a small shift in spending can have a big impact because of what economists term the local multiplier effect. Every time money changes hands within a community, it boosts the community's overall income and level of economic activity." Local liquor laws have effectively made Utah's Breweries and Wineries into some of the most enthusiastic supporters of the shift toward local produce and away from imported materials.

The development and prosperity seen in Utah's local markets have the potential to encourage other entrepreneurs to start up locally driven businesses as well. Existing businesses have put in place support systems that emphasize the importance of buying locally. Local First Utah, an advocacy organization that functions as a key cog in said support systems is especially geared towards creating public awareness that local business owners live here, do their hiring here, operate their stores and offices here, buy most of their supplies and products here, pay all their taxes here, and spend their profits here. They obviously contribute far more to our local economies than do chains. Unsurprisingly, Local First Utah has found some of its most strident supporters in the ranks of Utah's local beer and wine producers.

CONCLUSION

Although common sense holds as a self-evident truth the notion that government involvement in industry limits economic growth, in reality, the relationship between the two is much more complicated than that. In Utah's case, restrictive liquor laws on production, transportation and sale of alcoholic beverages have given rise to a vibrant, innovative and undeniably unique sector of the local economy. As a result, local businesses are able to reduce their carbon footprints, and the region as a whole benefits from sustained economic growth and employment.

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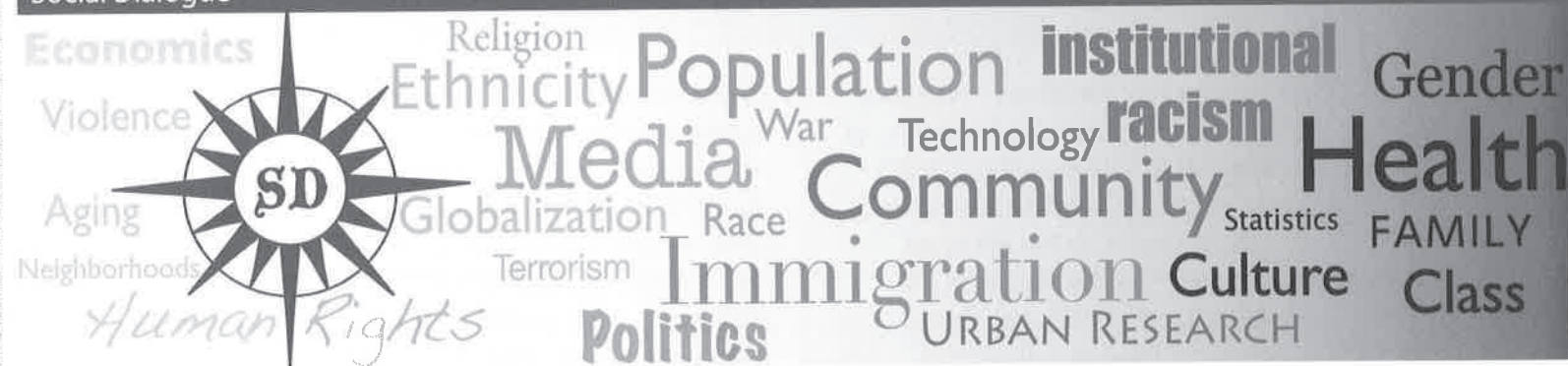
Mandatory Voting: a Catalyst for Electoral Reform?

Yesenia Valenzuela, University of Utah

The United States of America was established as a constitutional republic and a representative democracy. This system, however, only functions well when voters choose to participate in elections. According to the information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau only 131,407,000 of 229,945,000 of eligible voters participated in the 2008 Presidential election. The fact that barely half of Americans exercise their right to vote in any given election is slightly incongruent with our demand for proper representation of our constitutional rights, transparency in campaigning, and ethical functionality in American politics. One possible solution to this incongruency is mandatory voting. This paper will examine mandatory voting in major elections as a means of enhancing the integrity of the election process, reducing the crippling polarization our government is currently experiencing and promoting equal representation of voters regardless of gender, socioeconomic status or race.

Electoral Integrity and Voter Participation

Why is it important to enhance the integrity of the current voting system in the United States? To answer this we must examine the reasons why the American public is not voting. There are various reasons as to why people chose not to vote. Such explanations include a belief their vote will not influence the outcome of the election, a desire to voice their dissatisfaction with specific candidates and/or the government as a whole by abstaining from voting or voter suppression in the form of onerous ID requirements or restrictions on early voting. In any case, the decision not to vote serves as evidence that the integrity of the electoral process is being challenged by the American public. Additionally, the choice not to vote creates a "free rider" problem. In other words, those who choose not to vote are enjoying representation in government despite doing nothing to contribute to the electoral process.

Of the aforementioned reasons for not voting, the notion that a single vote doesn't matter is perhaps the most difficult to address. Political scientist Anthony Downs articulated the paradox of voting (also known as the Downs paradox) in which he explains that people choose not to vote, "because the probability that any individual voter can alter the outcome of an election is effectively zero... so if voting imposes any cost, in terms of time or hassle, a perfectly rational person would conclude it's not worth doing" (Orszag 2012). Although this perspective is eminently rational, implications of its widespread adoption are potentially disastrous to any democratic institution.

The notion that individual votes are effectively worthless is perhaps most acute in presidential elections, as the only consequential votes are cast by the Electoral College. It only takes 270 electoral votes to elect a president and said votes are almost entirely dependent on the predominant political party in a given state. Consider, as an example, the utter futility of voting for President Obama in Utah in 2012. Because Mitt Romney was all but guaranteed to carry the state by a wide margin, Democratic voters would have had just as much say in the outcome had they stayed home.

Closely related to these issues is the question of whose interests are best served by widespread voter non-participation. Amongst a disinterested body politic, the elite opinion-shapers wield power that is disproportionate to their small numbers. In

other words, "there are serious questions about how legitimate a government is when the vast majority of citizens have not elected it. ("The case for," 2007)

As mentioned above, American citizens may also show their dissatisfaction with the electoral process or the government itself by choosing not to vote. As Campbell suggests, "We may expect more voters to be alienated from unresponsive politicians, and thus abstain from voting as the distance of ideological preferences between the polarized elites and the centrist public increases" (Campbell, 2006). Further illustrating this point is the widespread frustration with Democrats and Republicans alike. According to the Pew Research Center, 51% of Americans hold an unfavorable view of Republicans, and 45% hold an unfavorable view of Democrats. (Pew Research, 2013) These results show the frustration with both parties, yet the political landscape remains offers little choice between the traditional red and blue ideologies.

Lastly, when analyzing the integrity of the electoral process, one must also mention a spate of new state-level legislation that was passed with the implicit purpose of disenfranchising voters. Designed to target the virtually non-existent issue of voter fraud, such laws effectively made voting a specified privilege for certain individuals and not a fundamental right for all. According to Lui (2012) "Protecting the integrity of our elections is the rationale Republicans give for the cynically restrictive voter ID laws they've enacted in Pennsylvania and elsewhere... but if we truly cared about the integrity of elections, we should ensure that they reflect the will of all eligible voters."

CHANGING THE AMERICAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

As it stands now, a disproportionate amount of campaign cash and energy are wasted on negative attack ads or the sort of single, emotionally-charged issues that attract the attention of politically aware voters. This would not happen as much if all eligible voters were required to vote and so-called wedge issues were unnecessary. Mandatory voting is hardly unusual. In fact, 32 countries have or have had a system of compulsory voting (Quintelier et al 2011). Of these countries, there have been various laws regarding enforcement of mandatory voting such as monetary sanctions of one form or another for those who fail to actively cast their voting ballot as well as

denial of public goods or services that are provided by the government. These enforcement measures vary in each country, but they all serve the basic function of incentivizing citizens to fulfill their civic obligation by participating in representative democracy. One country that has been successful in increasing voter participation via compulsory voting laws is Australia. Prior to 1924, voter turnout was typically less than 60 percent. After mandatory voting laws were implemented, however, voter turnout increased to well over 90 percent. Most importantly, mandatory voting enjoys wide support amongst the country's citizens, a fact that has made some American political scientists jealous. "If we had a system like the Australian one in place in our primaries, where turnout often hits ten percent, as well as for our general elections, we would have fewer extreme candidates nominated, fewer divisive issues exploited, and more honesty in our debates and deliberation." (Ornstein & Stoilov, 2011).

Mandatory voting could go a long way towards revamping an American system where primaries start years before the actual election and polarizing differences are increasingly emphasized. The current system rewards extreme rhetoric and hinders compromise. Equally problematic is the fact that, despite losing, the minority party sometimes remains more concerned with placating its base than it is with changing its policy to reflect the changing views of the American electorate.

Alan Abramowitz has extensively analyzed the obviously increasing polarization in America and come to the conclusion that voters are deeply divided when it comes to race, geography, ideologies, and economic issues. Mandatory voting has the potential to bring out more independent voters by focusing on issues that affect us all instead of poignant issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and gun rights.

Sadly, the current powers that be are very much aware of the fact that a relatively small number of eligible voters are interested in participating the political process. However, there is no getting away from the fact that laws passed at both the state and national levels affect everyone, even the politically disinterested. Furthermore, political non-participation can doom even popular policy. Princeton-based political scientist Martin Gilens, for example, argues that policies benefiting the poor are far less likely to pass Congress than other legislation,

even when as much as 80 percent of the public supports them" (Matthews, 2012). Similarly, the non-voting electorate effectively enables the most extreme elements of either party. In other words, "hardcore partisan believers are over-represented; independents and moderates are under-represented; if the full range of voters actually voted, our political leaders, who are exquisitely attuned followers, would go where the votes are: away from the extremes and they would become more responsive to the younger, poorer and less educated Americans who don't currently vote." (Matthews, 2012)

A shift in how we view the act of voting is vital for our progressive growth as a country. Mandatory voting would help accomplish this shift by increasing voter participation, promoting political knowledge and ensuring equality in the representative democracy. Like public schools, paying taxes, and serving on jury duty, voting could be viewed as a civic responsibility that Americans owe to one another.

In conclusion, the fact that it is easier to buy a gun in the United States than it is to vote should give us all pause. Mandatory voting can diminish the power we have given to right- and left-wing extremists, freeing the government to do its job in a way that benefits all. Furthermore, mandatory voting will strengthen the mandates of elected candidates by ensuring that they are chosen by all voters, rather than a vocal minority. The choice to vote should not be viewed as an option or a privilege. Mandatory voting can enhance the integrity of the electoral process.

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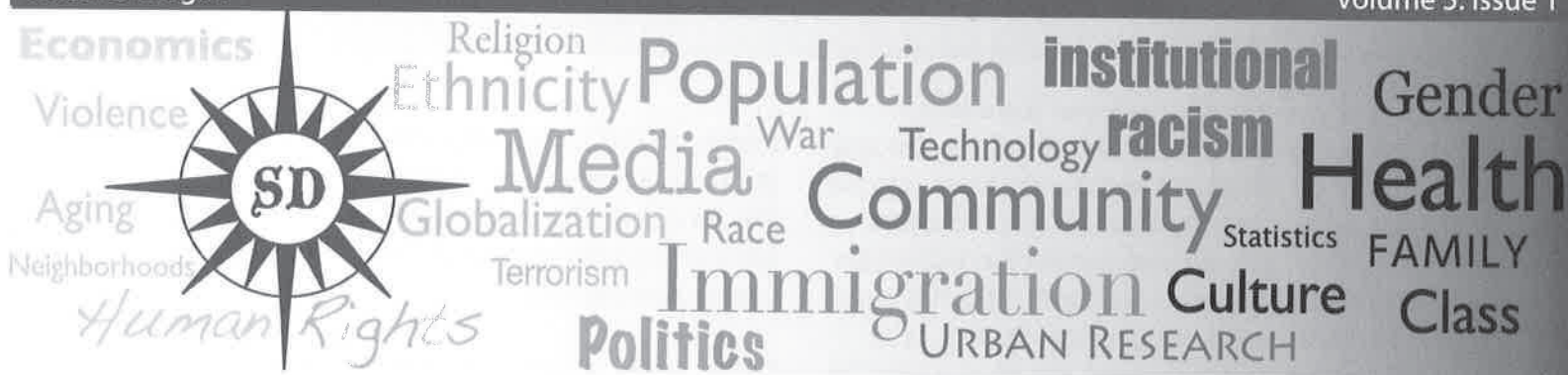Ornstein, N., & Stoilov, V. (2011). Perspectives: Should mandatory voting laws be implemented in the united states? Social Education, 75(1), 12-16. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/854552182?accountid=14677

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Born This Way: Queer Representation in Rock 'n' Roll
By Coco James

To know a society, one must know its popular culture. For 20th and 21st century Americans, rock and roll as pop culture has revealed us, defined us, and changed us. The evolution of rock and roll has always been a social mirror, disclosing our changing prejudices and preferences. Rock and roll also provides voice to the voiceless, and marginalized people speak their piece through lyrics. However, the representation of LGBTQ individuals in lyrics has evolved slowly in rock's history and has only recently come into its own in mainstream music. This paper will contextualize that representation, focusing primarily on analyzing song lyrics within the framework of social acceptance of queer individuals and the perceived legitimacy of queer relationships.

It must be noted that every artist presented in this paper was or is commercially successful. All had contracts with record labels and all sold albums within mainstream society. We assume that the lyrics written and sung by these artists became part of their own pop culture, not only representing it but also influencing it. While usually edgy to a certain degree, mainstream rock and roll artists are still overseen by record labels that want their artists to appeal to as broad an audience as possible. Even so, lyrics are a good litmus test for social attitudes, and the way these artists handled their own sexuality and the sexuality of others becomes a soundtrack to the gay rights timeline.

When rock music first emerged, rock musicians looked to blues, rhythm and blues, and jazz musicians as their worthy predecessors. While many of these artists were adept at addressing racial

inequality during a time of contentious race relations, heteronormativity was still the order of the day and queer artists actively hid their sexuality in order to be acceptable to American audiences. Johnnie Ray, for example, was a very popular singer and songwriter in the 1950s whose sexuality was scrutinized publicly after he was arrested for soliciting sex from a man (Stephens 2005). Throughout his career, Ray covered many songs written in the 1930s and 40s. He usually chose light-hearted songs whose lyrics embodied the social construction of male/female relationships during the early 20th century. Consider Walking My Baby Back Home, a popular song written by Roy Turk and performed by Ray, whose lyrics do not reasonably represent the desires of a homosexual male.

And we stop for a while and she gives me a smile
And cuddles her cheek to my chest
And we start in to pet and that's when I get
Her powder all over my vest
(Turk 1930)

These idealistic, light-hearted lyrics show what was considered valuable and appropriate in love relationships. The man in this song was chivalrously walking his lady home, stopping to let her rest and accepting a chaste form of physical intimacy. Both are dressed appropriately –she in powder, he in a suit– and one can fairly see this ideal heterosexual (probably white) couple. In sharp contrast, The Little White Cloud That Cried, written by Ray in 1951, speaks of a person with deep anguish.

I went walkin' down by the river
Feeling very sad inside
When all at once I saw in the sky
The little white cloud that cried
He told me he was very lonesome
And no one cared if he lived or died
And said sometimes the thunder and lightning
Would make all the little clouds hide
(Ray 1951)

These lyrics much more accurately reflect the lived experience of a gay man in a very heteronormative world. The loneliness and fear in the words is reminiscent of gay memoirs and personal narratives. Many queer individuals feared the consequences of being "outed" to their friends and family, and looming fear can be heard in these lyrics. Johnnie Ray was writing and performing at a time when homosexual acts between consenting adults was considered criminal in all states, and homosexuality was still listed as a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association. Given that, it is not surprising that Ray's lyrics are so shrouded in metaphor that interpreting them as the lament of a broken homosexual heart is probable at best. The lyrics ring true when read that way, but we will never know if that is how he actually intended them. Ray was in complete public denial of his sexuality out of necessity.

As rock and roll developed and became cutting edge, some artists became freer with their gendered presentation on stage, regardless of their sexual orientation. Little Richard is notable as the pioneer in ambiguous gender presentation. However, even while he utilized flamboyant showmanship and dramatic high vocals that were considered effeminate, his lyrics remained assuredly heterosexual.

Got a girl named Sue, she knows just what to do...
Got a girl named Daisy, she almost drives me crazy
She knows how to love me, yes indeed
Boy, I don't know what you're doin' to me
(Little Richard 1955)

Many of Little Richard's lyrics were unabashedly sexual (particularly the alternate lyrics of "Tutti Frutti, good booty), and many of his songs reference women by name. The argument could be made that while presenting an ambiguous gendered

performance, Little Richard used his suggestive, pointed lyrics to continually reassure a generally homophobic audience that he was indeed straight.

Well, long tall Sally, she's built for speed
She got everything the Uncle John need
Oh baby, yes, baby
Oooh baby, havin' me some fun tonight, yeah
(Little Richard 1956)

Over the course of Little Richard's long career, there were many advances in the gay rights movement including the decriminalization of homosexual acts by many states, the Stonewall riots, Harvey Milk's appointment to public service in San Francisco, and the beginnings of legislation prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation. While Little Richard himself is proudly "ex-gay", the gender-bending entertainment he popularized lived on in Elton John, Freddie Mercury, and David Bowie as the gay rights movement marched on through the 1980s. All of these men identified as bisexual or gay at some point in their lives, yet all chose to use either female pronouns in their lyrics or eschew the use of gendered pronouns at all. In Elton John's case, his lyrics became more gender-neutral after he came out of the closet and as social acceptance of gay relationships grew, but even he stops short of utilizing male pronouns in obviously romantic ways. However, while social acceptance for a man singing a love song about a man was still many years off, growing tolerance and support allowed these artists to be successful even while breaking previously rigid gender norms.

Gender pronouns are some of the most obvious and controversial words in rock music. The insistence that gender pronouns be heteronormative is strong. This becomes particularly noticeable when hearing a song covered by a singer of a gender other than that of the original songwriter. Alex Blaze, a blogger for The Bilerico Project (the largest LGBTQ group blog on the internet) calls it "straight-washing" and poses this question, "Why is it that gender is the area that singers are more than excited to change to match their sexual orientation (or, more accurately, willing to change to keep the lyrics heterosexual)?" (Blaze 2010) Examples of this are everywhere, perhaps most awkwardly in Big Yellow Taxi written by Joni Mitchell in 1970 and covered by Counting Crows in

2002. (Mitchell 1970) Particularly bad rewording changed "and a big yellow taxi took away my old man" to "and a big yellow taxi took my girl away." Blaze also points out a peculiarly heteronormative concern in Then I Kissed Her, the Beach Boys' cover of Then He Kissed Me by The Crystals. (The Crystals 1963) The Beach Boys changed not only the gender pronouns but also the subject and object in order to uphold the socially accepted active role of men and passive role of women.

When we danced I held her tight
Then I walked her home that night
And all the stars were shining bright
And then I kissed her
(The Beach Boys 1965)

A direct pronoun switch would read a little differently:

When we danced she held me tight
And when she walked me home that night
All the stars were shining bright
And then she kissed me

When read with a heteronormative bias, this becomes unbearably passive in regards to a male singer. A woman is not supposed to hold a man tight and walk him home as if she is bigger and stronger and he needs protecting. He is not supposed to wish and hope she will be his – he is supposed to make her his. The Beach Boys' change of lyrics represents a conscious, deliberate conformity to the gender norms of the day. Heteronormativity demanded that not only the ambiguity of sexual preference be solved by changing pronouns, but also any inferences that gender roles were not in line with social norms.

A relaxing of these rigid norms began during the 1960s. Tolerance for gay individuals increased and gay rights began to be addressed politically through the overturning of anti-sodomy laws, the first significant gay rights demonstration protesting discrimination in the military, and the organization of the first known gay student organization at Columbus University. The Stonewall Riots of 1969 are generally credited as a turning point in the modern gay rights movement in the United States. The 1970s saw the beginnings of acceptance of gay culture in mainstream society, as evidenced by the popularity of The Village People and other disco groups that

facilitated an awareness of gay culture. By the 1980s, gay rights were becoming part of public discourse, particularly after the AIDS epidemic. Americans saw a government that appeared not to care about the widespread nature of the disease, presumably because it most often affected gay men. The 1991 death of beloved Queen singer Freddie Mercury due to AIDS helped engender a measure of social support for AIDS research and prevention.

Social support for gay rights continued through the 1990s. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was instituted in 1993 and while the effect has been questionable in regards to gay rights, it was intended to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military. Public dialogue surrounding queer issues was increasing, and while backlash was not far away –as proven when Matthew Shepard was beaten and left to die on a fence in 1998– many Americans were thinking of homosexuality and gay rights in ways they hadn't before. This new consciousness predictably appears in song lyrics. In 1994, the band Green Day chose to play with the issue of gender fluidity on their third album with the release of the song Basket Case:

I went to a shrink
To analyze my dreams
She says it's lack of sex
That's bringin' me down
I went to a whore
HE said my life's a bore
So quit my whining
'Cause it's bringing HER down
(Green Day 1994)

Interestingly, the emphasis on the mixed pronouns in reference to the same person (a person seen specifically for sex, at that) comes from the Green Day album cover inscribed with their lyrics. The members of Green Day, all heterosexual musicians, did not want their fans to miss the enigmatic use of gendered pronouns. This represents a change in attitude, both in society at large and in rock and roll. That a very popular and highly visible band such as Green Day expressed such fluidity without fear (and were allowed to by their label) shows gathering acceptance. While other straight bands had certainly expressed sympathy through lyrics, Green Day's visibility and popularity make Basket Case notable. Green Day themselves did not claim a

social justice message, but they were also not worried about appearing bisexual. These lyrics indicate that acceptance for queer individuals and relationships was beginning to gather steam in the early and mid-90s.

Also during the early 90s, Melissa Ethridge released her incredibly popular album Yes I Am. The title was intended to accompany her recent coming out as a lesbian and lay to rest the intense speculation surrounding her personal life. Ethridge is very active in the gay rights movement and her sexuality is no secret, yet she has always chosen to eliminate gender pronouns in an effort to make her music accessible to everyone. At times the obvious omission of a gender pronoun produces awkward repetitions but in general, Ethridge handles this parameter beautifully. A common practice for her is to write to "you" instead of about "her". Her lyrics are incredibly intimate, heartfelt ballads from one person to another. Even while being accessible to straight individuals, many of her lyrics speak to the lived experience of queer individuals as they navigate a still-hostile society.

They both feel it when they kiss
And it breaks her heart the way it's breaking his
Another night pretending nothing's wrong
But they both know that she's already gone
He's holding onto yesterday but he knows she can't
live this way
And there's certain things a man just can't control
Like the distance in her eyes, like the truth he can't
deny
And the heartache that's about to take it's toll
Anyone who's ever been there and survived has come
to know
The moving on is in the letting go
(Ethridge 1992)

These brilliant lyrics can apply to any love relationship that is falling apart. However, they become particularly poignant when read thinking of the countless queer individuals who were in loving straight relationships as they came to terms with their own sexuality. Ethridge talks about this in terms of survival, and many queer individuals speak of their own experiences that way.

The legalization of gay marriage in a few states and the overturning of all anti-sodomy laws by the Supreme Court in the early 2000s continued both social acceptance of gay rights and the prevalence

and visibility of queer artists. More and more, music artists across the spectrum of sexual orientation are expressing support for the movement, both in person and in lyrics. Hip-hop and rap were notable exceptions until recently.

If I was gay
I would think hip-hop hates me
Have you read the YouTube comments lately?
'Man, that's gay'
Gets dropped on the daily
(Macklemore 2012)

However, a recent and very surprising announcement came from hip-hop artist Frank Ocean, indicating he had fallen in love with a man at the age of 19. This love had been unrequited but very important to Ocean, and he addressed it publically in 2012. Rumors about Ocean's sexuality were flying due to his use of male pronouns in a few songs on his album *Channel Orange*. Fans were shocked when Ocean's lyrics changed from these in *Novacane*:

Sink full of dishes pacin' in the kitchen, cocaine for
breakfast, yikes
Bed full of women, flip on a tripod, little red light on
shootin' I'm feelin' like
Stanley Kubrick, this is some visionary shit
Been tryna film pleasure with my eyes wide shut but it
keeps on movin'
I blame it on the model broad with the Hollywood
smile
Stripper booty with the rack like wow, I'll never forget
ya
(Ocean 2011)

to these in Bad Religion:

This unrequited love
To me it's nothing but
A one-man cult
And cyanide in my Styrofoam cup
I could never make him love me
Never make him love me
It's a bad religion
To be in love with someone
Who could never love you
(Ocean, Bad Religion 2012)
Comparing these two sets of lyrics is fascinating in the

context of their genre. The misogyny in Novacane is not unusual in hip-hop and Bad Religion is a startling contrast. Other artists have also shown that the insistent heteronormativity of hip-hop is changing. Consider Ben by Lion:

The Bible was wrong this time
Gay is OK
The No 1 thing a rapper shouldn't say
I said it anyway
(Lion 2012)

These lyrics are indicative of broader social acceptance of gay individuals, even in the hypermasculine holdouts of hip-hop and rap. In the years since the 2008 Proposition 8 debacle in California, social support for gay rights has skyrocketed. Many straight artists have come out (no pun intended) very firmly in support of queer individuals, using the strongest of terms in their lyrics. Consider Born This Way by Lady Gaga and Same Love by Macklemore:

There's nothin' wrong with lovin' who you are
She said, 'cause He made you perfect, babe
So hold your head up, girl, and you'll go far
Listen to me when I say
I'm beautiful in my way
'Cause God makes no mistakes
I'm on the right track, baby
I was born this way
(Lady Gaga 2011)

For those that like the same sex had the characteristics
The right-wing conservatives think it's a decision
And you can be cured with some treatment and religion
Man-made, rewiring of a pre-disposition
Playing God
Ahh nah, here we go
America the brave
Still fears what we don't know
And God loves his children it's somehow forgotten
(Macklemore 2012)

These two songs both make reference to God and morality in a way that supports gay rights. Invoking God in this debate has typically been to

denounce homosexuality, not uphold it. Lion's lyrics, along with those of Lady Gaga and Macklemore, show how social support for gay rights has expanded exponentially in the last several years. Artists are no longer hiding behind ambiguity and allusion – the sea has indeed changed in social acceptance, and this change is reflected in song lyrics from pop to rap. Although LGBTQ rights remain a hot-button political issue, the tide has turned in popular culture and it is certain that music lyrics will continue to reflect that change. Social cohesion is on the horizon, quite possibly sooner rather than later. Lady Gaga shows us the possibilities when she says:

No matter gay, straight, or bi
Lesbian, transgendered life
I'm on the right track, baby
I was born this way

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Author Bios

Michelle Densley, a Sociology major, has been working in the healthcare field since 1998 and is thus well acquainted with the benefits and disadvantages of the American healthcare system. Michelle currently works as a senior compliance officer for the University of Utah and is excited to see how the changes that comprise the PPACA will help produce a better healthcare product and help Americans lead longer, healthier lives. She credits Bruce Rigby for kindling her interest in Sociology.

Tyler Yagi just finished his junior year at the University of Utah. An accomplished student-athlete, Tyler is a three-year starter for the baseball team and was named tournament MVP en route to leading the Utes to the MWC title in 2009. His academic interests include healthcare policy, demography and aging. Tyler is pursing a degree in Health, Society and Policy in hopes of one day working in hospital administration.

Nicole Talbot is currently seeking degrees in Environmental and Sustainability Studies and Geography. Native to the Salt Lake valley, she has a strong connection to its natural and urban beauty. In 2010, she made a personal commitment to educate and empower herself in order to promote sustainability within the valley she loves. Nicole has strived to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom by volunteering at the Utah Museum of Natural History and participating in community restoration events. As the recipient of the E. Rich Brewer Scholarship, she hopes to continue to make a difference within her community.

Yesenia Valenzuela is a second-generation American and the first in her family to pursue a college education. Yesenia has Associate's degrees in General Studies and Paralegal Studies from SLCC, and she is working on a degree in Political Science major at the University of Utah. Her interests encompass a wide variety of hot-button political and sociological issues including immigration, racial discrimination and voting behavior. She hopes to one day make a difference in these areas by working for some sort of government advocacy organization.

Coco James recently completed her BA in Sociology and plans to enroll in the University of Utah's Sociology graduate program in August of 2013. Coco has become a fixture in the Sociology Department since transferring from Salt Lake Community College in 2011. In the last two years, she has worked as a teacher's assistant, a lab instructor and as the Department's Peer Advisor. Additionally, she has served as the Secretary, Membership Chair and Conference Coordinator of the Utah Academy of Arts and Sciences. Coco's tireless work earned her the George M. Coray Award for meritorious contributions to the field of Sociology and service to the Department of Sociology. Her research interests include sexuality (particularly LGBTQ issues), religion and the presentation of social issues in art.

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