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Three Studies of Psychopathology and Distress Among Privileged Groups

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Three Studies of Psychopathology and Distress Among Privileged Groups

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James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, 2017

ABSTRACT

Sociological studies of mental health have traditionally focused on the problems of the underprivileged. In this dissertation, I examine facets of psychopathology and stress among privileged groups. The first study asks whether and why anxiety has been rising across cohorts of college students, who are privileged relative to individuals with lower educational attainment. Through interviews with 12 long-tenured psychotherapists who have primarily served college students, I examine five hypotheses about why anxiety has risen. Therapists' observations support four of the five hypotheses. I also find that helicopter parenting and social media create distinct problems for younger cohorts. The second study asks whether privileged students are more likely than their less privileged peers to pursue a party pathway in college. Using weighted data from 18,611 undergraduates, aged 18-24, across 23 U.S. institutions, I find that parental socioeconomic status positively predicts marijuana use, drug variety, and frequency of alcohol consumption. In an unadjusted model, it also predicts the use of substances to disengage from stressors. The third study examines the Asian-White contrast in working-hours mismatches. Conventionally, undermatches are considered a consequence of under-employment and precarious jobs, and overmatches are interpreted as symptomatic of overwork among professionals. I hypothesize that collectivistic cultural values cause Asian respondents to express the desire for more working hours, relative to Whites, independently of under-employment and overwork, which also influence Asians' preferences. Using data from a New Zealand survey (N = 3,854), I find that Asian workers are approximately twice as likely as Whites to express the desire for more time at work, even after controlling for working hours, perceived income inadequacy, household structure, household income, occupational class, education, gender, age, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. Furthermore, having a family appears to diminish the desire for more work time among Whites, but marginally increase the desire for more work time among Asians.

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To my sweet wife, Erin, for whose existence I am very grateful

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

American sociology has been intertwined with social work since its founding

(Lengermann and Niebrugge 2007), and sociologists have therefore focused on the plight

of the socially disadvantaged. This inclination is morally laudable, but it has steered the

discipline toward what Christian Smith terms "the sacred project of American sociology,"

the liberation of victimized groups, a turn that has caused the neglect of the privileged

(cf. Abbott 2014). The *Annual Review of Sociology*, founded in 1975, published its first

review article on the sociology of elites merely three years ago, and its opening paragraph

included this jab at the discipline: "No review of this area has appeared upon these pages

or, indeed, in any other venue...." (Khan 2012:362). Asian Americans, the ethnic group

with the highest household income and educational attainment in the U.S., have been

similarly neglected (Sakamoto, Goyette, and Kim 2009).

Such neglect is apparent in the sociology of mental health. One historically

significant study did report greater general neuroticism in the upper class but this finding

inspired little further investigation, especially because the study's other findings were

along conventional lines (Hollingshead and Redlich 1958). Currently, the two dominant

theoretical models in the sociology of mental health are the fundamental-causes model

and the stress process model (Pearlin et al. 1981; Phelan, Link, and Tehranifar 2010). The

fundamental-causes model postulates that socioeconomic status (SES) is an intransigent

cause of disease but mediating processes change across eras. This theory leaves no room

to consider that some diseases might be more prevalent among the privileged class.

Pearlin's stress process model is less restrictive. Although the model was initially

supported by studies examining chronic stressors pertaining to low income and social

status, the theory doesn't posit that higher strata have few chronic stressors or better coping mechanisms consistently and ubiquitously (Pearlin 1999). Nonetheless, this assumption has become embedded in research based on the stress process model.

In this three-article set, I do not set out to falsify these canonical theories altogether and then propose a new and better theory. I concur with two young sociologists who suggest that "sociology must worry less about theoretical innovation and more about empirical description" (Besbris and Khan 2017:147) (That sentence constitutes the entire abstract of their article.) In fact, the first article is somewhat conventional for the sociology of mental health, grounded in ideas about chronic stressors and coping resources. The second article builds upon an idea from the sociology of education, though its ultimate focus is one type of mental illness. The third article examines heterogeneity within a privileged stratum, using a cross-cultural theory about the distinction between collectivistic and individualistic groups. Not oriented around a problem, it differs from the first two, but it does touch on overwork and stress.

In the first two articles, I suggest that college students have problems that have gone unrecognized by sociologists of mental health. Although the college population is diversifying, it still has a concentration of privileged youth who can look forward to greater earnings than those with just a high-school degree. Nonetheless, the stressors that affect them have seemingly become more severe over time. The article contrasts students of a previous era with students of today, analyzing the seeming rise in anxiety. Many studies suggest that generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), along with other kinds of psychopathology, have been rising in intensity and prevalence among college students (e.g., Twenge et al. 2010). I conduct an interview study with psychotherapists at college

counseling centers to better understand what triggers anxiety among today's students. Although the study is qualitative, it is not entirely open-ended. It tests five explanations of greater anxiety: perceived social threats, greater other-directedness, over-parenting, competitiveness, and the challenge of distinctiveness. These factors can be construed as stressors, and thus connected to Pearlin's (1999) model. In the conclusion, however, I connect the findings more closely to Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy model, and posit that the most significant stressors are not stressful life events or relative deprivation—the conventional culprits—but rather a perceived discrepancy between the real self and ideal self.

The second article mostly diverges from the stress-and-coping framework, examining the unhealthful recreational consumption of alcohol and drugs consumption of privileged students. For some decades, epidemiologists and medical researchers (but not sociologists of mental health) have been writing about the connection between economic privilege and poor health, using the term *diseases of affluence*. These diseases, mostly chronic and cardiovascular, result from the accumulation of unhealthy substances in the body due to the over-consumption of unhealthful food and drink in affluent societies. In the case of mental illness, addiction disorders can be construed as diseases of affluence. Illicit substances, for affordability and other reasons, are more likely to consumed by high-SES groups, at least in certain contexts. Building on *Paying for the Party* (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013), an ethnographic work describing the party pathway chosen by certain students, I postulate that, in the college context, SES should predict the incidence of marijuana use, the intensity of alcohol consumption, and the variety of consumed substances. Bringing stress back into the picture, I also propose that SES

positively predicts the use of substances to cope with stress. This style of coping, based on disengaging from the stressor, is typically adopted by people who deem themselves helpless due to inadequate resources. Finding that substance-use coping is higher among privileged students would be a disconfirmation of the conventional wisdom.

The third article, which is less problem-oriented, revolves around the distinction between two privileged racial groups in the Anglosphere, Whites and Asians. On average, both Whites and Asians are highly educated and well paid (Sakamoto et al. 2009) and, being in the upper stratum, they tend to hold professional jobs where long hours are normative (Cha and Weeden 2014). One would therefore expect a modest proportion of both Whites and Asians to want work reductions, especially among those who have families. Because the fact of long working hours is interpreted through cultural lenses, however, I posit that Whites and Asians differ. Asians should be less likely to want time reductions and more likely to want time increases than Whites, because work is interpreted as a family-oriented duty in collectivistic groups. I test this hypothesis in the third study, where the focal outcome is working-hours mismatch. Though not a mental illness, the desire for a work-time reduction can be construed as a manifestation of distress, which integrates this study with the dissertation's theme.

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CHAPTER 2:
DOES CULTURAL CHANGE EXPLAIN THE RISE IN COLLEGE STUDENT
ANXIETY?

ABSTRACT

Anxiety appears to be rising across cohorts of American college students, but the claim of an upward trend is disputed and its causes are unclear. Some of this confusion can be attributed to an over-reliance on quantitative methods, with no qualitative triangulation. In the current qualitative study, I theorize that five factors have caused anxiety to increase: societal factors (e.g., terrorism, recessions), other-directedness, helicopter parenting, competitiveness, and distinctiveness. Using a semi-structured script, I interviewed 12 long-tenured psychotherapists, most affiliated with US colleges and universities, about whether and why anxiety is higher among recent cohorts. I asked for open-ended reflections and then asked interviewees to evaluate the five hypotheses. Therapists generally agreed that anxiety was higher in recent cohorts, but their answers were nuanced, and they reflexively commented on personal biases. The interviews generally supported all the hypotheses except the other-directedness hypothesis. When addressing helicopter parenting, therapists noted that both over-parenting and under-parenting were problematic, and such practices were related to socioeconomic class. Novel discoveries include the findings that parents commonly interfere in psychological counseling, and that social media and mobile phone usage initiate and amplify exposure to causes of anxiety.

INTRODUCTION

The average anxiety level of American college students appears to have increased during recent decades (Twenge 2000; Twenge et al. 2010). Anxiety has also become a common complaint among college students in therapy (American College Health Association 2000, 2016). Reasons for this change are not clear, and much debate has revolved around methodological criticism of studies that show cohort change (Much and Swanson 2010; Sharkin 1997). Furthermore, with the exception of Twenge (2000), few researchers have analyzed the causes of such change. In the current study, I use qualitative interviewing and analyses to examine whether anxiety has risen among college students, and what factors underlie the putative rise.

The interviews in this study are with psychotherapists who have had long tenures at college counseling centers, and have therefore observed longitudinal change in the

nature and intensity of anxiety. This qualitative methodology addresses a primary limitation of previous studies on this topic, namely, the use of closed-ended survey questions. Questionnaires administered to counseling center administrators have typically used structured questions with fixed answer options (e.g., Backels and Wheeler 2001). Such questions can force a false structure on the data. For example, the long-standing claim of an actor-asymmetry bias—one's own behavior tends to be explained with situational causes and other people's behavior with dispositional causes—was found to be false when researchers examined attributions using free responses (Malle, Knobe, and Nelson 2007). Respondents cannot write (or state) additional information they deem pertinent in closed surveys. Twenge's (2000) research relies on correlating answers in questionnaires completed by college students each year between 1952 and 1993 with quantitative indicators of social change between 1952 and 1993, and is thus limited by the scope of survey questions and available social indicators.

In the current study, I specify theoretically grounded sociological and social-psychological hypotheses about why anxiety may be rising, but I use open-ended questions to evaluate these hypotheses. Because these questions are presented in an interview, psychotherapists can extend the scope of questions, and give nuanced answers. There are two reasons for not interviewing students themselves. First, students are likely to rely on introspection, which has limited validity (Pronin 2009). Professionals, however, are likely to rely on a combination of theoretical and empirical considerations. Second, current students cannot make informed comparisons between themselves and older cohorts, but many long-tenured counselors are administrators, and concern themselves with tracking the rates of psychological disorders at their institution. Also,

professional psychologists can also deploy their methodological training to examine scientific findings, and detect how spurious factors can drive perceptions of change.

I begin by presenting an overview of the psychological system underpinning anxiety, the causes of anxiety, and prevalence trends among college students and youth. In the second section, I elaborate on the evidence for the factors that may increase anxiety. In the third section, I explain the relevance of the current study, and present an overview of its methodology.

ANXIETY: AN OVERVIEW

The human neuropsychological architecture comprises three modules: the behavioral activation system (BAS), the fear-flight-freeze system (FFFS), and the behavioral inhibition system (BIS) (Corr and McNaughton 2012; McNaughton and Corr 2008). Activity in the BAS is instantiated when appetitive goal pursuit is warranted, such as when an appealing opportunity (e.g., for profit or revenge) is present. The FFFS activates when an *unambiguous* threat is detected, and self-protection is salient. The BIS activates when *ambiguous* negative cues in the environment indicate uncertainty must be managed. Anxiety represents activation of the BIS (Corr, DeYoung, and McNaughton 2013; Perkins, Kemp, and Corr 2007). The distinction between BIS and FFFS activation is important, because fear and anxiety are sometimes conflated by sociologists (e.g., Horwitz 2013).

The primary symptom of anxiety is worry (Mennin, Heimberg, and Turk 2004). GAD is likely to develop when an individual generally overestimates the usefulness of worrying, and specifically holds three positive beliefs: worry enhances problem solving and motivation; worry reduces the probability of negative emotions and outcomes; and

worrying is virtuous (Dugas et al. 2007; Freeston et al. 1994; Hebert et al. 2014). GAD is also more likely when people hold strongly negative beliefs about uncertainty, have a negative emotional orientation, and habitually use cognitive avoidance as a coping mechanism (Dugas et al. 2007).

A number of theories from clinical and social psychology can be applied to understanding anxiety. One influential theory is self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, Klein, and Strauman 1985). It is rooted in the theory of personality change developed by Rogers (1959), who posited that distress arises from discrepancies between two constructed selves: the *real self* (the current state of the person) and the *ideal self* (the person one desires to be and can potentially become). Broadening this theory, the social psychologist Higgins (1987) postulated that distress-producing discrepancies can also arise between the *ought self* (who society expects a person to be) and the *real self*. Clinical evidence is consistent with the theory (Watson, Bryan, and Thrash 2013).

Longitudinal studies show that anxiety among children and young adults has risen over time. A meta-analysis of anxiety and dispositional negativity (i.e., trait neuroticism) among American youth showed a one standard deviation increase from 1952 to 1993 (Twenge 2000). This increase was evident in both child and college student samples. Non-secure attachment styles have also become more common (Konrath et al. 2014). Such attachment styles predict GAD (Calvete, Orue, and Hankin 2013; Marganska, Gallagher, and Miranda 2013; Simonelli, Ray, and Pincus 2004).

In recent decades, young people have increasingly entered college, and the student population has diversified (National Center for Education Statistics 2014a, 2014b). Why is anxiety rising among this population? I present five hypotheses organized

in three categories: societal, relational, and egoistic factors. Societal factors are macro-level changes in economic and political domains. Relational factors are micro-sociological changes in how individuals interact. Egoistic factors are psychological processes.

I. SOCIETAL FACTORS

The societal factors hypothesis is that perceived and real increases in terrorism, crime, war, and similar problems have triggered anxiety. In her meta-analysis of anxiety, Twenge (2000) posited that social changes could explain an increase in neuroticism and anxiety. Twenge categorized social changes into overall threat (e,g., crime, suicide), low social connectedness (e.g., divorce rate, solitary living), and economic conditions (unemployment, child poverty). She conducted lagged, cross-sectional, and prospective analyses to test whether changes in these factors preceded rather than followed anxiety change, finding strong correlations between facets of overall threat and anxiety. Among men, the contemporaneous correlation was .49 between AIDS cases and anxiety/neuroticism (10-year lagged = .29), and .36 between the crime rate and anxiety/neuroticism (10-year lagged = .47). Furthermore, the unemployment rate strongly predicted anxiety ten years later, $r = .43$ (men); $r = .29$ (women), suggesting a lagged transference from unemployed parents to offspring.

Economic strains may also matter. Once perceived as elite and exclusive, the college track is now normative. The financial problem with this "college for all" mentality (Boesel 1999) is that, unlike high school, college can put its students into significant debt, which creates anxiety during and after college (Cooke et al. 2004).

Compounding this problem is the expectation that a college degree consistently begets financial success.

II. OTHER-DIRECTEDNESS

The other-directedness hypothesis is that younger cohorts are likely to orient themselves toward external approval. Other-directedness should amplify anxiety because it hinges on gaining the actual or perceived approval of others.

The concept of other-directedness comes from Riesman (1950), who postulated that in late industrial societies, people orient their goals toward external approval. Evidence substantiates Riesman's theory. The prevalence of other-directness was documented in the population by early scholarship (Centers and Horowitz 1963; Kassarjian 1962). Later, Snyder (1974) introduced the construct of *self-monitoring* to the literature, drawing on both Riesman's (1950) concept of other-directedness and Goffman's (1957) theory of interactional ritual (Snyder and Monson 1975). Snyder defined a high self-monitor as someone concerned with situational propriety, who modifies behavior to match interactants' expectations. In contrast, a low self-monitor draws on stable, internal beliefs anchored in his or her "true" self (Fuglestad and Snyder 2009). Content analyses of media have validated Riesman's hypothesis about rising other-directedness (Tansey et al. 1992), but a literature search does not yield other-directedness studies where individual attitudes, rather than media content, were measured. However, the personality trait of agreeableness includes a facet called compliance, similar to approval seeking, and agreeableness has increased (Smits et al. 2011). A loosely related construct is affiliation motivation, the desire to gain and securely maintain social bonds, and it has also increased (Zinkhan, Hong, and Lawson 1990).

Narcissism, which involves the evocation of admiration, has also increased (Twenge et al. 2008).

III. HELICOPTER PARENTING

The helicopter parenting hypothesis is that younger cohorts have been over-managed by their parents, and thus deprived of healthy stress. An intensification of parenting has occurred in U.S. society such that some parents—colloquially called *helicopter parents*—closely supervise and advise their college-going children, and frequently contact college staff to express concerns (LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011). Hamilton (2016) has argued that helicopter parenting has emerged as a response to an oversupply of qualified undergraduates in the labor market, an increase in income inequality, a decrease in the college-wage premium, and the scarcity of good jobs. Because these challenges come with economic risks, parents want assurance of a return on investment.

Though economically beneficial, helicopter parenting can deprive students of healthy stress and autonomy. Psychological studies show optimal performance and well-being under a condition of moderate, not mild, stress and adversity (Le Fevre, Matheny, and Kolt 2003; Seery, Holman, and Silver 2010). Helicopter parents may over-protect their children from adversity, and unwittingly cause anxiety in the long term. The causal direction is unclear—children who are anxious may elicit parental support—but formative studies show an inverse association between helicopter parenting and well-being (Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan 2014; LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011; Segrin et al. 2012).

A principle of self-determination theory (SDT), a robustly supported psychological theory, is that autonomy is a fundamental human need. Parental deprivation of autonomy predicts lower child well-being (Joussemet, Landry, and Koestner 2008), and overbearing parenting diminish children's well-being when they thwart the need for autonomy (Schiffrin et al. 2014).

Overly low parental involvement can also have poor psychological outcomes. In a qualitative study of parents and college-enrolled children, Hamilton (2016) described some parents as *bystanders*. Typically having low SES, bystanders failed to provide the adequate financial and emotional support. Their negligence stemmed from financial strain and inadequate time.

IV. COMPETITIVENESS

The competitiveness hypothesis is that younger cohorts devote more time and energy to academic and extracurricular pursuits to be viable for educational and employment opportunities. The rise is competitiveness follows several social changes. To begin, younger cohorts increasingly consider material acquisition central to their lives (Jaspers and Pieters 2016). At the same time, the job market has become precarious, bifurcating into good and bad jobs (Kalleberg 2013). Admission to a prestigious university, a pathway to a good job, has become more difficult (Leroux 2008; Lombardi 2007; Prestott and Bransberger 2008). The proliferation of advanced placement (AP) courses (Sadler 2010) and the development of a *shadow education* industry that supplements mainstream education (Buchmann, Condron, and Roscigno 2010) have assisted upper-class students gain admission to universities but burdened them with more academic work.

V. DISTINCTIVENESS

The distinctiveness hypothesis is that it has become increasingly difficult for individuals to differentiate themselves from others. Optimal distinctiveness theory postulates that people must balance their needs for inclusion and differentiation (Brewer 1991). The need for inclusion entails feeling immersed within a social group; the need for differentiation entails a desire to maintain special characteristics that distinguish oneself from others (Leonardelli, Pickett, and Brewer 2010). People feel satisfied when both are simultaneously met. In individualistic cultures, distinctiveness is closely associated with being unique (Becker et al. 2012).

An increase in formal rationality (Weber 1968), accompanied by massification and homogenization, has likely hindered the ability of students to perceive themselves and their institution as distinct. In the educational sphere, *US News and World Report* college rankings have become the de facto standard by which quality is gauged. Administrators prioritize policy changes that elevate their university's rank (Ehrenberg 2002), which collectively makes universities more homogeneous. Students also make enrolment decisions based on rankings (Bowman and Bastedo 2009). Just as upward rank comparisons in income have a stronger influence on life satisfaction than absolute or subtractive income comparisons (Boyce, Brown, and Moore 2010), upward rank comparisons in colleges are likely to have a stronger influence on life satisfaction than other kinds of comparison. Thus, students at an otherwise excellent institution might sense a lack of distinctiveness upon observing that other universities are ranked higher.

Their distress may worsen because of the institutionalization of self-esteem pedagogy, which was institutionalized in schools in the 1970s (Baumeister et al. 2003).

Rather than treating self-esteem as the product of success, its proponents treated self-esteem as a cause of success, instituting techniques to boost self-esteem (Baumeister et al. 2003). Under this pedagogical frame, value arises from uniqueness.

Finally, the focus on diversity may leave some students questioning their uniqueness. Diversity management policies highlight the value of individuals from disadvantaged populations. Individuals who not "diverse"—whites, Asians, and males—may subtly feel the need to overcome a deficit.

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STUDY

The first goal of this study is to discover whether experienced therapists perceive anxiety prevalence and intensity to be changing among college students. Some studies using closed-ended questions showed that psychotherapists at college counseling centers have perceived increases in psychopathology, but skeptics have noted methodological flaws with these studies, and found no evidence of change when they used other methods (for a review, see Schwartz 2015; Sharkin 2012). To my knowledge, only one prior study has presented open-ended questions to counselors, but its causal questions were not structured around hypotheses (Watkins, Hunt, and Eisenberg 2012). In the current interview script, I explicitly frame the evidence for change as mixed when asking about stability and change.

The second goal of the interview is to evaluate the hypotheses. To reduce the impact of acquiescence bias, I begin with an open-ended question, after which I ask questions corresponding to each hypothesis, and one question about the sub-hypothesis regarding choice fatigue. At the end, I ask a question specifically about white men because of compositional change. White men have consistently been part of the student

population over the last few decades, so it can be informative to find whether there are new triggers of anxiety among white male students. This does not mean white men are a control group. Compositional change has itself altered the experience of white male students.

The hypotheses in the current study were specified before data collection, and were not modified after analyses. Although hypothesis-driven, this study is undertaken within the context of discovery rather than the context of confirmation. The sample size and methods do not permit strong confirmatory tests.

METHODS

I conducted one pilot interview (interview #0) and 12 full interviews (#1-12) with therapists. Interviewees were recruited through a combination of colleague referrals, snowball sampling, and cold e-mailing. With one exception, therapists were affiliated with college counseling centers, and in many cases served as center administrators. Table 2.1 lists the characteristics of interviewees. I use pseudonyms to protect anonymity. All interviews were conducted via telephone. Except for the pilot interview (Bill) and the fifth interview (Kimball) all interviews were recorded with *TapeACall*. I received approval from Bill and Kimball to rely on their interview notes. Anonymized transcripts are stored in the Open Science Framework (OSF) repository under DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/4B5JM.

I began the interview with an introduction of my professional background, which is recommended when interviewing elites (Arksey and Knight 1999). I then asked (a) about the interviewee's employment history, (b) about whether and why anxiety prevalence and intensity were changing or remaining steady, and (c) whether each

hypothesis had or lacked validity. I concluded with set of miscellaneous questions. I occasionally shortened the script to accommodate interviewees' schedules but never skipped the hypothesis questions. The interview script is in appendix 1.

I analyzed interview transcripts using MAXQDA 12, and textually tagging recurring themes. I prepared 44 tags in seven categories to correspond to longitudinal change, the five hypotheses, and miscellaneous topics, e.g., pre-existing conditions, drug abuse. I contingently added 36 tags during analysis. In the section below, some excerpts from the interviews are quoted with ellipses. A plain ellipsis indicates a pause in speech, and a bracketed ellipsis indicates a segment I removed for concision. Such segments are not hidden in the transcripts stored in the repository.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nearly all of the respondents (11 of 12) said they had observed some increase in anxiety prevalence or intensity. Some relied not only on observations but also on quantitative data, drawing on both national and institutional surveys. Vivian mentioned that the Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH) studies from Pennsylvania State University showed anxiety overtaking depression around 2008 or 2009, which mirrored her own experiences. Julie pointed to data from two internal tracking systems. Similarly, Julie stated she had observed an increase in students "presenting with anxiety or with mixed anxiety; and with mixed anxiety and depression," and bolstered her point with quantitative evidence. In Julie's observation, the prevalence had increased dramatically but the intensity only modestly. Rhonda cited the trend in referrals: "To the extent that we refer on a fairly regular basis to an intensive outpatient program that specializes in OCD

and we're just seeing presentations at a rate and at an intensity that we never used to see before." She had "close to zero external referrals" when she started.

Many respondents rated anxiety as rising without commenting on pace of change or the prevalence–intensity distinction. Among those who did, there was little consistency. Rhonda claimed anxiety had increased "exponentially," but David said it was "a little bit worse...a little bit more intense." Kimball and Adair pointed to a dramatic rise in just the last five to ten years. On the other hand, Elaine believed the acuteness had changed.

> **Elaine**: In the past ten years...you know, to be honest with you, among my caseload I wouldn't necessarily say that that I'm seeing more or less anxiety. I feel like it's been consistently prevalent across the years but what I do feel like I'm noticing more subjectively that it seems that the students I'm meeting with are a bit more acutely anxious and seem to have less resources to manage it well.

Many respondents explained that an increase in consultations did not necessarily entail a true increase in anxiety. Six respondents noted that changes in screening practices along with reduced stigma about psychological treatment could be the cause—David said his university had programs actively encouraging students to seek mental help. Both Morgan and Reid pointed to progress in early identification as well.

> **Reid**: Most directors...I don't know if you've seen this research but for years [it] seemed to be saying you know we're seeing more acute people, with more acute conditions and more severe. And then the research from what I just saw recently says: well, students aren't more disturbed it's just that we're seeing more disturbed people because we've done a better job at early identification. Has it changed? It

feels like it's changed. But again the more empirical piece of me says I really

don't know.

Compositional change was also mentioned. Many therapists noted that the

diversification of the student body has changed at U.S. institutions, and absent this

diversification, anxiety levels may have remained steady absent this diversification.

Gene, Kimball, and David specifically referred to stigma reduction in a similar

vein. While discussing resilience with Gene, he also noted that he had seen a rise in

Asian-American clients, but not Asian clients, and commented on reduced stigma**.** He

assessed the increase in Asian-American clients as "very positive because the rap on

Asian students and the Asian culture used to be that therapy was like the worst thing you

could do." Additionally, therapists pointed to guilt about White privilege among white

men (Vivian and Morgan), and a decline in perceived status with the inversion of the

undergraduate gender gap (Vivian). Mateo noted that white students from conservative

areas were confronted with the challenge of acclimatization to a multicultural

environment.

> **Mateo**: So from the cocoon of their high schools or their families or whatever,
>
> they are exposed to a very complex and highly multicultural environment [and]
>
> then they don't have the internal skills to understand, to empathize, to connect,
>
> and they feel isolated—quite unable to bridge the interpersonal gap and then that
>
> raises their anxiety tremendously.... And the issue of political correctness then
>
> becomes "What the hell is that? What is politically correct? What do I say that
>
> doesn't alienate others?" And so forth and so on and that raises anxiety. So there
>
> are other things... the general advances in social tolerance with women's rights,

gay rights, transgender rights and so forth and so on, which is really it's like an earthquake in [unintelligible] in more traditional societies and the way kids have been raised.

Other therapists either pointed to masculinity issues—Reid noted that white men had a higher propensity for suicide, and Vivian noted that men seek treatment less often because of emotion suppression. Likewise, Daniel sensed a reluctance to accept mentorship, and also detected a "father hunger... to be able to talk to someone who not only listens, but can be frank and direct and genuine." David, Kimball, and Mateo stated that white male students did not seem to have distinct types of problems, but David and Mateo suggested their problems were less intense. Likewise, Gene said that the problem of white male students were about social connections and exclusion, which were generic. In Gene's opinion, a larger problem was the homogeneity at selective universities, such that gender and race differences were becoming less pertinent.

> **Gene**: My concern about these especially the research universities and the Ivy-plus schools is that they're becoming homogenous. They're looking for the same kind of person. It doesn't matter male or female or for that matter where you're from or ethnic or racial issues; it's more like you're the same kind of person, same kind of student, same kind of personality. And at this university it used to be that they were always looking for quirky, unusual students and I think it's again because of corporatization that they're looking for the same product to put out [...] the same basic raw material that they can stamp the template on.

Commenting on compositional change, Daniel observed that many students currently in college would not have been in college 30 years ago, and thus the pressure to

attend college and to "try to be successful" has become much greater. Gene also observed this trend.

> **Gene**: The other thing that happened and I think it was happening even when I started here—a lot of students who were psychologically pretty compromised would not be going to college. Or they would be going to a much less challenging environment or I would say not at all.

Gene attributed this change to the perception that college is as mandatory as high school. In Daniel's experience, some students also perceived it was "mandatory" to get consistently good grades. There was little room to accommodate idiosyncratic vulnerabilities, and adjust one's aspirations.

Qualitative change can occur such that the explicitly mentioned target of worry can differ across cohorts. Due to time constrains, I only asked seven therapists about target change. Three therapists (Vivian, Morgan, and Adair) at or near highly selective universities mentioned scheduling and planning as new triggers. They referred to changes in the perceived need to accomplish numerous scholastic, extra-curricular, and career-preparatory activities at both micro- and macro-time scales, which creates a model college application. These observations align with Rivera's (2015) finding that upper-class parents specify and manage a track to prestigious careers.

More than a few therapists stated that the triggers of anxiety had primarily remained steady:

> **David**: Very similar things: relationships, academics, general stress and anxiety, definitely would throw that in.

Julie: Well, the populations are different so I'm not sure that I can do a direct comparison [of past vs. present]. That said I think there's tremendous overlap in what I think things that students complain about now are the same things that students were complaining about in the sixteenth century. That I think a lot of those just go with the experience of being a student but the kinds of things that are different, so you know if you look at this as a Venn diagram and I set aside all the commonalities and I would make the note that there are significant commonalities.

Daniel: Well, many are very similar. I mean relationship breakups are a huge part of people's anxiety, feeling alone, and feeling abandoned so it's very difficult to separate out grief or depression or anxiety, I think there is evidence saying it's hard to distinguish between depression and anxiety sometimes.

Morgan: So I think there are similar in the sense that what has been triggering for students I think ...it has always...when somehow what's being expected of them is not balanced or counterbalanced in some way with them feeling like they've got the resilience they've built up...what they needed to do in order to do it...whatever that may be...to do it whether that's academic...or disruptions in their family life or just disruptions in the social life.

One therapist (Vivian) suggested that the frequency and availability of some triggers were amplified by social media, discussed later.

To forestall acquiescence to my hypotheses, I presented an open-ended question about change before revealing the hypotheses. In answers to this question, *competitiveness* and its subtopic *rising standards* were the most common topics, with 7 of

the 12 main interviewees discussing them. Two other sub-topics under competitiveness, i.e., *rank comparisons to peers* and *variability in competition by university type*, were mentioned by one-third of the interviewees. Helicopter parenting was mentioned by at least one-third of the interviewees. Four therapists mentioned the broad issue of societal change, and three specifically mentioned terrorism. Other-directedness and distinctiveness were not mentioned by any therapists in the open-ended answer.

In the second half of each interview, I asked therapists to rate each hypothesized factor as rising or steady. When answers were highly ambiguous, I split the vote between "steady" and "rise." The results, displayed in Table 2.2, mostly align with the answers that were given before therapists were informed of the specific hypothesis. For instance, competitiveness was frequently mentioned in the preliminary answers, and was also rated almost unanimously as relevant. In the following sections, I discuss each of the five hypothesized causes of anxiety.

I. Societal Factors

The societal factors hypothesis was that younger cohorts of college students perceive the world as more threatening due to economic recessions, terrorism, epidemics, and similar phenomenon. Therapists generally agreed with the hypothesis, but noted that some societal factors operated subliminally.

> **Mateo**: Some [clients] are a little bit more attuned to some global things and they talk...maybe about competition and what have you, but I think the root causes are much wider than they realize. They don't have the overarching perspective that allows them to understand exactly why. So they tend to ascribe the anxiety to, you know, smaller phenomenon that they're experiencing.

Elaborating further, Mateo said that population growth was, in his opinion, an underappreciated cause.

Therapists had mixed responses to the issue of terrorism. Five therapists stated that terrorist attacks were hardly mentioned, but other therapists thought that terrorist attacks created persistent distress. Vivian suggested that world events like 9/11 and later terrorist attacks seemed "closer to home because of technology." Likewise, Daniel, a center director, recalled numerous conversations with colleagues about terrorism. His assistant director believed that the 9/11 attacks introduced a "tremendous amount of anxiety" in the whole country, leading to greater anxiety among parents, which was transmitted to children. Adair, as noted earlier, said terrorism was not salient in therapy sessions, but at the end of our interview, I asked if she thought anything else was relevant to student anxiety, and she suggested that the 9/11 attacks had a subliminal influence. In line with research on public fear (e.g., Sunstein 2003), Gene pointed that out that media coverage of terrorist attacks and plane crashes caused people to over-estimate the likelihood of being killed in such an event. He also noted that authorities, despite public expectations, can never completely eliminate risk.

Certain categories of murder and assault were also cited. Vivian and David observed that racial violence and police shootings were salient; Rhonda and Reid added that anti-Muslim (and anti-minority) hate crimes were salient to both potential victims and bystanders. Rhonda assessed that the collegiate environment was one of "progressive thought and liberalism" so "students may generalize threats to groups even different from themselves to threats to themselves." David considered sexual assault at fraternity parties to be a continuing source of distress too. Finally, Reid mentioned that at his university

enrolled a considerable number of U.S. veterans and foreign refugees from conflict zones, for whom violence was salient.

Economic uncertainty

Many therapists also pointed to macro-economic phenomena as sources of anxiety. The 2008 recession was rarely mentioned, possibly because the interviews were conducted in 2016, although Elaine did note that its fallout was still salient to her students' families. More commonly, therapists noted that the purpose of college had changed. Both Daniel and Julie recalled being more focused on moral concerns, like social justice, during their college years, and less on mobility. Morgan and Gene reiterated that college was linked with economic success. As Bill noted, "Earlier on, people accepted they were students, and a lot of major life challenges were to try to come later. Now students are worried much more about whether they're successful. Now they're worried much more about the indices of success."

Vivian, Kimball, Morgan and Reid all mentioned debt, and Morgan added that weak job security was an exacerbating factor.

> **Morgan**: I think that there has been a shift in sort of what's expected and there's been a shift in how easy it is to begin that process. So what I hear from students...the biggest struggle I think from them is "How am I going to pay my student loan debt if I'm starting at this job that's only making this amount of money?" So if you have the student loan debt taken out of that equation, I'm sure they would be fine with starting that level. It's that they're starting out already with a huge amount of debt that they know is part of the equation I think changed over the past few decades.

Addressing aspirations, Morgan mentioned an article about inflation that he had recently read, and pointed to the "huge difference" between the size and cost of starter homes today vs. the past. Reid also cited aspirations as a problem for new graduates.

Reid: Society's expectations and the expectations of the individual have changed—what you need to be happy—everybody has a bigger house, everybody's got to have the bigger car. You've got to have everything and it's an illusion. I think those people that go out...that graduate from college and think they can have it all, I think they're going to be very disappointed. Some people will. Most people won't.

Vivian added that she sensed a generational changed in entitlement:

Vivian: [T]he other thing is just is a sense of entitlement about employment, you know, that that they should get hired they without a real sense of like how the workforce, you know, functions and, you know, what it means to make sacrifices, start at the bottom, and that kind of thing. I think that's something that this generation of students is definitely less inclined to be willing to do.

Viviana also pointed to macro-economic factors too, a crucial qualification given the trendiness of simplistic explanations that single out Millennials' entitlement. Millennials may be problematically entitled (Twenge 2014), but entitlement is one factor in a multi-causal network.

Anxiety about jobs was less salient at Kimball's university, a polytechnic institution, where a high percentage of students were able to find jobs after graduation. Kimball's comment accords with rankings of universities based on social mobility. There are a very small number of technical and agricultural-and-mechanical universities in the

U.S. but they are well represented in university rankings that weight graduates' social mobility (Anon 2016; Chetty et al. 2017). Despite such mobility, students at Kimball's university were still stressed about costs. Kimball noted that his students are aware of tuition costs, which creates stress, which is noteworthy.

In contrast to Kimball, Julie mentioned that her university was in an economically depressed region, and about 70% of the students are first-generation and place-bound. They know their prospects are poor. Due to reduced state support, community agencies that offer financial support at a local level were less munificent. Because the effect was regional, Julie observed similar concerns locally among high school students and older cohorts.

National Politics

It is difficult to generalize about the salience of politics, because these interviews were conducted during the 2017 election season in the US, an anomalous time. Specific anxieties around the Trump presidency will likely remain salient for a few years, so therapists' concerns are worth noting. Five therapists specifically mentioned Trump and the election. Rhonda connected the Trump victory to celebrity culture, citing his ability to garner positive media coverage and attain status despite a history of fraud.

> **Rhonda**: My observation just of social culture over the past number of years is that we have created this economy of celebrity that I think is problematic for young people and that success—young people are aware of Instagram stars, YouTube stars, those who seem not to have or, in most cases, actually do not have a degree and are not espousing a particular occupation. They have become successful and famous and, in many cases, wealthy simply by being. And being

seen. And I think that's what many of our students are competing against. And I think one of the disadvantages of this most recent political outcome is that we have, in fact, reinforced the idea that you don't actually have to be skilled and or have any particular expertise in order to be highly successful.

I repeated Rhonda's observation to Reid because he enquired about other therapists' political comments. On hearing Rhonda's opinion, Reid compared it to questions he had heard.

Reid: By the way, I think that's a good...that's a good hypothesis as well because again I...because I have had students come in here and wonder if it's all an illusion. Those kind of questions. "What's the purpose here?" "Why am I doing this?" "When somebody like Donald Trump makes it to where he made it to and that he won with the American public support?"

Other therapists commented on political violence. Julie said that in late October her staff reported "a number of students said things like, 'I voted and I'm really glad that we're voting by mail because if we were voting at a polling place, I'd be afraid to go.'" Violence and other threats, as I discuss next, can feel more immediate due to social media.

Social Media and Technology

I hypothesized that technology increased impatience, which was unsupported by interview data, but I did not hypothesize that technology exacerbates anxiety by amplifying exposure to negativity, which was often stated. Rhonda described "an evaporation of the division separating mediated life from real life". She recalled that as a college student she had to share one payphone with hallmates, which constrained

communication, whereas now the ability to "create a comfortable and isolated collegiate experience is gone." Similarly, Morgan felt that in the 1950s it was "much easier to shut some of the outside noise."

The second time Rhonda commented on media, she referred to parents being overexposed to stories about threat; and the third time, she referred to the effects of technology on sleep. In various ways, Bill, Vivian, Elaine, Julie, Kimball and Mateo also alluded to distress caused by social media usage. In Mateo's case, it was not simply bad news, but rather the volume and multiplicity of news.

> **Mateo**: [The sense of instability] is also a product of technology and the way communication is so fast. ...so we have to be responding to endless stimulation that comes from all over the world: All kinds of thoughts, all kinds of philosophies, all kinds of religions...et cetera et cetera. So kids are not ready for that ... their egos are not quite structured to deal with the barrage of responses that are required of them.

II. Other-Directedness

The other-directedness hypothesis was that younger cohorts are more oriented toward approval seeking than older cohorts, and that the uncertainty of gaining approval triggers worrying. Six therapists disagreed with the idea that other-directedness was problematic, or strongly hedged their answer. For instance, Elaine said she "observed it at some level" but in her 14-year career had not witnessed a rise. In Mateo's opinion, any change in other-directedness was epiphenomenal, arising from population growth, such that "sources of validation are much larger and greater than in the past."

Overall, I received two types of answers—the first focused on internality and the second focused on externality. In the *internality* category were Kimball and Rhonda, who pushed back against this hypothesis by noting the social consciousness of young people. Rhonda noted that the current era is one where non-profit organizations, crowd-funded social initiatives, and grassroots activities are flourishing, manifestations of internally driven behavior. Kimball, on the other hand, perceived that college students were searching for values, being "very concerned about feeling a meaning and purpose."

Reid's answer bridged externality and internality, and like some other therapists, he noted that anxiety was often driven by perceptions of what was happening in the external world. In Reid's case the focus was on societal events.

Reid: Most of the folks that come in here that think they have extreme anxiety—their motivation is much more extrinsic than it is intrinsic—meaning that what's bringing them in is the fears about what's happening and what's going on in the world. And not being clear...not quite clear about that versus those folks that we do see. We have folks that are much more intrinsic about how they see things and motivated more from their internal sort of principles. However, if that answers your question, I think that the [...] perceived unpredictability and uncertainty of the world ...the [world's] general principles... is causing anxiety and I definitely see more people that are more externally focused than those that are more internally focused and driven by their principles.

Other therapists who talked about externality focused not on world events, but on more proximal pressures. Elaine noted that "pressure from family or others" made it

difficult for some students to "figure out really what they want" Some, like Gene, also said that students were concerned with popularity.

> **Gene**: I have students who talk about how their friend group isn't there. They
> don't have the same friends and circle. [I say:] "But you don't want to be friends
> with some of these people." [They say:] "No but I don't have friends.... I'm not in
> a friend group." You know so they feel so isolated, alienated. They don't get
> invited to the party or something isn't happening.

In cases such as these, therapists noted, social media exacerbated the problem, enabling students to obsessively seek approval. Vivian stated that students had an "addiction to reassurance" so they persistently counted "likes" on their posts. Adair, the only therapist who discussed eating disorders, felt that young people internalized the idea that only certain external standards mattered.

> **Adair**: It's based on all those messages out there about performance and about
> being competitive and that takes an awful lot to succeed and in terms of eating
> disorders: "I'm only loved if they're pretty and thin or whatever...never mind how
> smart I am or whatever."

She continued by describing the perceived obligation to avoid changing majors while in college, and concluded by describing how a person might feel an external pressure to meet certain standards rather than "an internal standard of 'I know I'm OK.'" Daniel echoed these concerns, and Vivian interpreted the popularity of mindfulness meditation programs as a reaction to externality.

Bill had worked at the same competitive college where he completed his undergraduate degree. He observed that during his college years, students self-presented

as academically confident because exuding low confidence would have lowered one's status, but current students commonly complained to peers about their academic workload and fear of under-performance. College students' parents are likely to boast about how busy they are, because time overload has become an indicator of success (Hochschild 1989; Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Social learning may transmit this practice to college students.

Some therapists also commented on feelings of estrangement among outsiders. Both David and Julie noted that international students struggled with a sense of "not fitting in." International students, along with first-generation students, felt estranged because neither their peers nor their family members had an acculturation experience resembling their own.

III. Helicopter Parenting

The helicopter-parenting hypothesis was that college students were increasingly over-protected and over-managed by their parents, which deprives them of autonomy and shelters them from normal experiences of failure. Support for this hypothesis was almost unanimous. Vivian even laughed when I suggested that the helicopter-parenting hypothesis might be false. Only Reid disagreed, but he explained that his institution had mostly non-traditional students who more commonly coped with inadequate parental support.

Many therapists commented on the frequency of helicopter-parent incidents. Daniel estimated that in his staff of ten, it "probably [came] up every day from someone." His staff sometimes used *snowplow parents* as a label for aggressively interfering parents.

Therapists considered helicopter parenting an annoyance, but were nonetheless sympathetic to helicopter parents, acknowledging their good intentions. Morgan and Rhonda claimed, in accordance with past research, that the intention in the pre-college years is to keep children safe from threats and failure.

David, who had recently retired, and Morgan were the only therapists who suggested helicopter problem was not problematic. Morgan described situations on his campus where students attempted to solve problems on their own, but after confronting unresponsive officials resorted to calling their parents to intervene. He illustrated this problem with an example about a residence-life case where a student who was supposed to have one roommate was forced to live with two. He did not—and likely could not—have solved this problem without parental assistance. Morgan did not typically see students "running for parental help." Yet Morgan was talking about students who contacted parents, rather than the more common case of parent-initiated interference.

As in the case of competitiveness, therapists pointed to examples of helicopter parenting at various life stages. In the childhood years, therapists referred to the truism that children no longer have unstructured, unsupervised play in the outdoors. Morgan believed this disappearance was a side effect of competitiveness. Adair, a private counselor, had seen more cases of helicopter parenting among high-school than college students. While acknowledging individual variability, she noted "a tremendous pressure to excel," and be in "tip top condition to apply" to prestigious universities, and she noted that some parents were unreasonably distrustful of their child's diligence.

In the college phase, one manifestation of helicopter parenting was interference in children's psychotherapeutic treatment, which I had not anticipated. Of the five therapists

who described this problem, four were center directors. All described it as a frequent occurrence.

These practices suggest that some parents have begun to view therapists as parental proxies in the task of concerted cultivation, traditionally managed only by parents in the pre-college years (Lareau 2003). Parents therefore feel like stakeholders in the counseling process. This sense of entitlement is manifested in parental attempts to bypass confidentiality laws. Kimball had experience with parents who called, saying "I know you have client confidentiality but could you tell us how our child is doing?" Other therapists witnessed parents trying to breach confidentiality through blanket release-of-information forms. Julie counted this as her most common problem, and Rhonda was confident that parents sometimes forged the child's signature. Elaine explained that when parents asked to use these forms, it disrupted therapy. She had to explain to students that therapy was about the clients' needs, not the parents' needs. Rhonda similarly said that these situations provoked a discussion with her client about the important of autonomous decisions, especially around healthcare, and she "routinely" refused to approve releases because of this violation of autonomy.

Consequences of Helicopter Parenting

Most therapists perceived that helicopter parenting had harmful consequences, and I discerned two themes here. The first theme was a deficit in skills and abilities, particularly the ability to cope with failure. In his unprompted comments, Mateo commented on the generational gap in coping ability observed by his colleagues and himself.

Mateo: And from my clinician's perspective these same things would be not seen as generators of anxiety in the past whereas now it's almost as if the students are weaker now. I shouldn't put it that way but they're more vulnerable, they're more frail, they're more susceptible to anxiety experiences and I think this is not just happening to students but to the general population. [...] I mean pressed for an example on how say 30 years ago the level of maturity of 20-year olds was much higher than the level of maturity of a 20-year old right now in college. And all my colleagues share this. "Oh yeah we feel you know what's happening? They're more immature. They're more susceptible to trouble. They break down so easily."

Mateo was not addressing helicopter parenting here, but other therapists tied this deficit to helicopter parenting. Julie also noted a developmental lag specifically among traditionally aged students (18-to-22 year olds), whose self-management skills she compared to "a fairly regressed K-12 student" who doesn't know how to function independently or delay gratification. While noting that generational stereotyping was bad, she saw that among ailing students there was "a level of entitlement and expectation that other people should fix their problems, and be responsible when things go wrong." She noticed an increase in their own unwillingness to accept responsibility for their choices. She added a disclaimer: "I'm guessing you could go back and Ben Franklin would have said exactly the same thing, but within my 30-35 year perspective, almost 40 years, I have seen that shift pretty significantly."

Elaine observed that helicopter parenting was more pervasive among high-SES households, and it decreased self-efficacy. When students "bump[ed] against a barrier" they evaluated themselves as incapable of coping independently, or their "level of

frustration [and] tolerance [was] a bit lower" than expected. Elaine was relatively young, and described her own generation as having a more tolerant attitude: "Some things you just need to suck up and deal with, and then if you can't, you figure it out, and you use your resources." But, she noted, her resilience may stem from growing up in an immigrant household.

Gene tied the problem of helicopter parenting to the institutional imperative that "everybody has to feel OK," itself a consequence of the commercialization of the academy and a by-product of parents' beliefs about self-esteem. He noted some students were frustrated with perceived academic failures, considering such failures as abnormal.

> **Gene**: [Upon getting imperfect grades] they just feel like failures and that creates a lot of anxiety and I think stress and they [...] say, "Well I want this fixed so that I can excel again. [...] that's not part of what we can do. [...] You're going to struggle because there are always going to be people who are much better with something than you are. [...] also there is a sense that the parents have spoiled them. And I don't mean to use it in that pejorative sense but I think they have been too caught up in the child's self-esteem in the wrong way. In other words, it's not developing the way self-esteem develops which is: you fall down and you get up and you do stuff and you succeed. By your own efforts. This... you fall down, somebody picks you up and says, "Oh that's terrible that you fell down ... that should never have happened," and then blame something [...] all it does is create more anxiety because again it takes away the agency that the student could have to deal with this, which then of course can become more um generalized to you know how they feel about themselves and how they cope in the world.

In a similar vein, Bill described that in his orientation talk to parents, he emphasized that failure bred success so parents should distinguish between protecting and supporting their children. He had observed a bigger difference among parents than students across cohorts in perceptions of obligatory parental involvement. The protection of self-esteem, which Gene and Bill alluded to, is a common theme in postmodern books on successful parenting. These books admonish parents to *always* protect their child's self-esteem when modifying the child's behavior, instead of giving parents a comprehensive understanding of child development, which would enable them to assess tradeoffs (Elkind 1994).

The second theme was the restriction of autonomy. Vivian stated that helicopter parenting came with certain advantages, but there was also a "cost in terms of learning to be autonomous and independent." Rhonda also addressed the constraining nature of parental supervision in her open-ended answer.

> **Rhonda**: I think they probably do have anxiety issues, you know, because helicopter parenting is interplaying with the students desire to become autonomous. So if you have a parent who on the one hand is saying, "I can't let you be autonomous ...I'm going to call you to make sure you get up in the morning. I'm going to call you..." I think on some level there is this inherent sense that "I can't do this by myself." Or "If I challenge that authority to let me go and let myself [do this], that will create conflict."

Like Rhonda, Gene noted the high frequency of parent–child communication sustained an internal working model, in children's minds, of dependence: "I've had students like that where they just talk to their parents about everything.... It's almost like,

well, how do you find out who you are if you can't ... if everything is going through your parents. You're just basically... again it's infantilizing to some degree." Bill also noted that students today anticipated and did not resent parental involvement, which he contrasted with attitudes in the 1960s. He suggested that student "didn't differentiate" today. Thus, Gene and Bill suggested that identity development was stunted. Marcia's (1966) theory of identity development posits that identity achievement (the ideal state) is attained when an adolescent experiences an identity *crisis*, and then *commits* to an ideological identity. Therapists hinted at the fact that the deprivation of autonomy can engender *identity diffusion*, where the adolescent has no sense of having choices, or *identity foreclosure*, where the adolescent complies with their parents.

> **Vivian**: And then you know having a different experience here. And that's probably where I see it play out the most, where students just became really pressured to live their lives according to what their parents want for them, and having a harder time slowing down and figuring out what they want. Having autonomous needs.

Here, Vivian notes the connection between helicopter parenting and other-directedness, a point also raised by Reid, who noted how excessive monitoring relates to "the external vs. internal principles." Elaine, Julie, Mateo, and Vivian also commented on over-constrained autonomy.

Bystander Parents and Low-SES Parents

Therapists also talked about parents who provided inadequate support due to socioeconomic circumstances. When I asked Reid about helicopter parenting, he explained that non-involvement was a greater problem at his university, which primarily

served non-traditional commuter students, and where many students suffered from complex trauma due to parental maltreatment and no safety net: "Nobody that's going to catch them when they fall...more of a problem than helicopter parents." Therapists also noted that financial obligations and role stress were pervasive among students who had low socioeconomic status and whose relatives under-estimated the typical college workload. Julie described this problem with an anecdote.

> **Julie**: He was a bright kid but was struggling because his sister was working and thought that he should be babysitting her five children and he was saying, "I have all this work I have to get done," and she was saying, "You know, I don't see why you can't...all you're doing is reading...why can't you watch the kids?" Yeah of course you know that's a problem. And so that's one example, but it's a lot more intense and complex than that.

Vivian also mentioned that she knew some students who supported their parents financially, and Rhonda knew of students who juggled two jobs to be financially stable.

Therapists also noted that bystander parents often lacked a college degree, which entailed a deficit in cultural capital. Morgan believed first-generation college students faced greater strain due to the disadvantage of not having an appropriate "cultural inheritance" from parents. Julie made a similar observation, adding that this stress was compounded because first-generation students tended to underestimate the number of other first-generation students, assuming they were singularly disadvantaged.

These findings align with those of Hamilton (2016) but her ethnographic study only sampled traditional residential students. While some non-traditional students have bystander parents, others have dependent relatives and their caregiving burden constrains

their academic progress. Overall, parental involvement appears to have an inverted U-shaped relationship with well-being. Over the next decades, both slopes on the U may become steeper as helicopter parenting intensifies in proportion to academic and career competition while parental financial strain intensifies as state support diminishes.

IV. Competitiveness

The competitiveness hypothesis was that students vie more aggressively for academic and non-academic accomplishments. Six therapists pointed to problematic competitiveness in their open answer, but some doubted that things were different today relative to the past. David recalled intense competition, including sabotage of peers' projects, around getting accepted into medical and clinical psychology programs. Rhonda stated that rather than competitiveness, she saw more academic struggles due to a rising lack of writing and math skills among high school students. Nevertheless, there was considerable agreement, even among therapists at less competitive colleges, that competitiveness had risen sharply.

> **Gene**: One analogy I have is that you know the Olympics when they come around every four years, it's always interesting to hear people who are commentators who used to perform and earn medals in that category. And when they talk about what has changed over the years...8 to 15 years time... they will share things like "I could not do what I was doing to earn a gold medal...if I did something like that today, I would not be anywhere close to earning a gold medal."

Elaine made a similar comment about the constancy in the slots in doctoral programs, internships, and post-graduates despite the higher number of people being matriculated.

Some therapists noted the structural manifestations of competition in educational institutions. For instance, Gene recounted that in his youth, Advanced Placement (AP) courses had changed from a "luxury" to a necessity. Others witnessed cohort change in students' focus from personal values to economic gain in the present. Kimball had observed this change even though his university, a polytechnic, had a high placement rate, confirming his perception that competitiveness is now central to identity. Likewise, Daniel felt that many had "introjected a very harsh critical superego" and it was difficult for students to "observe their internal experience without being critical of it."

A frequently mentioned problem was job competition. For instance, Reid and Mateo commented on the scarcity of good jobs—Reid perceived that it was "very, *very* difficult" to find a job that could support a student "in a reasonable fashion," while Mateo said that job scarcity made students think, "I have to excel *beyond* what I think it's possible in order to have the jobs later on." Many therapists noted that this narrative gets internalized before college, with Gene citing pressure from middle school onward.

Like Gene, Elaine worked at an elite university but she was relatively young. Despite the smaller age gap, she was struck by hearing "students talk about what their application experience is like and everything that's on their resumes. And I think to myself that that sounds to me so astounding." Morgan, also young, made a similar assessment.

Earlier in the interview, Morgan, like Gene, noted that these demands were mostly pertinent for applicants to elite colleges. This qualification is important because some therapists, like Adair, noted that students were prone to think that only a small set of highly competitive colleges were worth attending. David noted that this misconception

drove under-prepared students to apply to and enroll in competitive institutions. He also saw how rankings distorted evaluations, noting that despite the "amazingly diverse number of colleges and universities," students focused their "attention on the top 10 as opposed to the best fit."

Vivian suggested that socialization by parents drives students to overly use quantifiable indicators of success, like SAT scores, when evaluating their status. When students see their peers' scores on social media, in Vivian's account, they make invidious comparisons and "feel like they're not sort of hitting those marks." Gene noted that both students and parents often fail to check the veracity of social media posts and the validity of advice distributed through social media.

> **Gene**: [Social media] has created a lot more, in my opinion, difficulty for students because they see... they look on Facebook and they see their friends: "Oh I got this A in this and I got this and I got into that." Who knows if it's even true, but there all these comparisons that are made and I think it really just...Plus it's all in the air all the time [...] If a parent says, "Oh yeah, there's an article about what students should do," then [the parents] are like, "All right I'll do that." And I think it just creates this kind of hothouse environment.

Social media is also a challenge for students who feel their distinctiveness has been threatened, which I discuss later.

Perfectionism was an undercurrent in these answer. As hypothesized, Vivian noted that such perfectionism resulted in dissatisfaction when students failed to get admitted to their preferred college, "like it somehow means they're a failure, even though

they're at an elite institution." She had heard such complaints from students at three different universities.

Students and parents also tended to believe that sufficient planning would ensure success. In recent decades, organizations have become increasingly systematic, mathematically driven, and predictable (Ritzer 2008), a development that can shape students' expectations, nudging them toward the belief that life course can be thoroughly planned. All the therapists at highly competitive schools and one therapist at a less competitive school described this belief. Morgan observed that parents and students understood the template for gaining acceptance into educational institutions, but some of his professional peers underappreciated the value of this template, recollecting their acceptance into graduate school with modest GPAs. Failing to recognize rising standards, they instructed current students to "relax" because a high GPA, in their opinion, was not necessary.

In the final years of college, the over-planning problem was manifested in the job search. Vivian said that students felt entitled to a job once they "checked all the right boxes" and felt betrayed if they failed. Elaine, in the midst of discussing an excess of choices, noted that students desired a precise formula for job success.

> **Elaine**: I think I think if anything I hear more about "How do these choices actually translate into a job?" So they have a lot of choices to go do things, and that's fine but it's sort of like how will this actually translate to me getting a job or me getting whatever thing that I want, and the other thing that they bring up is the question prior to this one which has to do with level of availability of resource. So even if I *do* do this, what will this mean?

Me: So in general does it seem like students want to have a very clear formula for what gets you a job?

Elaine: Yeah [laughter].

Because so much anxiety revolved around transitions, several therapists cited the first and last years of college as most stressful.

Although therapists at highly selective schools described competition as pervasive, they also emphasized that Asian foreign students (but not Asian-American students) had unique problems. Gene noted that Chinese students often sought therapy to deal with their shame about under-performance; they also felt that "they've shamed their family or they've shamed their country," which can be "life-or-death kinds of crises" for Chinese students. Gene's comments align with the findings of Lee and Zhou (2015), who have shown that East Asian families apply a success frame in which an advanced prestigious degree is essential; anything less is shameful. Yet Mateo believed that the hyper-competitiveness prevalent in East Asia had become prevalent in the U.S. too. David and Gene also commented on how acculturation difficulties triggered anxiety in East Asian students who often misunderstood conversational (but not written) English, and were confused when penalized for collaboration and copying that was acceptable in their native country.

Countering the thesis that a surfeit of choices increases anxiety, therapists observed that that students under-estimated choices. Students believed their only options were traditional sectors such as banking, medicine, and education. Students also believed that indecision and career change signified failure. Morgan also noted that students made poor forecasts—some assumed a bachelor's degree made them competitive for

professional fields, or that college reputation would influence earnings. A novel

challenge was managing career exploration under the shadow of debt. Morgan's clients

believed that their success hinged on perfect educational choices, a perception grounded

in the hyper-specialization of professional sectors. Thus, the flexibility that formerly

constituted the liberal-arts ethos was disappearing. Overall, however, there was little

consensus about whether choice fatigue had caused greater anxiety.

V. Challenge of Distinctiveness

The distinctiveness hypothesis was that the need to be optimally distinctive is

thwarted when structures make it difficult to perceive one's achievements as noteworthy.

This problem could be exacerbated because self-esteem pedagogy. Nine therapists agreed

with this hypothesis, albeit somewhat hesitantly in many cases. Some said this concern

manifested when high-school achievers realized they were average in college.. Many also

tied distinctiveness to competitiveness and other-directedness because all three topics

pertained to self-appraisal.

Elaine and Rhonda also commented on how diversity concerns played into

feelings of indistinctiveness. Elaine had heard some white men describe feeling that they

lacked something unique to contribute, and that they would be uncompetitive if

competing for a job against a minority candidate. Rhonda also noted that white men had

anxieties about self-worth because they saw women and people of color "overtaking

white men in public prominence" on campus, adding that election of Donald Trump was

a manifestation of this anxiety.

Vivian, Adair, and Julie also agreed that distinctiveness problems may have been

exacerbated by self-esteem pedagogy. Vivian and Julie noted a tendency for many

children to get labeled "above average" and receive trophies for trivial achievements, though Julie noted the classed nature of this phenomenon. Remarkably, Julie had witnessed a disproportionate increase in entering students who "really have had no failure experiences." Both Julie and Vivian thought students needed some failure experiences *before* college, because in college the stakes are "too high" (Vivian).

Adair addressed the neglect of diligence in self-esteem pedagogy.

Adair: It teaches you that you are unique and special and then when you have to put your nose to the grindstone and create something that's unique and special, that's very different [laughter] and so I do think that...I think it goes back to perhaps what you said earlier about [other-directedness]. That to me you still need to be super-special to the outside world as opposed to just really feeling "I really love what I do" and knowing "I'm good at it and that's OK" in my small inner world.

Daniel similarly commented on the other-directedness problem. He thought the pursuit of distinction detracted from the intrinsic pleasure of learning and spurred unnecessary anxiety.

Population growth, social media usage, and celebrity culture also play a role. On social media, one must compete for attention, a challenge that encourages extreme gambits. Both Rhonda and Mateo pointed out that being provocative on social media was one such gambit. As Mateo put it, people try to be "a little bit outrageous or a little bit provocative or a little troubled" or express anxiety or vulnerability (on social media) to elicit attention. Mateo considered these issues a side effect of population growth and "massification" where people feel "like cattle," and react by pursuing uniqueness. Vivian

observed that some students considered distinctiveness to be existentially crucial. Absent a unique contribution to the world, they believed their existence was pointless. Elaine recalled that some felt impelled to make this unique contribution immediately after graduation.

Limitations

The purpose of this study was to examine the anxiety trend in college students, and to test five hypotheses about the putative rise in anxiety. In answering the question about the anxiety trend, some therapists drew on large datasets. However, in answering the hypothesis-driven questions, many therapists relied on conscious recall. Confirmation bias and acquiescence bias may have prompted the recall of more favorable than unfavorable evidence. Nevertheless, many therapists flagged instances when they were speculating. Therapists' recollections may have also been biased by recency effects, particularly in the societal question.

The sample size of this study is also a liability. Each therapist drew on thousands of hours of consulting experience so the indirect sample size (i.e., number of therapy clients) was large but the number of interviewees was small. These findings should be validated with a larger sample; the current findings can inform questionnaire design.

Conclusion

Most therapists said they had observed an increase in anxiety, but many noted that compositional change in the student population, revised screening practices, and reduction in stigma could partially explain the change. Their attention to compositional change is important because previous research with psychotherapists elicited their perceptions of anxiety change, but neglected to ask about whether they attributed a

portion of such change to compositional differences rather than cohort differences. Nevertheless, some also suggested that cohort differences were discernable.

Therapists' observations generally aligned with the hypotheses about anxiety change. There was moderate-to-strong support for the hypotheses regarding societal stressors, helicopter parenting, competitiveness, and distinctiveness. The findings on societal change not only indicate that population growth and terrorism instigate anxiety, but also point to political polarization and right-wing extremism as sources of anxiety. Sociologists have criticized the mental health profession for elevating biochemical models and neglecting sociology, but therapists' comments suggest that account for societal changes. Therapists made no comments about biochemical models and drug treatment, possibly because I did not ask or because drug management is the responsibility of psychiatrists, not counseling psychologists.

Findings on competitiveness and distinctiveness suggest, in accordance with prior findings, that the need to be a viable candidate for professional pursuits has become increasingly salient. The most novel findings are those about increased parental interference in college counseling, and increased parent–child communication. Both distinctiveness and competitiveness could be tied to the theme of impression management, which would suggest support for the other-directedness hypothesis, but when therapists were asked about other-directedness, their responses were mixed. Perhaps other-directedness has been steadily regnant since the late 20th century, with no discernible increase. Technology and social media were often cited as relevant to all the hypotheses.

The distinctions between the hypotheses suggest a highly complex model, but a simplification is possible. In Figure 2.1, I show in the upper half the direct and indirect paths from stressors to anxiety. Stressors range from large-scale political occurrences to small-scale academic competition. Such stressors directly lead to perceptions that the world is uncontrollable and unpredictable, a process that gets amplified by high-frequency media consumption. Parental supervision may assuage students' concerns, but it has a nonlinear association with anxiety. Adequate supervision can assuage financial anxiety and prevent students from making poor academic choices. Excessive supervision can suppress autonomy, thereby hindering coping skills development. These processes are complemented by self-discrepancies, discussed in the introduction, that can induce anxiety and depression. Such discrepancies pertain to knowledge, academic performance, and the steadiness of the life course. Although the figure separates these discrepancies for interpretability, such discrepancies are likely overlapping. Note that choice fatigue and other-directedness are absent.

Future surveys of college-employed psychotherapists may be improved by having (a) questions that separately tap into the college's proprietary quantitative data and the psychotherapist's clinical observations, (b) questions that separate intensity from prevalence, and (c) discrete questions about the magnitude of change that therapists attribute to compositional difference, selection effects, stigma reduction, early screening, and cohort differences. Surveys could separately measure whether students' aspirations have moved upward and whether students' self-perceptions have moved downward. Student surveys could similarly include questions about ideals and self-evaluations which would allow researchers to track cohort change. Targeting uncertainty perceptions,

student surveys could also address why students with similar objective resources reach different conclusions about the uncertainty of future success, which has downstream effects on anxiety. Lastly, interventions aimed at reducing helicopter parenting through, for example, parental education during first-year orientations, could be experimentally tested to ascertain whether administrators can induce moderate supervision rather than insufficient or excessive supervision. Students could similarly be trained to recognize and cope with challenges posed by insufficient or excessive supervision.

The most novel findings of this study are those about increased parental interference in college counseling, and increased frequency of parent–child communication. Colleges and parents cannot reverse technological and cultural changes, but interventions targeting over-communication that narrowly address these two issues may assist college students with autonomy and identity development. At an institutional level, one might invest in social-norms interventions and behavioral economics techniques to guide students toward periodic rather than continuous media usage. Training in self-administered, evidence-based therapeutic techniques like mindfulness and third-generation cognitive-behavioral therapy could provisionally become part of the college curriculum too.

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TABLES

Table 2.1. Characteristics of Interviewees

	Name	Current Title	Experience (years)	Affiliation	Region	Experience Between Internship and Current Job
0	Bill	Retired Director	27	Highly Selective Private Liberal Arts College	Mid-Atlantic	
1	David	Retired Director	34	Highly Selective Private University	Southeast	
2	Vivian	Director	16.5	Highly Selective Private University	Southeast	Counselor and Director at similar universities
3	Elaine	Associate Director	13	Highly Selective Private University	Southeast	Counselor at less selective public university
4	Julie	Director	25	Mod. Selective Public University	Northwest	Professor and head of psychology program
5	Kimball	Director	23	Highly Selective Private Polytechnic	Northeast	
6	Rhonda	Director	27	Moderately Selective Public University	Southwest	Counselor at highly selective private and moderately selective public university; acute psychiatry specialist at university-

						affiliated hospital
7	Adair	Private-Practice Counselor	37	Private Practice	N/A	Counselor at public university
8	Daniel	Director	27	Moderately Selective Public University	Northeast	Counselor at highly and moderately selective universities in Northeast and Midwest
9	Morgan	Director	16	Highly Selective Private Liberal Arts College	Northeast	Counselor at public university in Northeast, community mental health institution, and VA hospital
10	Reid	Director	27	Moderately Selective Public University	Northeast	Manager for rural mental health clinic; crisis center director; clinic director; etc.
11	Gene	Staff Psychologist	47	Highly Selective Private University	Midwest	Forensic psychologist; therapist at private practice arm of community health center; counselor at adult day-care facility for mentally ill; etc.
12	Mateo	Consulting Psychiatrist	32	Highly Selective Private University	California	Professor of psychiatry; psychiatrist in private practice

Note. Experience includes all years of medical and psychotherapeutic work.

Table 2.2. Subjective Ratings of Causal Factors as Steady or Rising

	Overall		Highly Sel.		Less Sel.	
	Steady	Rise	Steady	Rise	Steady	Rise
Societal Change	3	9	3	4	0	5
Other-Directness	5	7	2	5	3	2
Helicopter Parenting	3	9	2	5	1	4
Competitiveness	1.5	10.5	0.5	6.5	1	4
Choice Fatigue	6	6	3	4	3	2
Distinctiveness	3	9	2	5	1	4

Note. Sel. = Selective. One therapist made a case for both rise and steadiness in competitiveness; his vote was split across both columns. The pilot interview is excluded
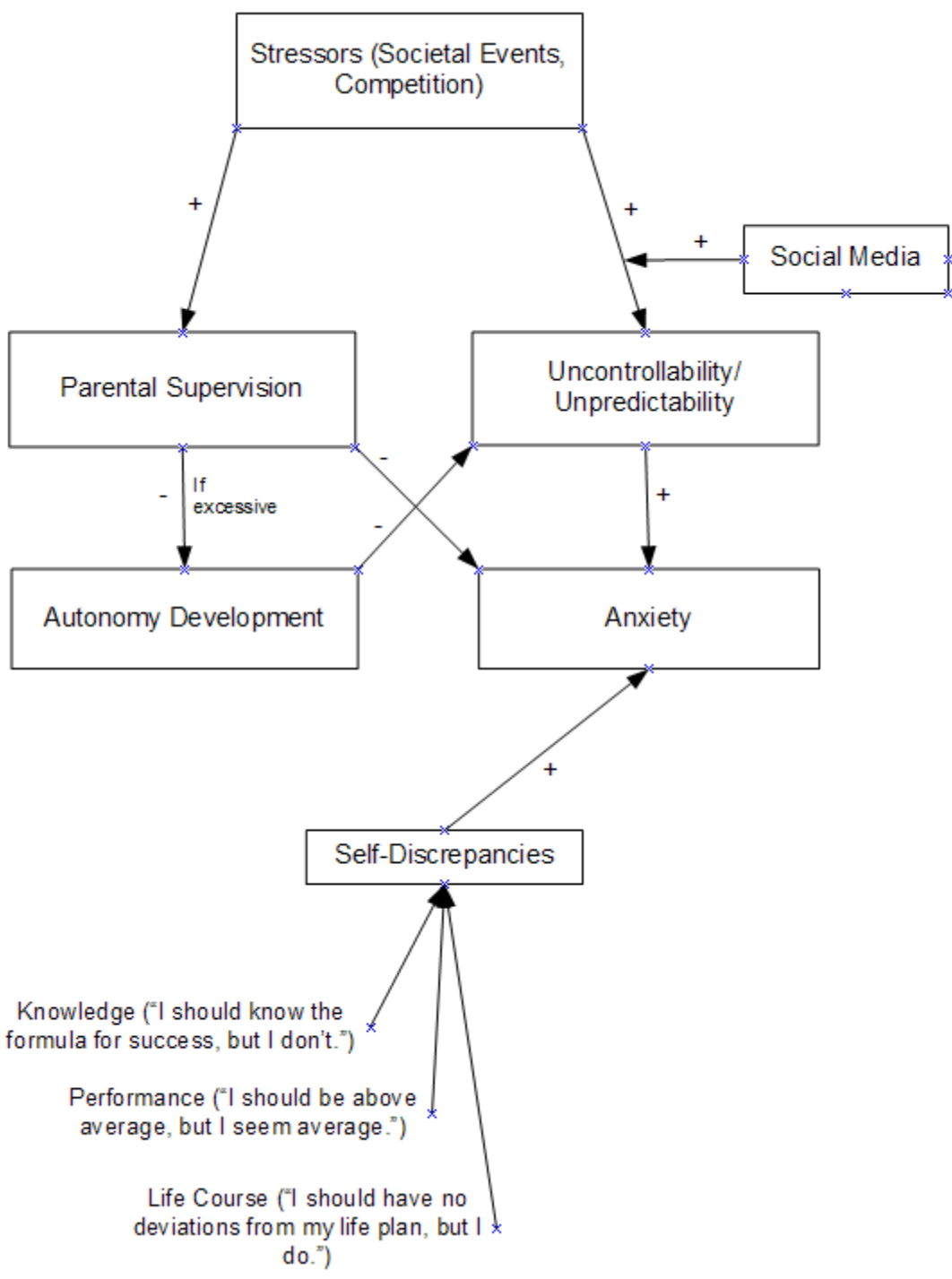
FIGURES

Figure 2.1. Causal processes in the development of anxiety

CHAPTER 3:
PARENTAL SES AND SUBSTANCE USAGE IN UNDERGRADUATES: EVIDENCE
FOR THE PARTY PATHWAY

ABSTRACT

In *Paying for the Party*, Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) describe how privileged college students often opt for a party pathway, placing social success and enjoyment above academic considerations during their college years. If such a pathway is indeed chosen by many high-SES students, rates of alcohol consumption and substance use should be higher among students from high-SES households. In the current study, I examine whether students from high-SES households are more likely than peers to use marijuana, choose varied drugs, consume alcohol frequently, and use alcohol and substances to cope with stress. Using data from 18,611 undergraduates, aged 18-24, in the Healthy Minds 2016-17 dataset. I find that high SES is predictive of marijuana use, drug variety, and frequency of alcohol consumption, and disengagement coping through substances. The first three results hold after adjusting for gender, race, residence type, and relationship status. These results imply that high-SES students may be greater risk for addiction disorders, and colleges may enable downward mobility by permitting students to opt for the party pathway.

INTRODUCTION

In Paying for the Party, Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) describe the contrasting

pathways that undergraduate students take through their college years. One pathway

commonly taken by wealthy students is the party pathway. The mindset behind this

pathway, which students often inherit from their parents, is that the college years are for

celebrating one's youth before one enters the adult world. Students on this pathway

prioritize their participation in Greek organization and social clubs, and consider

academic work a low priority. Given this party pathway, one would expect the use of

alcohol and illicit substances to be higher among students from privileged backgrounds.

The current study examines this hypothesis about alcohol and substance usage.

Uncovering such a pattern is relevant to the sociology of mental health because

substance usage is a precursor to addiction. The prevailing consensus in the sociology of

mental health is that socioeconomic status (SES) is a resource that consistently *protects*

individuals from mental illness. Most health sociologists draw upon Pearlin's (1981)

stress model, and Link and Phelan's "fundamental causes" model (2010), both of which

present little to no downside to socioeconomic advantage. In epidemiology and medicine,

one finds research on *diseases of affluence*, the consequence of unhealthy diets in wealthy

societies, but this concept is missing in the sociology of mental health.

In the case of substance use disorders, conventional models such as the stress

model and fundamental-causes model may fall short because addiction can ensue from

recreational choices and peer norms rather than inadequate buffers. Recreational

substance usage has traditionally been considered deviant behavior, and criminological

studies have shown that that SES is a poor predictor of such behavior among both adults

and adolescents (Agnew et al. 2008; Dunaway et al. 2000). High SES predicts a taste for

risk, low perceived risk of detection, high social power, and unconventional values,

factors that promote deviant behavior, though such behavior is somewhat suppressed by

low levels of alienation, aggression, and financial strain; and high levels of aspirations

and self-control (Wright et al. 1999). Consequently, SES has a weak negative association

with crime.

When it comes to substance usage, studies show that adolescents from wealthy

households and neighborhoods are more likely to use licit and illicit substances. Luthar

and D'Avanzo (1999) compared substance abuse rates between suburban and inner-city

adolescents. Higher rates were found in the suburbs. Neighborhood type also moderated a

downstream effect. Among suburban adolescents, substance use was more strongly

linked with subjective maladjustment. Findings from a different suburban neighborhood

showed that rates there were higher than national norms (Luthar and Goldstein 2008).

Other findings also show higher alcohol and substance use among adolescents in affluent households (Patrick et al. 2012), schools (Botticello 2009), and communities (Song et al. 2009). Consumption is sensitive to affordability, which partially explains this association (Farrell, Manning, and Finch 2003; Martin et al. 2009).

The scope of psychological work extends beyond substance use, and shows that depression, anxiety, and somatic symptoms are relatively high among affluent adolescents (Luthar, Barkin, and Crossman 2013). The onset of mental illness and substance usage can be jointly predicted by low parental commitment and containment (Luthar and Goldstein 2008). Commitment is the propensity of parents to prioritize children amidst competing priorities. When long working hours or other activities lead to insufficient parental involvement, children perceive low commitment, which predicts greater distress and substance use (Larzelere and Patterson 1990). Containment refers to the stringency of anticipated parental reactions to deviant behavior. High containment means that adolescents expect parents to be strict rather than tolerant.

Peer norms are also influential. Evidence suggests that neighborhood affluence is a better predictor of anxiety and depression than household affluence, suggesting that prevailing peer norms influence the behavior of all contained youth, regardless of individual affluence (Lund and Dearing 2013). Empirical findings based on a social learning perspective (Bandura 1969) corroborate this interpretation, showing that individual consumption can be predicted by normative consumption of alcohol in one's peer group and post-consumption expectancies of alcohol's effect (DeSoto et al. 2014).

The current study examines whether high parental SES predicts greater alcohol and substance usage, henceforth *substance usage*, in college undergraduates. As some

critics have noted, *Paying for the Party* is based on a small sample of residential female undergraduates, a consequence of the ethnographic method. For generalizability, its findings should be triangulated with quantitative studies based on larger samples from a range of universities, as in Hamilton (2013) and this study.

I examine four outcomes predicting that all will be correlated positively with parental SES. The first three outcomes, which are *behavioral outcomes*, are the likelihood of using marijuana, the diversity of drugs consumed, and the quantity of alcohol consumed. I initially included the likelihood of using any drug, but its correlation with marijuana use was almost perfect. The fourth outcome, an *instrumental outcome*, is the likelihood of using alcohol and drugs to cope with stress. These dependent variables were first selected and then analyzed. Their inclusion is not the result of selective reporting after analyzing numerous outcomes.

I selected marijuana consumption as an outcome because marijuana, unlike cocaine and heroin, is barely affected by its price (Gallet 2014). Thus, an association between SES and marijuana usage is unlikely to solely result from un-affordability. Also, marijuana consumption is common, so statistical power is greater.

The diversity of illicit substances is the second outcome. The likelihood of experimenting with numerous substances should rise among those who prioritize the party pathway, and among those who enjoy risk and perceive self-invulnerability, two factors associated with high SES.

The third outcome, quantity of alcohol consumption, was selected because the first two outcomes only measure incidence. Quantity of consumption is informative. A student who drinks alcohol daily is probably on the party pathway; a student who drinks

alcohol once a week is probably not. Among underage students, heavy drinking entails greater risk of punishment, so frequent consumption may also indicate low perceived risk of detection.

The fourth outcome is the tendency to use substances to disengage from stressors. Disengagement is an avoidant form of coping, which contrasts with approach-oriented and emotion-oriented forms. In general, people opt for disengagement coping when they are pessimistic or hopeless. Accordingly, low SES predicts disengagement coping (Finkelstein et al. 2007). Substance-use disengagement is one of four forms that disengagement coping takes, but there should be a *positive* association between SES and substance use coping if high-SES students are more habitual in their use of substances.

The four outcomes are modeled in both unadjusted and adjusted analyses. In the adjusted analyses, I add race, relationship status, gender, and residence type. Whites are more likely to enter the party pathway, and Asians are likely to forgo substance usage because of the cultural emphasis on academic achievement (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013; Lee and Zhou 2015). Men are more likely than women to use substances, a manifestation of greater risk taking in general (McCabe, Teter, and Boyd 2006; Nolen-Hoeksema 2004). Marriage tempers substance usage (Duncan, Wilkerson, and England 2006).

I considered controlling for both residence and Greek society membership. Students who live with parents are farther from campus parties, and receive parental supervision, which suppresses substance usage. Conversely, students active in Greek life, especially those residing in a Greek house, are probably on the party pathway. These two factors are also manifestations of SES, however, and thus mediate rather than confound

the relationship between SES and substance usage, so the risk of over-controlling is considerable. I ultimate chose to control for residential status only. Furthermore, Greek-society membership information was missing for 5% of respondents, whereas residential status was missing for only 2%. After running the main analyses, I ran analyses (a) dropping residential status and (b) including both residential status and Greek membership. The SES coefficient was marginally stronger in (a) and weaker in (b), suggesting that both factors mediate the effect of SES.

METHODS

Sample

Data came from 18,611 undergraduates, aged 18-24, who participated in the Healthy Minds (HMS) 2016 study. HMS is an annual survey of university students in the United States that examines mental health and counseling service utilization. In 2016, 23 schools administered the survey, each connecting HMS with either a random sample of 4,000 students (large schools) or all students.

Because graduate students are different in maturity and SES, I only examined undergraduates, excluding participants over 24 because they have passed the young adulthood stage. Participants in the 23-24 age range reported lower SES, so for robustness, I also tested models with those aged 18-22, finding no meaningful differences.

Students were invited and reminded to participate via email. Non-responders were reminded up to three times. The overall participation rate for the 2016 study was 26%. HMS includes individual-level non-response weights, constructed from calculations of

disproportionate responding by gender, race/ethnicity, academic level, and grade point average.

A question about what drugs, if any, were used within the past 30 days was included in the main survey (N = 18,325). A question about frequency of alcohol consumption was in the Substance Use module, administered at six schools (N = 3,415). The Brief COPE inventory (Carver 1997), which includes questions about substance usage for coping, was in the Stress and Coping module, administered at 13 schools (N = 10,795).

Table 3.1 contains descriptive statistics for categorical variables. I break down parental education because it is more interpretable than the SES score. Table 3.2 contains descriptive statistics for the continuous variables, along with age and parental education.

Measures

Participants were asked a question about Hispanic ethnicity and a question about their race. Using answers from both questions, I coded respondents as (1) *Non-Hispanic White* if they answered no for Hispanic, and exclusively white for race, (2) *Hispanic White* if they answered yes for Hispanic, and exclusively white for race, (3) *Hispanic only* if they answered yes for Hispanic, and selected no race, (4) *Black* if they exclusively selected black for race, (5) Asian if they exclusively selected Asian, (6) *Asian-White* if they selected exactly two races, Asian and White, and (7) *Other* if they selected any other race or combination of races. Other races that could have selected were American Indian, Native American, or Alaskan Native; Middle Eastern, Arab, or Arab American; Pacific Islander; Hawaiian Native; and "Other (please specify)." I avoided coding students as

biracial because it can encompass any two races. Asian-White biracial constituted 1.8%
of the sample, so I coded it separately. Other biracial groups were small.

Residence type was coded 0 for on-campus dorms, on-campus apartments, and
on- or off-campus co-operative housing; 1 for fraternity or sorority houses; 2 for off-
campus non-university or "other" housing; and 3 for living with parents or relatives.

Relationship status was measured with six options, which I collapsed into four
categories: single (reference); in a relationship; married, domestic partnership, or
engaged; and (4) other.

Gender was measured by asking for gender identity. Options were male, female,
trans male/trans man, trans female/trans woman, genderqueer/gender non-conforming,
and other. Because of small cell counts, I created a trichotomous variable: male, female,
and trans/queer/other (TQO).

Participants answered a single question about recent substance usage, "Over the
past 30 days, have you used any of the following drugs?" The options were marijuana,
cocaine (any form, including crack, powder, or freebase), heroin, methamphetamines
(also known as speed, crystal meth, or ice), other stimulants (such as Ritalin, Adderall)
without a prescription, ecstasy, other drugs without a prescription (please specify), and
"no, none of these." Participants could select multiple drugs but "none" was only
selectable exclusively. I created a dummy code for marijuana. I indexed drug variety by
counting selected options.

Frequency of alcohol usage was indexed by the question, "How often do you have
a drink containing alcohol?" Its options were 1 (*never*), 2 (*monthly or less*), 3 *(2-4 times a*

month), 4 (*2-3 times a week*), 5 (*4 or more times a week*). This question is from the

Alcohol Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) (Saunders et al. 1993).

Disengagement coping was measured with the Brief COPE (Carver 1997).

Respondents were asked how they "respond to stressful situations". Two items on the

Brief COPE measured alcohol-and-drug disengagement: "I use alcohol or drugs to make

myself feel better" and "[…] to help me get through it" ($\alpha = .92$). Respondents answered

on a scale from 1 (*I usually don't do this at all*) to 4 (*I usually do this a lot*). I computed

the mean and to adjust for a sawtooth pattern I rounded up fractional values. The Brief

COPE also includes a two-item scale of behavioral disengagement: "I give up trying to

deal with it" and "I give up the attempt to cope" ($\alpha = .69$). I computed the mean.

I created a composite score for parental SES using three questions. The first two

questions measured parental academic attainment, and were answered on a 7-item scale

from 1 (*8th grade or lower*) to 7 (*graduate degree*). The third question was "Which of the

following best describes your family's financial situation growing up?" The options were

1 (*very poor, not enough to get by*), 2 (*Had enough to get by but not many "extras"*), 3

(*comfortable*), and 4 (*well to do*). The composite score was derived using polychoric

principal component analysis, recommended for generating an SES score from ordinal

questions (Kolenikov and Angeles 2009).

Data Analysis

All analyses were conducted in Stata 14. I used multilevel models with schools at

Level 2. For dichotomous outcomes, I used logistic models. For the two coping-style

variables, answers were right-skewed, so I used ordered logistic models. Unless

otherwise specified, all analyses are weighted. I grand-centered SES at Level 1 to make

intercepts and coefficients meaningful. The intercept is the outcome if parental SES is average and other characteristics match the reference values (i.e., single, non-Hispanic, White, male, on-campus resident). The intraclass coefficients for the outcomes are in Table 3.2, and show that most variation is at the individual level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Correlations between key variables are in Table 3.3. I include average parental educational attainment for interpretability. Parental educational attainment and SES had comparable positive correlations with marijuana usage, variety in drug usage, and frequency of alcohol consumption.

Multilevel modeling results for the behavioral outcomes are in Table 3.4. Note that only the third column shows linear coefficients. The table includes z statistics to make cross-column comparisons possible. Supporting my hypotheses, these results show parental SES is predictive of marijuana usage, variety in drug usage, and frequency of alcohol consumption. The SES effects are much stronger in the unadjusted models, suggesting race confounds the relationship; and residential status and relationship status mediate the relationship.

Alcohol and drug usage were highest among Whites, which comports with the findings of Armstrong and Hamilton (2013). Non-Hispanic Whites, due to their privileged status, may also feel immune to sanctions, and therefore engage in more frequent and intense alcohol and substance use. Asian students were least likely to use alcohol and drugs, and Asian-White biracial students were at the approximate midpoint between Asians and Whites. A subset of White parents likely encourage partying, sometimes hovering over their children to help them maintain social popularity

(Hamilton 2016). In contrast, Asian parents likely constrain their children's pursuit of extracurricular activities unless those activities contribute to one's marketability (Lee and Zhou 2015). This cultural contrast may explain why, despite comparable SES (Sakamoto, Goyette, and Kim 2009), there is a racial contrast. Across all outcomes, the effects for Asian-White students suggest the cultural effect is stronger when transmitted by two Asian parents rather than one. The White–Black contrast may derive from the tendency of disadvantaged students to shun the party pathway and take the mobility pathway, in which college is viewed as a path up the economic ladder (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013). In addition, some Greek life organizations practice *de facto* discrimination against Black students (Sidanius et al. 2004), and Black students have greater reason to fear being arrested (Beckett, Nyrop, and Pfingst 2006).

As anticipated, students who lived with parents were less likely, and students who lived in a fraternity or sorority were more likely to use substances. The effect sizes in both cases were high. Living with parents is a manifestation of low SES, representing fiscal constraints and attendance at a local school, but living in a fraternity or sorority house is a value-driven choice. The fact that the effects were strong suggests that physical proximity to alcohol and drugs, and to parties where they are consumed, is one of the best predictors of consumption incidence and rates.

Aligning with prior research on relationship status and gender, all results showed that married individuals and women were less likely to use alcohol and drugs. Being in a relationship rather than single also seemed to weakly reduce alcohol and drug usage.

Substance use coping, the instrumental outcome, is displayed in the fourth column of Table 3.4. Parental SES was predictive of substance usage coping in the adjusted

analysis, but not in the unadjusted analysis. The coefficients for residence type in this model are relatively strong, which suggests that high-SES students who live in Greek housing and off-campus apartment may have readily accessible alcohol, which they can consume when stressed, but high-SES students who live in on-campus dormitories may be less prone to store alcohol in their residence.

I modeled behavioral disengagement to compare the results with substance-use disengagement (see Table 3.4). Behavioral disengagement was much higher among low-SES students. Because behavioral disengagement is essentially "giving up," it signifies enduring pessimism. One would expect students who lack socioeconomic resources to opt for such disengagement (Finkelstein et al. 2007). Substance-use disengagement is less permanent, signifying transient pessimism, which could explain why the patterns are dissimilar for substance-use and behavioral disengagement.

Alternatively, low-SES students may, due to pessimism about *completing* tasks, combine behavioral disengagement with substance-use disengagement—they may give up on a task and then drink to de-stress. High-SES students may solely use substances to distract themselves from academic stress, a consequence of opting for the professional rather than the party pathway**.** The professional pathway is oriented toward career outcomes (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013). Like the party pathway, it is more likely to be pursued by wealthy students. Both high school and college students facing achievement-related stress use alcohol and substance use to diminish their stress (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse 2007, 2012) A recent study of elite high schools showed that students who deployed effective coping strategies *also* used drugs and alcohol to cope with academic stress (Leonard et al. 2015). Through quantitative and qualitative

data analysis, the authors uncovered to a future-oriented mindset among students, who believed that a narrow, stress-inducing focus on superior academic achievement in the short-term would bear fruit in the long term.

Thus, a certain set of high-SES students may use substances to cope with achievement stress, while a certain set of low-SES students may use substances to cope with hopelessness, manifesting as modest rates of substance-abuse coping among both sets. In both cases, the quantity of consumption is likely to be low, because the student is not party-oriented. However, students who combine the professional and party pathways may use substances to de-stress because substances, being habitually consumed, are readily available. This would explain why many factors that predict behavioral outcomes also predict substance-use disengagement.

This study's primary limitation is the response rate. Although non-response weighting corrects this problem to a degree, the response rate was likely correlated with trait conscientiousness, which also predicts healthier life choices (Bogg and Roberts 2013). Because of its topic, HMS also elicits fewer responses from mentally healthy students (Eisenberg, Golberstein, and Gollust 2007).

These findings are consistent with the thesis that students who pursue a party pathway are likely to have high-SES parents. The authors of *Paying for the Party* argue that high-SES students who pursue this pathway are nevertheless successful in their post-college careers because they leverage their parents' social capital to obtain good jobs but the small number of low-SES students who take this pathway end up "paying for the party," suffering career consequences. Thus, the authors argue, colleges maintain inequality. My findings paint a more complicated picture. Given their alcohol and drug

consumption, high-SES students may be more likely than their peers to suffer direct outcomes of substance consumption, like neural damage and addiction disorders, and indirect outcomes, like unintentional and intentional injury. They may not pay for the party in career outcomes but in health outcomes instead, manifesting downward mobility rather than the persistence of inequality.

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Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics, Weighted Percentages.

	Models 1-2	Model 3	Model 4
Age			
18-20	36.7	33.6	36.3
21-24	63.3	66.4	63.7
Gender			
Male	44.2	44.5	43.2
Female	54.8	54.3	56.0
Trans./Other	1.0	1.2	0.8
Race/Ethnicity			
Non-Hispanic White	68.3	67.9	74.4
Hispanic White	5.2	5.9	4.3
Hispanic Only	2.9	3.8	2.5
Black	4.2	4.2	4.2
Asian	11.0	9.8	7.6
Asian-White	1.9	1.8	1.5
All Other	6.5	6.6	5.5
Relationship Status			
Single	61.5	62.2	61.1
In Relationship	36.1	36.2	36.2
Married	1.6	0.8	1.9
Div./Wid./Other	0.8	0.9	0.8
Parent 1 Education			
8th grade or less	1.6	1.5	1.4
8th-12th grade	1.7	1.9	1.7
High School Deg.	10.1	10.3	10.9
Some College	10.5	11.5	10.3
Associates	6.6	6.7	7.9
Bachelor's	34.5	36.4	34.3
Graduate	35.1	31.7	33.5
Parent 2 Education			
8th grade or less	1.6	1.3	1.5
8th-12th grade	2.0	2.0	1.9
High School Deg.	12.0	13.5	12.2
Some College	12.4	13.5	12.4
Associates	8.0	8.1	8.6
Bachelor's	35.1	36.7	35.6
Graduate	28.9	24.9	27.8
N	18611	3469	10944

Table 3.2. Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion for Continuous Variables

	Mean	Median	SD	N	Kurtosis	Skewness
Parental SES (0-4)	2.69	2.72	0.59	20960	2.96	-0.51
Marijuana (Dummy)	0.23	0	0.39	19097	2.76	1.32
No. of Drugs (0-6)	0.30	0	0.59	19097	12.09	2.65
Freq. of Alcohol (1-5)	3.05	3	1.00	3566	2.00	-0.21
Subst. Use Coping (1-4)	1.37	1	0.61	11186	5.30	1.71
Behavioral Disengagement (1-4)	1.51	1.5	0.62	11179	4.74	1.41

Note. Kurtosis and skewness are unweighted.

Table 3.3. Table of Pairwise Correlations and Intraclass Coefficients, Weighted

	Age	Par. Educ.	SES	Marijuana (Y/N)	Drug Count	Alc. Freq.	Drug Diseng.	Beh. Diseng.
Age	1							
N	21596							
Par. Educ.	-.07***	1						
N	21495	21495						
SES	-.08***	.92***	1					
N	20960	20960	20960					
Marijuana (Y/N)	<.01	.04***	.05***	1				
N	19097	19017	18611	19097				
Drug Count[1]	.03***	.04***	.05***	.83***	1			
N	19097	19017	18611	19097	19097			
Alc. Freq.	.17***	.09***	.11***	.32***	.34***	1		
N	3566	3547	3469	3539	3539	3566		
Drug Diseng.[1]	.09***	.02	.02	.44***	.47***	.31***	1	
N	11186	11149	10944	10955	10955	972	11186	
Beh. Diseng.	.03*	-.08***	-.10***	.08***	.09***	-.02	.26***	1
N	11179	11142	10937	10948	10948	972	11179	11179
ICC	.01	.13	.13	.11	.03	.02	.02	.01

Note. The observation count is included because it varies greatly across cells.

[1] Variable is right-skewed. Use caution when interpreting the coefficient.

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table 3.4. Multilevel Model Results for Marijuana in Last 30 Days, Number of Drugs in Last 30 Days, Alcohol Frequency, Substance-Use Disengagement, and Behavioral Disengagement

	Marijuana	No. of Drugs	Alcohol Freq.	Substance Use Disengage-ment	Behavioral Disengage-ment
Model	Logistic (OR)	Neg. Binomial (IRR)	Linear	Ordered Logistic (OR)	Ordered Logistic (OR)
Unadjusted					
Intercept	0.288***	0.301***	2.760***	--	--
	(-8.31)	(-9.48)	(37.93)		
SES	1.172***	1.150***	0.186***	1.095**	0.836**
	(3.82)	(3.66)	(3.72)	(2.80)	(-4.02)
Random Effects					
L2 Var.(Intercept)	0.392	0.279	0.024	0.174	0.016
L2 Var.(SES)	0.014	0.011	0.008	--	0.011
L2 Covar. (Intercept, SES)	-0.045	0.021	-0.005	--	0.002
	(-1.49)	(-1.02)	(-0.70)		(0.40)
L1 Var. (Residual)	--	--	1.330	--	--
N	18,611	18,611	3,469	10,944	10,937
Adjusted					
Intercept	0.341***	0.337***	2.854***	--	--
	(-6.98)	(-8.75)	(23.77)		
SES	1.129**	1.106**	0.120**	1.050	0.861**
	(2.98)	(2.68)	(2.67)	(1.32)	(-3.14)
Residence: On-Campus	1	1	1	1	1
Frat./Sor.	2.425***	2.364***	0.659**	2.539***	1.066
	(6.99)	(7.92)	(2.96)	(9.74)	(0.42)
Off-Campus	1.548*	1.536***	0.320	1.747***	1.087
	(7.36)	(8.11)	(1.41)	(6.63)	(1.29)
With Parents/Relatives	0.618***	0.651**	-0.447***	0.740**	1.326**

	(-4.53)	(-3.99)	(-3.60)	(-3.16)	(3.06)
Non-Hisp. White	1	1	1	1	1
Hisp. White	0.949	0.999	-0.177*	0.880	1.116
	(-1.78)	(-0.01)	(-1.99)	(-1.18)	(0.73)
Hispanic Only	1.382**	1.162†	-0.356***	1.169	1.154
	(2.69)	(1.79)	(-3.61)	(1.64)	(1.115)
Black	0.913*	0.858*	-0.446***	0.711	1.087
	(-1.28)	(-2.28)	(-3.52)	(-1.48)	(0.41)
Asian	0.485***	0.581***	-0.623***	0.689***	1.304**
	(-7.21)	(-5.49)	(-10.78)	(-4.02)	(3.84)
Asian-White	0.752**	0.785*	-0.347***	0.907	1.081
	(-2.97)	(-2.83)	(-7.15)	(-0.54)	(0.54)
Other	1.116	1.075	-0.367***	1.148	1.216*
	(1.28)	(1.40)	(-3.68)	(1.31)	(2.16)
Single	1	1	1	1	1
In Rel.	0.940	0.949†	0.039	0.869**	0.913*
	(-1.56)	(-1.84)	(0.50)	(-3.34)	(-2.28)
Marr.	0.439***	0.544***	-0.589**	0.561**	0.892
	(-6.27)	(-4.22)	(-2.81)	(-2.92)	(-0.57)
Other	2.029**	1.901**	0.970**	0.963	1.218
	(2.82)	(3.29)	(3.29)	(-0.16)	(1.46)
Male	1	1	1	1	1
Female	0.677***	0.702***	-0.096†	0.824**	1.373***
	(-8.65)	(-8.25)	(-1.87)	(-3.34)	(7.96)
Trans/Other	0.848	0.752	-0.637***	1.334	3.806***
	(-0.69)	(-1.26)	(-5.00)	(1.35)	(4.79)
Random Effects					
L2 Var.(Intercept)	0.387	0.266	0.015	0.180	0.014
L2 Var.(SES)	0.016	0.013	0.004	--	0.006
L2 Covar. (Intercept, SES)	-0.034	-0.008	-0.004	--	<0.001
	(-1.32)	(-0.49)	(-0.95)		(0.96)
L1 Var. Residual	--	--	1.238	--	--

N	18,325	18,325	3,415	10,802	10,795
No. of Schools	23	23	6	13	13

Note. Z statistics in parentheses. OR = Odds ratio. IRR = Incidence rate ratio. Var. = variance. Covar. = covariance. For substance use disengagement, the Level 1 slope was fixed. Non-linear models used 7 integration points

CHAPTER 4
THE CULTURAL MEANING OF TIME MISMATCH: CONTRASTING ASIANS
WITH WHITES

ABSTRACT

Working-hours mismatches occur when people want to spend less or more time at work. Conventionally, undermatches are considered a consequence of under-employment and precarious jobs, and overmatches are interpreted as symptomatic of overwork among professionals. In the current study, I examine culture as another reason for mismatches. I posit that Asians and Whites answer survey questions about mismatch differently because work has different meanings across collectivistic and individualistic groups. In collectivistic groups, the desire for more work time, though partially symptomatic of deprivation, can also represent a commitment to one's family and an acknowledgment that time spent at work will be interpreted positively rather than negatively by family members. Using data from a New Zealand survey (N = 3,854), I find that Asians are approximately twice as likely as Whites to express the desire for more time at work, even after controlling for working hours, perceived deprivation, and other potential confounds. Furthermore, having a family diminishes the desire for more time among Whites, but marginally increases the desire for more time among Asians.

INTRODUCTION

The discrepancy between desired and actual working time is commonly termed

mismatch. Mismatch trends, particularly undermatch trends involving the desire for more

work time, have interested researchers who study precarious jobs, where workers have

short hours and inadequate income and thus desire more working hours. For such

workers, it is assumed that the fiscal benefits of more working hours will outweigh the

cost of reduced leisure time. While this explanation has merit, it underplays the role of

culture, which can drive people to *state* that they want more time at work, regardless of

inadequate earnings. This article examines the effect of culture by comparing how Asians

and Whites respond to a mismatch question in a survey.

The study of working-hours mismatch follows from a line of sociological research

that began with interest in mean working hours. Further research revealed that the most

significant change was not in the mean but the variance. In an influential study, Jacobs and Gerson (2004) documented an increase from 1970 to 2000 in the proportion of workers who worked less than or more than 40 hours per week. Similar increases in working-time variability were documented in Australia and New Zealand (Callister 2005; Wooden and Drago 2007), and the U.K. (Green 2001). A set of under-employed people now have short working hours and insufficient earnings, while a set of highly educated people have long working hours and generous earnings (Bluestone and Rose 1998; Coleman and Pencavel 1993a, 1993b; Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Kalleberg 2013).

Because of rising interest in working-hours mismatch, questions about mismatch have been introduced into surveys. Recent studies on mismatch have used data from the European social survey (Başlevent and Kirmanoğlu 2014), the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) (Angrave and Charlwood 2015), and the International Social Survey Program Survey on Work Orientation (Stier and Lewin-Epstein 2003). One stream of research is concerned with the effect of mismatches on human welfare. Studies focus on the association between mismatches and the well-being of individuals and families, probing how the association is moderated by the national unemployment rate, gender, the mismatch valence, and other factors (Angrave and Charlwood 2015; De Moortel et al. 2017; Wooden, Warren, and Drago 2009; Wunder and Heineck 2013). Some scholars have also questioned whether time mismatch has a weaker impact on well-being than other temporal factors like schedule control (Lyness et al. 2012).

The second stream, to which the current study belongs, has focused on the interpretation of answers to survey questions about mismatch. Answers vary depending on whether working-time questions are asked baldly, or whether a phrase in the question

tells respondents to account for the impact on income and family time (see Campbell and van Wanrooy 2013). Mismatch questions also evince unreliability, with answers from the same individuals varying from year to year, even when working hours are constant (Reynolds and Aletraris 2006, 2010). Although such changes can be attributed to life events or real changes in appraisal, the variation suggests that the question might be problematic. In a qualitative study, long-hours workers who changed answers across survey waves were interviewed about their rationale. Their answers belied an ambivalence about whether an hours reduction was actually feasible, even if personally desirable, given their local work culture (Campbell and van Wanrooy 2013).

These answers suggest that culture matters for people who express a preference for less time at work. Culture may also drive people to express a preference for more time at work, regardless of financial need. As Weber (1958) documented, Protestantism changed the work culture of many European nations because Calvinism and similar doctrines preached that a person's work ethic signified whether God had predestined their eternal salvation. This development ramped up the propensity to be industrious and entrepreneurial, one factor in the emergence of capitalism. As an industrialized economy took hold, a Fordist ideology of efficiency determined the start and end of the working day, but in recent decades, a post-Fordist ideology has emerged. This ideology encourages employers to grant autonomy to their workers, but also requires employers to reward "motivated" workers who visibly prioritize work over other commitments, thereby promoting a culture of over-work (van Echtelt, Glebbeek, and Lindenberg 2006).

Cross-cultural differences also affect work-related attitudes. In this article, I contrast Asian and White (European) workers in New Zealand because these workers lie

at different points on the collectivism–individualism spectrum. This cultural dimension, one of five documented by Hofstede (1980) has been central in cross-cultural research (Brewer and Chen 2007). In collectivist cultures, people must fulfill their duties toward a wider ingroup, often their household, prioritizing those duties over autonomous desires. In individualistic cultures, people are expected to independently shape their own lives based on distinctive, autonomously chosen life goals. Although social scientists have argued that the concepts of individualism and collectivism need refinement, there is consensus around the usefulness of differentiating cultures on this basis. Individualism is high in Western cultures, and highest in the Anglosphere (Hofstede 1980). It is lower in Asia and Latin American. India and Japan are more individualistic than other Asian nations—but no Asian nation is comparable to the Anglosphere. These cross-cultural differences have been consistent over time (Beugelsdijk, Maseland, and van Hoorn 2015). Within the Anglosphere, people of European ancestry are more individualistic than people of Asian and other ancestries (Benet-Martínez and Karakitapoglu-Aygün 2003; Podsiadlowski and Fox 2011).

Collectivism affects how people appraise their work situation (Aycan 2008). In a collectivist frame, work is a means of fulfilling one's financial obligation to one's family (Powell, Francesco, and Ling 2009). Collectivists also perceive that family members who work long hours are dedicated to the family's well-being, whereas individualists interpret such behavior as inconsiderate (Yang et al. 2000). When individualists consider potential benefits of longer working hours, they must also consider the subsequent home conflicts to a greater degree than collectivists. Cross-cultural studies have found accordingly that work demands are a better predictor of work-family conflict in individualistic than

collectivist cultures (Lu et al. 2006; Spector et al. 2004, 2007). Thus, increases in

working hours and income adequacy, among individualists, should induce a desire for

fewer hours, not more hours.

In addition, employees from individualistic countries perceive themselves as

bearing a heavier workload than counterparts in collectivistic countries, net of working

hours (Lu et al. 2006; Yang et al. 2012). Distinct appraisals may arise from different

models of psychological resources (Job and Walton 2017). On average, Americans

believe that exerting willpower is depleting, whereas Asian Indians believe that exerting

willpower is energizing (Savani and Job 2017). One cross-cultural study on work-family

balance examined how collectivism and individualism moderate the association between

work-family balance and well-being (Haar et al. 2014). Workers from collectivist

cultures (i.e., Malaysians, Chinese, New Zealand Maori) and individualistic cultures (i.e.,

Spanish, French, Italian, New Zealand Europeans) were compared, and, as hypothesized,

a lack of work-family balance reduced well-being only in individualistic groups. This

study is pertinent because of the New Zealand context, where White residents are more

individualistic than non-Whites (Podsiadlowski and Fox 2011).

A secondary reason to expect an Asian–White difference is that Asian parents in

Western nations instill a work ethic in children that emphasizes superior performance.

This cultural mindset, found across working- and upper-class Asian immigrants, has been

well documented, and is one reason for the exceptional performance of Asian children

(Kao and Tienda 1998; Lee and Zhou 2015; Liu and Xie 2016; Qian and Blair 1999;

Sakamoto, Goyette, and Kim 2009). For a New Zealand study of this phenomenon, see

Guo (2014). Researchers have not yet examined whether this mindset persists through adulthood, so this explanation is tenuous.

In the current study, I build on earlier studies by examining time mismatch in the New Zealand context. Asian immigration to New Zealand has followed a pattern similar to that in Canada and Australia—a whites-only policy was replaced by a human-capital oriented policy in the late twentieth century (Akbari and MacDonald 2014). In New Zealand, there was a tiny proportion of Asians until the 1960s, when the government changed the focus toward recruiting semi- and unskilled labor from abroad (Spoonley and Bedford 2012). Starting in 1991, New Zealand instituted a points system to grade potential immigrants on fit with the domestic labor market. The points system sparked a large inflow from Asia, with sizable proportions from Hong Kong, Korea, and Taiwan in the early 1990s, and from India and China after 2000 (Bedford and Spoonley 2014). Although U.S. immigration policy is somewhat different, the steep rise in the Asian immigration rate is similar across New Zealand and the U.S (Akbari and MacDonald 2014; Barnes and Bennette 2002; Hoeffel, Elizabeth et al. 2012).

The hypothesis of this study is that Asians are more likely than Whites to express a desire for more time at work, net of factors that also influence mismatches. The analytic plan is to use a multinomial logit model, where the three categorical outcomes are desiring less time, about the same time, or more time at work. In the initial model, race is the only predictor. Under-employment mismatches typically occur when people have low working hours and inadequate income. In the second model I include working hours, income adequacy, and a three-way interaction between race, working hours, and income adequacy. The desire for more time at work should diminish when people are married

and have children (Otterbach 2010; Reynolds and Aletraris 2010). In Model 3, I adjust for household configuration. As noted earlier, Whites should be more sensitive than Asians to this effect, so I also enter an interaction term. In Model 4, I add gender, income, occupational class, and age. Involuntary long hours are more common among men, and employees whose jobs have high prestige (van Echtelt et al. 2006). Involuntarily short hours are more common among women (De Moortel et al. 2017; Puig-Barrachina et al. 2014). People at different life stages have distinct priorities, and, given immigration trends, younger Asians may be over-represented.

Mismatches also ensue from low work-life balance and job satisfaction (Başlevent and Kirmanoğlu 2014; Lyness et al. 2012). Model 5 includes these two covariates. Asians and Whites may differentially occupy sectors where objective factors improve work-life balance and satisfaction, but high work-life balance and job satisfaction can also be manifestations of the same latent attitude that drives up the preference for work time. Thus Model 5 should be interpreted cautiously.

METHODS

Sample

Data are from Wave 1 of the Sovereign Wellbeing Index (SWI) dataset. The SWI data are from a diverse but non-representative sample of New Zealand adults. An international market research company recruited prospective participants from SmileCity, the largest commercial survey platform in New Zealand, open to individuals 18 and older. Its users volunteer to take online surveys and receive cash or gift cards as compensation. Email invitations were sent to 38,439 individuals over three waves. The return rate, which includes partial responses, was 32%. The complete response rate of

26% was within the typical range (20-39%) for online surveys (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000). The sample may be biased because web-survey respondents tend to be higher in conscientiousness and other traits than the general population (Marcus and Schutz 2005). Employed respondents ages 18-65, who self-identified as exclusively White or Asian, and provided sufficient data were included in analyses (N = 3,854).

Demographic characteristics in aggregate and by race are in Table 4.1. Asians, as anticipated from immigration trends, were younger than White participants, on average, but a reasonable proportion of Asians (19.3%) were in the 45-65 age bracket. Marital status and household type were comparable, although more Asians were married and fewer were single parents. Asian educational attainment was quite high with 76% of Asians vs. 30% of Whites holding a bachelor's degree. Asians were also less likely to be in the working class. Twice as many Asians—51% vs. 26%—stated a desire for more time at work, which aligns with the hypothesis. For a closer examination of occupational class, I compared the proportion of Asians in each occupation to their proportion (13%) in the estimation sample, using 95% confidence intervals. Asians were over-represented in four professional fields: business, human resources, and marketing (25%); design, engineering, science and transport (28%); health (20%); and information and communications technology (27%). Asians were under-represented in professionals–education (6%), technician and trade workers (8%), and community and personal service workers (4%).

Measures

Race was measured by asking participants to select one or more of these categories: "New Zealand European / Pakeha," "New Zealand Maori," "Samoan," "Cook

Island Maori," "Tongan," "Niuean," "Other Pacific," "Chinese," "Korean," "Indian," "Other Asian (e.g., Filipino, Japanese)," "British / European," "Australian," "South African," or "Other (please specify)". These categories were collapsed into European, Asian, Pacific Peoples, Maori, and other. Participants who exclusively selected European or Asian were coded as White or Asian respectively.

Because the association between age and mismatch was unlikely to be linear or quadratic, I divided age into three categories, 18-24, 24-44, and 45-65. For robustness, I also tested a model with numerical age and age^2, and a four-category coding scheme, finding no meaningful changes.

Marital status was measured with a question with four options: single and never married, married or living with a partner, permanently separated or divorced, and widowed. Household composition was measured with a series of questions, asking participants to record the gender, age, and relationship of all household members. Combining this information with marital status, I created a four-category variable encoding household type: (1) single, no child (henceforth *single*), (2) married, no child, (3) child, not married, and (4) married with child (henceforth *family*).

Occupational class was derived by recoding a 14-option question about occupation into a dummy variable coded for working class vs. professional. Working class occupations were machinery operator or driver, laborer, technical or trade worker; community or personal service worker, clerical or administrative worker, and sales worker. Professional occupations were manager or any of 7 subtypes of professionals. Ordinarily, laborers and machinery operators would be separated from clerical workers, but due to the small proportion of Asians in those fields, I used a dichotomous variable.

Participants were asked to select their highest academic qualification on a six-point scale: 1 (*finished primary school*), 2 (*finished secondary school*), 3 (*University entrance/bursary/scholarship [or equivalent]*), 4 (*apprenticeship, diploma, trade certificate*), 5 (*bachelor degree or higher*), and 6 (*postgraduate diploma/degree or higher*). I recoded answers to create a three-category variable: primary/secondary; university entrance/diploma; and bachelor's or higher.

Income inadequacy was measured by asking how participants felt about their household income nowadays. The options ranged from 1 (*living comfortable on present income*) to 4 (*finding it very difficult on present income*). Both job satisfaction and work-life-balance were measured on a scale from 0 (*extremely dissatisfied*) to 10 (*extremely satisfied*). Participants were asked how satisfied they were with their present job, and "the balance between the time you spend on your paid work and the time you spend on other aspects of your life."

Household income was measured with a single question: "What is the total combined income that your household got from all sources, before tax or anything was taken out of it, in the last 12 months?" Respondents answered on a 16-point scale. Items 1–3 were "zero or negative," " ≤ $5,000," and "$5,001–$10,000" respectively. Items 4–13 were intervals spanning $10,000. Items 14–16 were "$100,001–$150,000," "$150,001–$200,000," and "≥ $200,001." Median household income in New Zealand was $57,820 at the time of survey administration (Statistics New Zealand 2012).

Working hours were measured by asking participants how many weekly hours they spent in paid employment. Answer options ranged from 1 (*less than 5*) to 15 (*more than 70 hours*). Working-hours mismatch was measured using the question, "Compared

with now, how much TIME WOULD YOU LIKE to spend on each these aspects?" on a

scale from 0 (*a lot less time*) to 10 (*a lot more time*)." The midpoint was 5 (*about the*

same amount of time). Ten life domains were presented, one of which was work. Wanting

less time is not the polar opposite of wanting more time (Angrave and Charlwood 2015;

De Moortel et al. 2017), so this variable is not ordinal. I recoded 1-4 as *less time*, 5 as

same time, and 6-10 as *more time*.

Analytic Plan

Multinomial logistic regression was used to analyze the outcome, working time

mismatch. To obtain robust standard errors, I used the Huber/White/sandwich estimator

of variance (Hayes and Cai 2007). The coefficients in multinomial logistic regression can

be exponentiated to obtain relative risk ratios, as in logistic regression, but interpretation

is problematic given many possible outcomes. Marginal probabilities must be estimated,

for which I used SPost13 (Long and Freese 2014). For continuous factors, I used

standardized variables so that intercepts and coefficients would be meaningful and

comparable. For the same reason, I used the middle category of age and education as

reference values.

RESULTS

The distribution of working hours mismatch by race is in Figure 4.1. Table 4.2

displays the means and standard deviations of work-related variables, in aggregate and by

race. The standardized White–Asian difference is in the last column. Table 4.3 displays

correlations between key variables. Asian and White household incomes are comparable

despite the Asian advantage in education and occupational class. Greater job seniority

among Whites may explain this equality. In job satisfaction, $d = -.03$, and working hours,

d = .11, Whites and Asians are reasonably similar, but Whites are more likely to perceive

their income an inadequate, *d* = .30. The correlation between household income and

income inadequacy is moderate, at .40, and working hours positively correlates with

income, but negatively correlates with income inadequacy. These facts support the

primacy of income adequacy over household income in predicting mismatches.

Table 4.4 shows the results of the first three multinomial logistic models.

Coefficients in the model are relative risk ratios, with *same time* as the reference

outcome. Model 1 shows that Asians are more likely to want more time at work, and less

likely to want less time at work. In Model 2, as anticipated, the interaction between

inadequate income and short hours was predictive of wanting more time. At .08, the *p*

value for the three-way interaction with race was marginally significant, but the statistical

power to detect three-way interactions is low, so I retained it. I probed the interaction by

computing the desire for more time at low (-1 SD) and high (1 SD) values of income

inadequacy and working hours, by race (Table 4.5). Although both Asians and White are

affected by deprivation, the effect is much stronger for Whites. The probability of

wanting more time for a White worker short on income and hours is .35, and but only .21

if the worker has adequate income and long working hours, *z* = 6.088, *p* < .001. For

Asians, however, the corresponding probabilities are .52 and .46, a negligible difference,

z = 0.620, *p* =.54.

In Model 3, I include household type and its interaction with race. Although there

appeared to be no effects for wanting more time, there was an interaction effect for

wanting less time. For White workers, the probability of wanting less time increased as

household size increased. Specifically, the probability was .389 if single and .429 with a

family, $z = 1.620$, $p = .11$. Though weak, this change suggests a desire for family time. For Asians, however, the probability of wanting less time was .332 if single but dropped to .137 with a family, $z = -3.749$, $p < .001$, suggesting an aspiration to serve one's family better through earnings.

Table 4.6 shows models 4 and 5. In model 4, occupational class, education, gender, and age were added to the model. Workers in the 45-65 age bracket were less likely than younger workers to want a time reduction. Perhaps parents in this age bracket have older children who are not at home, or have job seniority providing autonomy and job satisfaction. Being highly educated and holding a professional occupation had contrary effects. Given the correlation between education and class with each other and other covariates, it is difficult to interpret these effects. However, both education and class effects are weaker in Model 5, where job satisfaction and work-life balance are included. People who report satisfaction with work and work-life balance do not feel overworked, and the effects of education and occupational class are likely mediated through these two forms of satisfaction, which are strong predictors—the pseudo R^2 increases substantially in Model 5.

In both Models 4 and 5, the Asian coefficient is stronger than earlier, indicating further suppression effects. The probabilities of wanting more and less working time for Asians and Whites at particular levels of working hours, household type, and income inadequacy are in Figure 4.2, a forest plot in an order descending from deprived individuals (insufficient income and short hours) to over-satiated individuals (sufficient income and long hours).

In both the upper and lower plot, Whites follow the canonical pattern. Deprived Whites are less likely to want time reductions and more likely to want time increases, relative to the average White. Also, Whites with families are more interested in time reductions than single Whites. Deprived Asian workers are less inclined to want time reductions, and non-deprived Asian workers are roughly twice as likely as Whites to want time increases. Asians consistently express this desire, across levels of income inadequacy and working hours.

In the upper plot, there is a zigzag pattern—Asians and Whites are close in odd (single) rows and far apart in even (family) rows, which represents the interaction effect of household type discussed earlier. When they have a family, Asians become less interested in time reductions, whereas Whites become more interested in time reductions. This zigzag pattern also appears to a weaker degree in the last six rows of the lower plot. This pattern suggests that Asian workers may lack a strong target for their collectivistic duties until they have family. When single, perhaps they appraise work as a thief of leisure time, as Whites do. Once within a family, however, Asians and Whites evaluate time differently. Whites want time reductions, which create more family time. Asians, having a target for collectivistic duties, do not want time reductions, comporting with the tendency of collectivistic individuals to appraise paid work as a family-serving duty.

DISCUSSION

The results here are consistent with the thesis that under-employment and low earnings are predictive of subjective under-employment, but they also reveal a racial contrast in time mismatches. Even after accounting for differences in subjective deprivation, household income, work satisfaction, and work-life balance, Asians are

much more likely than comparable Whites to desire more time at work. Although I could not directly test individualism and collectivism as mediators, this racial contrast is consistent with the cultural hypothesis. Moreover, the interaction between household type and desire for more time fits the theoretical prediction that collectivism determines how people appraise their work time and work-life balance.

Hypothetically, time-mismatch questions could tap into whether people foresee a net time gain from reducing working time, or a net income gain from expanding working time. White workers apparently answer in this fashion, consistently wanting more time given short hours and insufficient earnings, and less time given long hours, sufficient earnings, and a reason to spend time at home. On average, an Asian individual with short hours and insufficient earnings, like a White individual, desires more work time. In other respects, the Asian responding pattern deviates from the White pattern. Asians' desire for more work time is surprisingly high by absolute standards, even under conditions of high income and long working hours. This effect is not mitigated by having a spouse and child.

These results indicate that Asians may not solely be appraising work time through the lens of net gains and losses. Rather, they seemingly consider not just perceived deprivation but also role-based identity. Among Asians who are married parents, a collectivistic value orientation seems to motivate an answer to the mismatch question that verifies their identity as a family-oriented breadwinner (Stryker 2003). Even single Asians desire more work time than comparable Whites, so family-based orientations cannot be the sole explanation. Perhaps the perfectionistic Asian school ethic persists as a work ethic. Alternatively, collectivism may motivate the interpretation of diligent work

as duty fulfilment toward parents and younger siblings. Fear of discrimination should not be ruled out, however. Given that even professional Asians with substantial earnings state a preference for more work hours, fears of downward mobility may be salient (Zeng 2011), motivating compensatory efforts.

This study's primarily limitation is the lack of representative sampling. Although the sample was diverse, some occupations may be disproportionally represented. Asians may also be concentrated in occupations where the workplace culture emphasizes overwork, and the Asian–White contrast may weaken after accounting for that fact. A second limitation is that the nationality and immigration status of respondents is unknown. Workers who are non-citizens may possess a stronger work ethic because of insecurity about their immigration prospects. Furthermore, New Zealand's immigration policy resembles that of Australia and Canada, so these results may not be generalizable to the U.S. or U.K. A final limitation is that I could not ascertain if collectivism was a mediator because it was not measured.

The study does not imply that only Whites answer the mismatch correctly. Rather, it implies that both Whites and Asians bring cultural lenses to bear. Motivating Asians and Whites to interpret the question similarly may be challenging. Even if phrased to emphasize the impact on hours on income, the question may elicit contrasting answers from collectivists and individualists. Over-employment can be indexed through questions about work-life balance, so the challenge is indexing under-employment. If researchers seek to measure deprivation, surveys may be improved by assessing precisely what the respondent cannot afford, and whether longer working hours would address that problem. Alternatively, a survey question could be framed around whether the employer allots

fixed hours and, if so, how many hours. A larger concern is that all questions are filtered through a cultural lens. Given how Asian immigrants have changed workforce composition, sociologists must consider whether a longitudinal change in work-related attitudes derives from compositional change. Furthermore, culture not only varies by race and nationality, but also cohort and period, and all cultural changes can affect appraisals.

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TABLES

Table 4.1. Summary of Demographic Characteristics and Work Mismatch, Aggregate and By Race

	All	White	Asian
Gender			
Male	49.99	48.35	61.12
Female	50.01	51.65	38.88
Age			
18-24	10.01	9.86	11.02
24-44	48.96	45.91	69.65
45-65	41.03	44.23	19.33
Race			
White	87.16		
Asian	12.84		
Marital Status			
Single	23.24	21.98	31.72
Married	66.23	66.54	64.08
Separated/Divorced	9.46	10.26	3.99
Widowed	1.08	1.21	0.21
Household Type			
Not Married, No Child	26.94	26.28	31.41
Married, No Child	31.05	31.82	25.9
Not Married, Child	6.19	6.69	2.88
Married, Child	35.81	35.22	39.81
Education			
Primary/Secondary	26.84	29.97	5.89
Diploma/ Univ. Entrance	36.94	39.87	17.26
College	36.22	30.16	76.84
Occupational Class			
Working	51.87	53.79	39.10
Professional	48.13	46.21	60.90
Work Time Preference			
Less	37.99	40.34	22.04
Same	32.92	33.78	27.03
More	29.1	25.88	50.94
N	3746	3265	481

Includes information for individuals with non-missing data for work-time preference and race, sufficient for inclusion in Model 1. Missing data is <3% for all variables except household type (14.2%) and occupational class (9.3%).

Table 4.2. Means and Standard Deviations of Continuous Demographic and Social Psychological Variables

Variable	Range	All		White		Asian		Cohen's d (95%CI)
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Working Hours[1]	1-15	7.73	2.31	7.7	2.35	7.96	1.98	0.11 (0.02, 0.21)
Household Income[2]	1-15	9.84	3	9.86	2.97	9.72	3.14	-0.05 (-0.15, 0.06)
Income Inadequacy	1-4	2.01	0.88	2.04	0.88	1.79	0.84	-0.30 (-0.40, -0.20)
Job Satisfaction	0-10	6.29	2.42	6.3	2.45	6.23	2.23	-0.03 (-0.13, 0.07)
Work-Life Balance	0-10	6.01	2.31	5.97	2.33	6.26	2.18	0.13 (0.03, 0.22)
N		3746		3265		481		

[1]Working hours were measured on an interval scale where 7 = 31-35 hours, and 8 = 36-40 hours

[2] Household income was measured on an ordinal scale where 9 = $60,001-70,000, and 10 = $70,001-80,000.

Table 4.3. Pairwise Correlations Between Variables Used in Regression Models

	Female	Asian	Age (yrs.)	Education	Working Hrs.	Household Inc.	Professional Class
Female	1						
Asian	-0.09***	1					
Age (yrs.)	-0.08***	-0.19***	1				
Education	-0.01	0.30***	-0.17***	1			
Working Hrs.	-0.29***	0.04*	0.03	0.08***	1		
Household Inc.	-0.13***	-0.02	-0.03	0.23***	0.28***	1	
Professional	-0.01	0.10***	<.01	0.43***	0.15***	0.31***	1
Income Inadeq.	0.02	-0.10***	0.07***	-0.17***	-0.11***	-0.40***	-0.17***
Job Sat.	0.05**	-0.01	0.09***	<.01	0.02	0.08***	0.14***
Work-Life Balance	0.04*	0.04*	0.04*	0.04*	-0.20***	0.07***	0.07***

	Income Inadeq.	Job Sat.
Income Inadeq.	1	
Job Sat.	-0.24***	1
Work-Life Balance	-0.27***	0.59***

In regression models, age is treated as categorical, but the continuous form is used here. *$p <$ .05 **$p <$ .01 ***$p <$ .001 (two-tailed tests).

Table 4.4. Multinomial Logistic Models 1-3 Predicting Desire for Less or More Time Relative to Same Time at Work

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	less	more	less	more	less	more
	RRR/SE	RRR/SE	RRR/SE	RRR/SE	RRR/SE	RRR/SE
White	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asian	0.691**	2.450***	0.667*	2.638***	1.428	2.823***
	(0.095)	(0.288)	(0.108)	(0.365)	(0.390)	(0.732)
Income Inadeq.(z)			1.151**	1.214***	1.144**	1.192**
			(0.054)	(0.065)	(0.058)	(0.069)
Asian X Income Inadeq.(z)			0.947	0.887	0.959	0.876
			(0.151)	(0.125)	(0.163)	(0.136)
Working Hrs.(z)			1.324***	0.924	1.295***	0.926
			(0.058)	(0.046)	(0.061)	(0.050)
Asian X Working Hrs.(z)			1.247	1.257	1.371	1.224
			(0.243)	(0.198)	(0.288)	(0.202)
Income Inadeq.(z) X Working Hrs.(z)			0.954	0.851**	0.943	0.854**
			(0.045)	(0.044)	(0.047)	(0.047)
Asian X Income Inadeq.(z) X Working Hrs.(z)			1.151	1.328	1.407	1.423*
			(0.235)	(0.215)	(0.297)	(0.238)
Single No Child					1	1
Married No Child					1.089	0.946
					(0.133)	(0.127)
Child Not Married					0.925	0.794
					(0.185)	(0.175)
Married Has Child					1.100	0.846
					(0.130)	(0.112)

White X Single No Child			1	1
Asian X Married No Child			0.350*	0.856
			(0.143)	(0.312)
Asian X Child Not Married			0.231	0.283
			(0.191)	(0.221)
Asian X Married Has Child			0.260***	1.010
			(0.101)	(0.330)
Pseudo R^2	0.015	0.031	0.034	
N	3854	3520	3037	

RRR = relative risk ratio. Pseudo R^2 is McFadden's R^2. *$p <$ .05 **$p <$ .01 ***$p <$ .001 (two-tailed tests)

Table 4.5. Predicted Probability of Wanting More Work Time by Race, Working Hours, and Income Inadequacy

	Working Hours	Income	p	95% CI	
				LL	UL
White	Short hours	Inadequate	0.350	0.315	0.385
	Short hours	Adequate	0.241	0.209	0.272
	Long hours	Inadequate	0.202	0.168	0.236
	Long hours	Adequate	0.210	0.182	0.238
Asian	Short hours	Inadequate	0.517	0.375	0.659
	Short hours	Adequate	0.540	0.452	0.629
	Long hours	Inadequate	0.513	0.373	0.652
	Long hours	Adequate	0.466	0.390	0.542

Table 4.6. Multinomial Logistics Models 4-5 Predicting Desire for Less or More Time Relative to Same Time at Work

	Model 4		Model 5	
	less	more	less	more
	RRR/SE	RRR/SE	RRR/SE	RRR/SE
White	1	1	1	1
Asian	1.437	4.582***	1.325	4.623***
	(0.458)	(1.432)	(0.465)	(1.463)
Income Inadeq.(z)	1.163*	1.072	0.864*	1.075
	(0.073)	(0.075)	(0.060)	(0.078)
Asian X Income Inadeq.(z)	1.063	1.027	1.009	1.037
	(0.209)	(0.193)	(0.220)	(0.195)
Working Hrs.(z)	1.305***	0.962	1.142*	0.929
	(0.076)	(0.063)	(0.072)	(0.063)
Asian X Working Hrs.(z)	1.358	1.315	1.231	1.321
	(0.363)	(0.274)	(0.345)	(0.287)
Income Inadeq.(z) X Working Hrs.(z)	0.935	0.821**	0.953	0.824**
	(0.054)	(0.051)	(0.060)	(0.050)
Asian X Income Inadeq.(z) X Working Hrs.(z)	1.555	1.530*	1.419	1.544*
	(0.404)	(0.311)	(0.383)	(0.328)
Single No Child	1	1	1	1
Married No Child	1.103	1.066	1.249	1.049
	(0.158)	(0.174)	(0.191)	(0.171)
Child Not Married	0.937	0.872	0.951	0.869
	(0.212)	(0.215)	(0.231)	(0.214)
Married Has Child	1.127	1.016	1.266	0.979
	(0.160)	(0.167)	(0.192)	(0.160)
Household Type X Race				
White X Single No Child	1	1	1	1
Asian X Married No Child	0.334*	0.746	0.394	0.745
	(0.157)	(0.316)	(0.194)	(0.318)
Asian X Child Not Married	0.255	0.201	0.261	0.205
	(0.226)	(0.190)	(0.251)	(0.193)
Asian X Married Has Child	0.267**	0.630	0.266**	0.651
	(0.113)	(0.237)	(0.123)	(0.246)

Household Inc.(z)	1.073	0.856*	1.056	0.867
	(0.074)	(0.064)	(0.077)	(0.065)
Occupational Class				
Working	1	1	1	1
Professional	0.667***	0.926	0.769*	0.889
	(0.074)	(0.114)	(0.091)	(0.112)
Education				
Primary/Sec.	0.985	1.147	0.988	1.118
	(0.126)	(0.160)	(0.134)	(0.156)
Univ ent./Dipl.	1	1	1	1
Coll./Grad Sch.	1.285*	0.892	1.200	0.911
	(0.159)	(0.126)	(0.157)	(0.130)
Female	1.012	0.880	0.978	0.859
	(0.106)	(0.101)	(0.107)	(0.100)
Age				
18-24	1.174	1.359	1.229	1.308
	(0.229)	(0.291)	(0.251)	(0.281)
25-44	1	1	1	1
45-65	0.762**	1.281*	0.764*	1.253
	(0.080)	(0.151)	(0.084)	(0.148)
Job Satisfaction (z)			0.702***	1.185*
			(0.044)	(0.086)
Work-Life Balance (z)			0.520***	0.886
			(0.034)	(0.065)
Pseudo R2	0.045		0.108	
N	2458		2457	

RRR = relative risk ratio. Pseudo R^2 is McFadden's R^2. SEs in parentheses. *$p <$ .05 **$p <$ .01 ***$p <$ .001 (two-tailed tests)
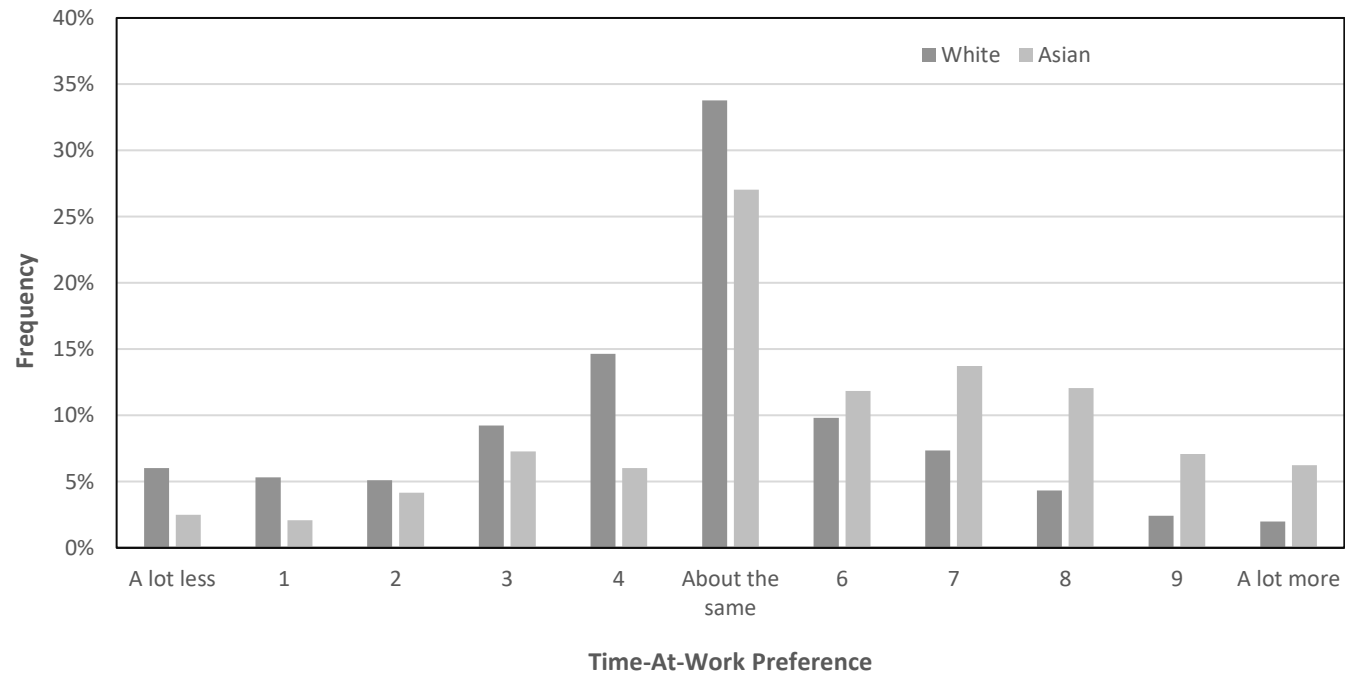
FIGURES

Figure 4.1. Distribution of Working Time Mismatches for White (N = 3,265) and Asian (N = 481) Workers
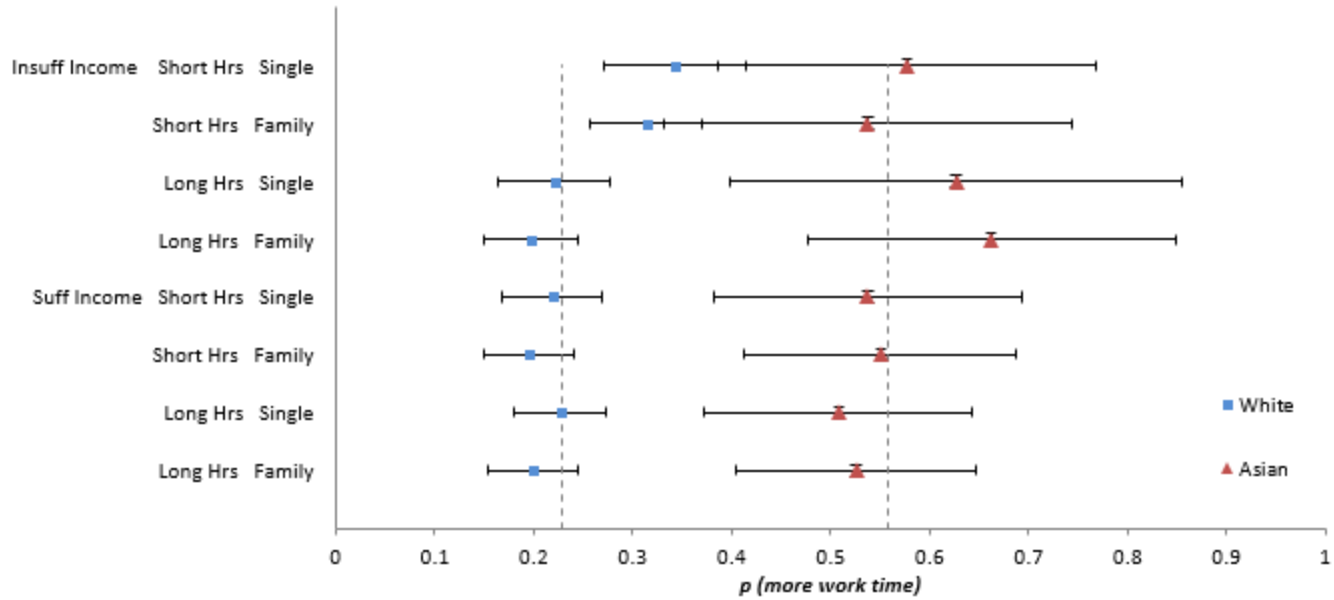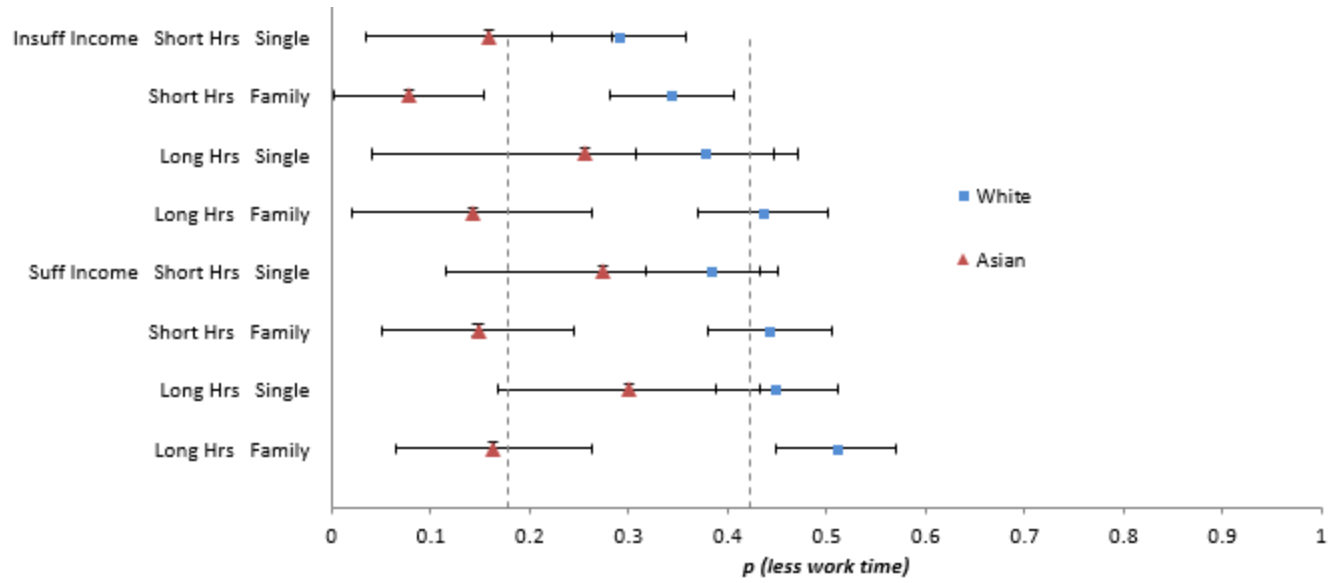
Figure 4.2. Adjusted Probability of Wanting More and Less Work Time for White and Asian Workers, Ages 18-65. Error bars denote 95% confidence intervals. Hrs = working hours. Insuff. = insufficient. Suff. = sufficient. Single = not married or cohabiting, no child at home. Family = married or cohabiting with 1+ child at home.

CHAPTER 5:
CONCLUSION

These three studies examined the causes of psychopathology and distress among groups that sociologists consider privileged. In the first two chapters, I presented evidence that college students, who are assumed to be economically privileged, and White college students, who are assumed to be racially privileged, may have more problems than the typical sociologist might assume. In the final chapter, I show that collectivism may improve appraisals of long working time, and thus the professional-sector problem of overwork may be mitigated through different cultural appraisals.

A recurring theme across the chapters is mismatches and imbalances. Merton (1968:216) considered mismatches between means and ends when defining anomie as "a breakdown in the cultural structure, occurring particularly when there is an acute disjunction between the cultural norms and goals and the socially structured capacities of members of the group to act in accord with them" (Merton 1968). In all, Merton had 10 definitions of anomie (Levine 1985), but this one has been relatively influential, and many psychotherapists pointed to a similar imbalance. They cited clients who felt that college was the culturally sanctioned path to economic prosperity, but that a bachelor's degree saddled them with debt while also providing little employability without a subsequent graduate degree. Therapists also cited celebrity culture and the election of a celebrity to the presidency as factors causing an imbalance between, on one hand, internalized norms about how one should achieve status through educational attainment, and on the other hand, status being observably attained through other means.

In the chapter on substance usage, there is no such imbalance between cultural norms and means. College students who are socialized to value the party pathway apparently find the means to pursue it. Anthropologists and medical researchers have posited an evolutionary mismatch hypothesis: human instincts evolved in hunter-gatherer and agricultural societies, and mismatches between those societies and industrialized society cause once healthy instincts to become physically and mentally unhealthy (Nesse 1999; Nesse and Williams 1994). This sort of mismatch is evident in the study of alcohol and substance use. Sociologists rarely cite the evolutionary mismatch hypothesis, but sociologists have been continually interested in describing modernity as a historical rupture, which is similar. In an ancestral world, the reflexive consumption of carbohydrates and fats may have been salubrious in an era when food was scarce, but this instinct is maladaptive in the industrial world, where carbohydrates and fats are so plentiful—and unnaturally refined—that reflexive consumption causes chronic illness (Eaton and Konner 1985). Drug abuse is a similar problem, because drugs can now be invented, refined, and delivered at maladaptive rates (Pani 2000). As my findings indicate, having strong social ties to parents or a spouse strongly reduces the likelihood of using illicit drugs, but young adults at many universities lack such social ties, which is also discrepant with pre-modern arrangements. Thus, in the college context, socioeconomic privilege can translate into poor health.

The final chapter is directly about working-hours mismatches, the appraisals of such mismatches, and the methodology used to measure mismatches.

The fact that appraisals matter is central to the sociology of stress and coping (Mirowsky and Ross 2003). Working hours mismatches are conventionally interpreted as dissatisfactory appraisals, and therefore stressful, but I show that a survey question about mismatches may only tap into negativity when administered to Whites. The problem with measuring mismatches through survey questions is evident.

In the introduction, I stated that I did not seek to overturn conventional theories altogether, but to note some problems. One overarching problem is the disciplinary over-reliance on the heuristics of class and race. Sociologists generally believe that socioeconomic inequality persists, and that higher class therefore denotes greater advantage. The first study suggests, in contrast, that upper-class undergraduates might face more helicopter parenting and therefore develop weaker coping skills than middle-class peers, who have not been subjects of concerted cultivation. The class gradient is not completely inverted. Working-class students face the challenge of financially supporting themselves, and occasionally their parents and siblings too, and thus have restricted time and money. Furthermore, upper-class students, relative to middle-class students, have the financial and social capital to make up for poor academic performance. Nevertheless, financial and social capital cannot directly translate to psychological coping skills. Upper-class parenting practices seem to contain a few seeds of downward psychological mobility. With alcohol and drug consumption also higher among White students, but not Asian students, the heuristic use of Whiteness as an indicator of advantage may also be outdated (Sakamoto, Goyette,

and Kim 2009; Wilson 1980). Indeed, the third study suggests that Asians may be more satisfied than comparable Whites in New Zealand because of how they positively appraise the long hours that have become normative for professionals. Weber (1946) espoused the presentation of "inconvenient facts" by sociology professors, by which he meant facts that can erode the professor's own political ideology. Though each chapter in this dissertation has unique goals, the dissertation also presents a few inconvenient facts about race and class.

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APPENDIX A

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Thanks again for agreeing to talk to me and for returning the informed consent form via email. Did you have any questions about that form? [Pause]
I'd like to tell you a bit about my professional background and this project. I'm currently a PhD student in sociology at Emory University. I have a bachelor's degree in psychology from Davidson College, and a master's degree in psychology from the College of William and Mary. I've also published some articles and chapters on well-being. I'm familiar with the terminology of abnormal psychology and personality psychology, so if you want, you can use technical terms when answering my questions, but don't feel obliged to use them if you'd rather not.

This interview is for my dissertation, which is about why anxiety disorders might be becoming more prevalent among young people. I'm specifically focusing on college students right now, but if you have anything to say about pre-college students during the interview, feel free to add that to your answer. I'm hoping to figure out, first of all, whether you agree or disagree with the claim that anxiety disorder is more common now. And then I'd like to move on to things that might cause anxiety disorder in this generation.

Do you have any questions before we start?
[Start Recording]

1. What's your current employment status
_Retired
_Full-Time
_Part-Time
_Other (Describe_____)

2. What are your educational qualifications?
_PhD in Clinical Psychology
_PhD in Counseling Psychology
_MD
_MSW
_Other

3. At how many different college counseling centers have you worked? N:__
 [Loop through following questions using N iterations]
What is the name of the university or college where you worked [first/next]?

Approximately how many different students did you see each academic year at this university?

Did you manage group therapy sessions, and if yes, what were the groups focused on?
[End loop]

4. Now I'd like to talk about change in student anxiety over the course of your tenure. What do you think about trends in anxiety? Do you think student anxiety has become worse, better, or stayed the same? [IF 'stayed the same', SKIP to 6.]

5. Thanks. In your opinion, what do you think are the causes of this trend? [SKIP to 7]

6. Do you think the reasons for anxiety—that is, the things that cause students to worry—have stayed the same?

7. Although there are a variety of reasons for anxiety, I'd like to talk about some specific causes that others have mentioned. I've already sent these to you in an email. I'd like to go through them one by one and hear whether you've heard students increasingly complain about these problems. I'm going to list all of them in case you don't have the email at your fingertips. And then start from the top again and go through them one at a time.
The first theory is that college students perceive more threats in the world. Economic threats, diseases, and terrorism are examples of this.
Another idea is that older generations were guided by internal principles, but younger generations need the approval of other people. And this creates uncertainty because you feel like other people disapprove of you until you've made a good impression on them.
The third idea is that helicopter parenting is interfering with the ability of students to solve their own problems. Parents are trying to protect their children from anxiety, but this prevents them from learning to solve problems on their own.
The fourth idea is that competition is more intense because of a larger population. At many selective college, the number of spots hasn't increased but the number of application has increased, so there's fierce competition.
The fifth idea is students have more choices to make, and these can be overwhelming. For example, the number of college majors, minors, and concentrations is much larger now, and students can choose multiple majors or minors.
The last idea is that it has become harder to achieve something. The self-esteem movement taught them that they're each unique and special, but they're finding it hard to really to be distinctive.

8.Thinking about what students complained about a couple of decades ago versus what they complain about today, what do you think about these ideas? [If needed, PROBE for concrete examples of complaints and further details about change over time.]

9. Do you think there's a subset of students are most or least affected by some of these problems?

10. The composition of colleges has changed, but one constant is that white males have generally been present on campus. If you think specifically about white males, do you think their anxiety levels have changed?

11. Can you think of anything else that's relevant?

12. Thanks. That covers everything. Would you like me to send you a copy of the manuscript about this research?
_ Yes
_ No