

SCHOOL STRAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN U.S. NATIVE AND IMMIGRANT URBAN STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the sources of strain in school among native and immigrant students caused by the lack of interest in student development by school administrators, specifically in preparing for their future educational goals. The study also explored whether strain caused by a lack of interest increased the likelihood of deviance and anger among students. The majority of the students experienced such strain. Of native and immigrant students, the latter expressed higher levels of school strain and stress as well as a greater commitment to school and educational goals. Native and immigrant students both expressed a dislike of unfair school policies and negative interactions with teachers and school administrators. The two groups expressed similar levels of actual deviance and anger. The students that did not express strain from an administrator's lack of interest were more likely to approve of deviance, aggression, and anger. The results of the study call for additional investigation of different strain sources found in urban schools among native and immigrant students.

INTRODUCTION

Strain is defined as a type of stress that causes a person to respond negatively to different situations (Agnew, 1992). Strain has been connected to negative thoughts, anger, and delinquency among populations with limited opportunities for advancement (Agnew, 2002). This study explores the sources of strain in school among native and immigrant students caused by the lack of interest in student development on the part of the school administrators, specifically in preparing students for their future educational goals. This study also explores whether strain is linked to negative student thoughts about school and whether they are associated with deviance and/or anger.

Robert Merton claimed that socially structured strain was endemic to American Culture, which puts a premium on the acquisition of wealth (Merton, 1938). Merton held strain to be concentrated in the lower classes, for whom it led to anomie.ⁱ (Anomie occurs when individuals confront a kind of strain that prioritizes wealth while social structures limit their ability to acquire this goal [Merton, 1938].) Other theorists have since expanded on Merton's concept of strain. A. K. Cohen, for example, discovered that youth delinquency occurred in groups with no financial hopes (Cohen, 1955). R.A. Cloward and L.E. Ohlin concluded that violent gangs were formed by people who did not aspire to middle class values or wealth (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960). F.T. Cullen argued that strain can be individual (goal blockage) or societal (societies without ways to achieve goals) (Cullen, 1984).

AGNEW'S GENERAL STRAIN THEORY AND TESTS ON SCHOOL STRAIN

Agnew's General Strain Theory (GST) focuses on individual persons and their social environment. Agnew mentions three main types of strain: when a person is prevented from achieving positively valued goals; when positively valued stimuli are removed or threatened to be removed; and when a person is presented with "noxious or negatively valued stimuli (Agnew, 1992). Only some of the individuals with strain turn to crime; others may use cognitive, behavioral, or emotional ways to cope with strain (Agnew, 1992). The redefined GST holds that "delinquency is higher among those who experience family, school, and neighborhood strain," as well as peer abuse (Agnew, 2002).

In school, strain may come from perceptions of discrimination, stressful events, negative attachment, and peer pressure. Strain has also been linked to school failure. Simons, Chen, Steward, and

A. LEBERATTO: SCHOOL STRAIN DIFFERENCES NATIVE AND IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

Brody found that discrimination correlated with delinquent behavior after controlling the quality of parenting, affiliation with deviant peers, and prior conduct problems for school-aged boys and girls (Simons et al., 2003). Anger and strain mediated a portion of the relationship between discrimination and delinquency (Simons et al., 2003). Minority students from urban high schools feel discriminated against through undue monitoring, blocked opportunities or access to college, and rough interactions with school police (Wakerfield, 2004). By contrast, schools that are perceived as fair by students have less delinquent student behavior (Hoffman, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

Data for this study were obtained from junior and senior students at Elizabeth High School, the biggest in New Jersey, with about six thousand students. Students are primarily Hispanic and many have migrated to the United States. Fifty were randomly chosen from the student roster. Of the 50 chosen, 17 students returned assent and consent forms, and took the survey, which was administered in the high school library, in May 2008. Students completed the survey administered by principal investigator, Antony Leberatto, in about 15 minutes. High school administrators were not part of the study.

Subjects' confidentiality was necessary for receiving truthful answers and to satisfy IRB regulations protecting human subjects.² The subjects were informed that they could answer the questions they felt comfortable answering. They were given contact information for the school's guidance counselors and two nonprofit guidance organizations, Family and Children's Services, and Youth Advocacy Program, in the event that participation caused unforeseen stress and anxiety. Of the 17 subjects, 14 were females and 3 were males, who ranged in age from 15 to 18. Eight respondents were immigrant females, 8 were native, and one subject's origin was unknown. The survey consisted of multiple choice and open-ended questions.

DIFFERENCES IN IMMIGRANT AND NATIVE STUDENTS

The study explores whether the administrators, teachers, lack of preparation for the future, and day-to-day occurrences in school caused strain among native and immigrant students and if this strain was connected to negative thoughts about school and acceptance of deviance and anger. Students were asked if and when they migrated.

SCHOOL'S HELP FOR STUDENT'S FUTURE GOALS AND INTERACTIONS WITH ADMINISTRATION

Students were asked how the administrators helped them prepare for their postsecondary school goals. They answered questions such as, "In the last two years has any school official discussed with you your educational interests after high school?" One assumes that students who think their school has adequately prepared them will respond positive to open-ended questions that ask, "How has school prepared you for your future?"

Students were asked to affirm or deny statements about their daily school practices and interactions with teachers and peers, such as "I was interested in what I was learning in class". One expects that if students are uninterested in school they will think school practices are unfair or unnecessary. If they believe school is not helping them achieve their goals it is probable they will feel stressed, which may lead to anger and deviance. Students were asked to describe in open-ended questions, "What are some things that make you feel stressed during school?" and "What do you think teachers and administration think about you?" The open-ended questions were designed to probe students' feelings about fairness and stress in school. Those who express negative opinions of teachers and administrators will probably have higher levels of stress and strain.

DEVIANCE AND ANGER AMONG STUDENTS

Students were asked their thoughts on deviant acts to determine if higher stress, strain, and school dissatisfaction are connected with deviant behavior by affirming or denying if they have "Damaged school property on purpose" or "Skipped a day of school without permission." Those students who have

higher levels of deviance will probably have negative opinions about their classes, teachers, and the school administration.

Students were asked their personal opinions on the use of violence in conflict resolution by affirming or denying statements such as, "When I'm really angry, other people better stay away from me." To complement these statements, students were asked open-ended questions such as, "What are some things that make you angry during your time in school?" One expects that students who favor using violence for conflict resolution will have negative views of school administrators and may have higher levels of strain and stress.

FINDINGS ON STUDENT'S OPINIONS AND SCHOOL'S HELP WITH FUTURE GOALS

First, students' opinions about their future educational goals were explored. Of the seventeen respondents, only two claimed not to have discussed their postsecondary educational plans with school administrators. However, when students were asked open-endedly, "How has school prepared you for the future?", the majority of the responses were negative. Of the seventeen respondents, 15 named college as a goal, one wanted to become a flight attendant (Respondent #007), and one did not answer the question (Respondent #010). Of the fifteen students who wished to attend college, eight answered negatively, four positively, and three, in terms unrelated to education. To better understand the respondents, a short profile with their responses follows. The negative responses are listed first, followed by those responses unrelated to college, and ending with the positive ones.

Respondent #001 is a 16-year-old Hispanic female who migrated from Ecuador in 2002; she hopes to attend Williams College in Massachusetts to major in fine arts. Her reply to "How has school prepared you for the future?" began,

Not much, I learned all the requirement of college out of school, nobody really told me about it, I believe that I didn't have enough education for college, but thanks to God and thanks for those pre-college programs I guess now I do.

Respondent #006, a 15-year-old female who migrated from Puerto Rico in 2007 wrote, "This high school doesn't do nothing to prepare the students for their future plans." A 16 year old female that migrated from Ecuador in 2004, Respondent #007, answered, ". . ." She plans to work for a year to save money for college. Respondent #008, an 18-year-old female who emigrated from Colombia in December 2003, responded:

This high school hasn't really prepared me. My family had, so has my school in Colombia. In this school the students don't want to learn nor do the teachers want to teach (some of them). This school sucks! The schedule sucks!

Respondent #008 plans to study biomedical engineering, and hopes to become a doctor. Respondent #013, a 16-year-old white female whose parents migrated from Portugal answered, "It hasn't done much of a great job in that area." Respondent #013 plans to attend college. Respondent #014 offered no personal information except her gender; she answered, "I don't know they never shown me up anything." Respondent #014 hopes to go to college, get a master's degree, and join the state police. Respondent #015, an 18-year-old female whose parents emigrated from Puerto Rico answered, "Um, I'm not sure." Respondent #015 hopes to go to college. Respondent #012, a 17-year-old male whose mother is Peruvian and father, American, answered, "Besides T.V. production it hasn't taught me anything at all." Respondent #011 plans to attend college, and study T.V. and film production.

Three respondents answered in terms unrelated to educational goals. Respondent # 003, an 18-year-old female who emigrated in 2003 stated, "In many ways," and plans to attend college. Respondent #002, a 16-year-old Hispanic/African American male answered, "Be independent, do things for myself or they will not get done." He answered "college" for his future plans. Respondent #005, a 17-year-old African American female replied, "It helped me how to socialize with different people, cultures and personalities." Respondent #005 hopes to win a basketball scholarship and get a degree in psychology.

A. LEBERATTO: SCHOOL STRAIN DIFFERENCES NATIVE AND IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

Four responses were positive and related to educational goals. Respondent #004, a 14-year-old Hispanic female who observed, "It has prepared me by teaching things about college and how to write an essay and what college professors ask for," hopes to study fashion marketing. Respondent #009, a 17-year-old female who migrated from Colombia in 2003 and hopes to attend college answered, "It has given me education and put me in situations where I have to use my intelligence to solve problems that I may encounter later on." An 18-year-old Hispanic male, respondent #011, commented, "Well it helped me by me taking an elective which is T.V. production and it helped me a lot. I've really liked it." He hopes to study T.V. and film production. Respondent #016 is a 16-year-old female who emigrated from Bolivia in 2002, and plans to attend college to study psychology answered, "High school has given me some of the knowledge that I need and education." Respondent #s 010 and 017 left the question blank. Respondent #010 is a female, and respondent #017 who emigrated from the Dominican Republic in 2005, intends to become a flight attendant.

Of the 15 respondents who planned to attend college, four replied positive responses to the question, "How has school prepared you for the future plans?" Two of the four were immigrants. Three respondents answered in terms unrelated to education; one of the three was an immigrant. Eight complained that school had not helped them with their future goals; half of these were immigrants. Thus, clear distinctions cannot be made within native and immigrant reactions to this question except that among the seven immigrant respondents, the four that answered negatively used some of the strongest language to criticize the school. Respondents #s 001, 006, 007 and 008 explicitly stated that the school has not helped them, and two of the respondents found help outside of school.

Immigrant students overwhelmingly noted less help than native students in preparing for college. When students were asked if they had discussed college options with a school official within the last two years, twelve answered "No," and five, "Yes"; the twelve who answered "No" include all eight immigrants. When asked if a school official had helped them seek college financing, eleven responded answered "No," one answered "Don't Know," and five, "Yes"; five of the eleven who answered "No" were immigrants. When asked if a school official had encouraged them to go on college tours, eleven replied "No," one, "Don't Know," and five, "Yes." Seven who answered "No" were immigrants. Of four respondents who asserted that they do not have enough education for the kinds of jobs they wish to pursue, three were immigrants. Immigrants' responses to multiple choice questions about preparation for college were overwhelmingly negative. Although most students thought the school had not helped them prepare for the future, this had not discouraged them from wanting to attend college. Fifteen of the seventeen respondents, both native and immigrant, hoped to do so.

Responses concerning the school's help with future goals fall into three groups. The eight "*very negative responses*" to the open-ended questions (Respondent #s 001, 006, 007, 008, 012, 013, 014, and 015) are part of group "A." The ten students with "*negative expressed opinions*" to two or more multiple choice questions of the multiple choice questions are part of group "B." The four respondents who belong to both "A" and "B" (Respondent #'s 001, 006, 008, and 012) have shown the "*greatest negativity opinions*" about the school's preparations for their educational goals. The three students who are not part of groups "A" or "B" (Respondents #s 002, 010, and 011), belong to group "C," "*without negative opinions.*" The answers of the students in groups "A," "B," and "C" were explored to see which students were negatively attached to administration and show signs of deviance and anger.

OPINION ON TEACHERS AND TIME IN SCHOOL

One assumes that students who are dissatisfied with school will not want to take part in extracurricular activities, be bored by classes, and think school policies unfair. Students were asked if they participated in any extracurricular activities in or outside of school. Ten of seventeen participated in extracurricular activities; nine were members of groups "A" or "B," including four immigrants. Five students took AP classes; all they were members of groups "A" or "B," including four immigrants. Feelings that administrators had not helped prepare them for their futures did not deter students from participating in extracurricular activities or AP classes.

The study also explored the relation between interest in class and dissatisfaction with school. Students were asked if during the last year of school they did as little work as possible, whether they were interested in what they learned in class, and whether school was a waste of time. To the first question, three students answered positively, all part of "A" or "B"; none was an émigré. When asked if they were interested in what they learned in class, ten students answered "Often" or "Always." These answers were split evenly between native and immigrant students. When asked if they felt school was a waste of time, two students, both native and in group "C", answered "Strongly Agree" (Respondent #s 002, and 010). Clear conclusions cannot be drawn about students who are uninterested in classes, since respondents from all groups answered negatively. However, immigrants did not profess to do as little work as possible or think school was a waste of time. The students that expressed that school was a waste of time were part of group "C."

To account for the negative opinions about school, students were asked if "school policies are fair" and to explain why. Four students answered "Strongly disagree" (Respondent #s 003, 005, 008, and 011) and two, "Disagree" (Respondent #s 001 and 015). Three of the six were immigrants (Respondent #s 001, 003, and 008). The written explanations indicate that immigrant students were concerned with fairness in attendance policy and punishment for lateness, while native students objected broadly with school policies. Respondent #001, 16-year-old female from Ecuador wrote:

Sometimes they don't understand you, for example I had my first detention in my whole life and it was just because I was tardy, but there are some cases where the kids are always cutting and they don't do anything to them.

Respondent #003, an 18-year-old female who migrated in 2003 explained, "With the absences, they just give 9! When they should give 18 that's what we had before." Respondent #008, an 18-year-old female from Colombia explained that racism is involved, "Some of the TA's are black. Therefore they sometimes will not punish a black student but if the student was Hispanic or White they will punish him, (suspension or ISS /in school suspension)." Meanwhile, native students, such as Respondent #005, a 17-year-old African American female, found the rules too restrictive:

We stay in school way too long we cannot focus 100% for that long. We always have to wear an ID and if you don't have it you have to pay for another one before entering. If you don't have money you get detention!

Respondent #011, an 18-year-old Hispanic male, grumbled, "No, the school policies are not fair because it makes school boring and makes people not come to school." Finally, Respondent #015, an 18-year-old Hispanic female explained, "It's unfair because it doesn't seem like its for our best interest, its more like they do it so the Board (of education) can seem like they are doing good." While immigrant students complained about hall policies, native students expressed a broader dislike of school.

The study explored connections between students who felt administrators did not help prepare them for their educational future and those who felt teachers and administrators did not personally care about them. One would expect these two groups would overlap. Students were asked to affirm or deny the following statements: "If I needed extra help, I received it from my teachers," and "I could talk to teachers and administration about my problems." Three strongly disagreed with the latter statement (Respondents #s 001, 003, and 017). All are immigrants from group "A" or "B." One student answered "Disagree" (Respondent # 012), also in group "A." When asked, "If I needed extra help, I received it from my teachers," four disagreed (Respondents #s 002, 003, 016, and 017); Respondent #002 is in group "C"; the remaining students, in group "B" are also immigrants. The multiple choice questions indicate that immigrant students from groups "A" and "B" replied negatively to questions about school administrators' willingness to advise them on their educational goals.

The students were asked "What do you think teachers and administrators personally think about you?" and "What do you think teachers and administrators think about the students in school?" The

A. LEBERATTO: SCHOOL STRAIN DIFFERENCES NATIVE AND IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

majority of students responded that teachers and administrators have a positive view of them personally, regard them as they would any other student, or think they do not live up to their potential. However, when asked what the school administration collectively thought of all the students that attend the school, they wrote that the administration thinks them apathetic and badly behaved. To the question of what students think of you, respondent #007, a 16-year-old immigrant female wrote, "I don't know maybe some of them say that I'm pretty good but because of my lack of interest in school I don't get better grades and it makes me feel mediocre and dumb." Respondent #005, a 17-year-old African American female answered, "Most of them say I am very bright and have a good future. It makes me feel even more confident in myself." Respondent #012, a 17-year-old Hispanic/white male noted, "They believe I'm bright, but some don't think I work up to my potential, I honestly wholeheartedly agree, but I don't really like high school classes."

Both native and immigrant students responded very negatively when asked what they thought teachers and administrators generally thought of the student body. Respondent #001, a 16-year-old immigrant female explained, "Most of my teachers say that the students from Elizabeth High School are just apathetic about school but I believe administrators need to know that not all students are like that." According to Respondent #013, A 16 year old white female, "They, most likely think half of the school's population is here for nothing. Lack of work/effort/respect or decency." Respondent #014, a female, observed, "Sometimes I feel that teachers don't care about us because they never talk about the future or give us any ideas for after high school, they just talk about class." Although the majority of students believed their teachers thought well of them personally and hoped they would live up to their potential, they also thought -- both immigrant and natives -- that the teachers have a low opinion of the student body. Notably, one of the main concerns of the students was being pegged as not caring about her or his education or future.

STUDENT'S OPINIONS ON THINGS THAT BOTHER AND STRESS THEM WHILE IN SCHOOL

Immigrant and native students were asked to list the things that bother them in school and how they deal with these annoyances. There were small differences; while immigrants and natives were annoyed by disruptive and apathetic students, the long school day, and school rules, immigrant students also were bothered by apathetic administrators. Respondent #001, a 16-year-old immigrant female, complained about:

Stupid kids who don't want to learn anything but don't allow others to learn. Most of the time they are just pathetic, they don't care about anything, another thing that really bothers me is teachers who come to school just to get their check and they don't even bother to teach correctly.

Respondent #009, a 17-year-old female immigrant female remarked, "I don't like the long days, it bothers me to stay in school for more than 8 hours and not use the time efficiently. It's stressing to be so much time in school." According to Respondent #016, a 17-year-old immigrant female:

What bothers me is that every time I go to guidance she is busy and even when my mom comes. Also the bathroom every time I go there is dirty, that's why I don't use them. It also bothers me those students that don't want to learn and are interrupting the class and don't let me concentrate and for last the food, I really don't like it.

Respondent #005, a 17-year-old African American female answered:

I get so frustrated and try to do the best I could in all my classes but I feel overworked because of the long school day. I have no choice but to try to stay focused knowing I could do better if I had decent time to work on these skills instead of being tired and not being able to function.

Respondent 014, a female talked about arbitrary rules and violence;

School rules sometimes make me feel uncomfortable because they give us detention for no reason. Also school fights, the big issue could be gangs; this board of education has to do something real quick to get done with it.

Students were also asked to identify and discuss their stresses: "What are the things that stress you during your time in school?" and "How do you deal with the things that stress you?" Immigrant and native students are both stressed by school work and tests. Respondent #006, a 15-year-old immigrant female wrote that she was stressed, "When I have a test or when I don't understand something;" Respondent #007, a 16-year-old immigrant female, "When the teacher gives me projects that I don't understand, I get really upset and in depression." To resolve this problem she, "talks to my teacher for help or go to my best friend which makes me relax." Respondent #008, an 18-year-old immigrant female, had no problems: "Nothing, there is nothing to worry about in this school, everything is very easy." Respondent #002, an African American/Hispanic male concurred: "Nothing." Respondent #010, a female explained:

Good question, have a lot of hours in school and I don't know why, and this lunch they give is terrible. For a lot of time in the school you only want to sleep, and teacher give work and homework is my stress. Imagine 7:30 to 4:00 I don't know but I think that is too much time.

Respondent #011, a Hispanic male answered, "The things that make me stress is the amount of work I have to get done in such a small period of time." Respondents #s 002, 010, and 011 are part of group "C," yet they answered similarly to immigrant and native students in the other groups. All students experienced similar annoyances and stresses in school.

STUDENT'S OPINIONS ON DEVIANT THOUGHTS AND ACTS

To test whether students who feel school has not helped them prepare for their future are also inclined to deviant thoughts, they were asked about their opinions about lying and fighting. They were requested to affirm or deny the statements: "Lies don't hurt anyone," "Lies that help friends are ok," and "Lies that keep you out of trouble are ok." Five respondents agreed with at least one of these statements. Respondents #s 002, 005, and 011 agreed with two or more and two of those respondents, #'s 002 and 011, are in group "C." Then, students were asked to affirm or deny: "Fights are ok if hit first," and "Fights are ok if standing up for rights," "Fights are ok if standing up for family and friends." Six respondents agreed but only respondent #s 002, 005, and 011 strongly agreed or agreed with all statements. Respondent #s 005 and 011 agreed that it is okay to beat up someone if she or he threatened you, and respondent #005 answered that it is okay to beat someone up if he or she does not show you enough respect. The majority of respondents who approved of deviant thoughts were native students in group "C."

One would assume that students who think school has not prepared them for the future would be inclined to deviant acts. The most common act was skipping school; only five native students reported that they had not. The second most common deviant act was "taking something from a store without paying for it," which five respondents admitted doing once (Respondent #s 002, 004, 006, 008 and 011), and three, more than twice (Respondent #s 005, 009, and 014). Of these respondents, three are immigrant and five native students, including two from group "C." The third most common deviant act was getting drunk; three respondents reported getting drunk more than twice (Respondent #s 004, 014 and 015), and three immigrants once (Respondent #s 001, 008, and 017). The fourth most common deviant act was damaging school property. Two students (Respondent #s 007 and 017) admitted doing this more than twice, one twice (Respondent #009), and two, once (007 and 016); all were native. The least common deviant act was, "Hurt someone badly enough that he or she needed bandages or a doctor." One student reported do this once (Respondent #002), and three, more than twice (Respondent #s 006, 011, and 017).

There was no difference between the deviant acts of native and immigrant students and groups "A," "B," or "C." However, attitudes toward deviance differed, with native students from group "C," "without negative opinions," most likely to approve of lying or fighting.

STUDENT'S RESPONSE TO ANGER AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

While exploring difference in anger between immigrant and native students and between groups "A," "B," or "C" we found that immigrant students are angered more often by academic and bureaucratic problems and student immaturity; native students by poor student relations. As Respondent #001, a 16-year-old immigrant, explained:

What makes me feel extremely angry is when you need changing your classes, your guidance is always busy or at some meeting, and when you do have time to talk to them they won't do anything to help you, they just treat you like another kid.

Respondent #006, a 15-year-old immigrant female is angered when, "teachers don't understand the students or when I have a bad grade." Respondent #007, a 16-year-old immigrant female, was troubled by, "The constant anger of my peers. The lack of communication between administration and students." Native respondents were angered by relationships with other students in addition to school work. Respondent #004, a 14-year-old Hispanic female, felt angry, "When other people talk about you without even knowing you." Respondent #005, a 17-year-old African American female answered, "People keep annoying me in general, or arguing around me." Respondent # 014, a female is angered when, "A lot of people walk in my same side through my class." Clearly, immigrant students are more concerned with problems in the classroom, whereas native students are bothered by conflicts with other students. There was no difference between groups "A," "B," or "C." Moreover, students unanimously resolved their conflicts by "talking," although while they perceived that other students solved theirs by "fighting or arguing."

As to their own anger, seven students agreed, "I lose my temper pretty easily." Three of these students were part of group "C" (Respondent #s 002, 010, and 011), two were immigrant (Respondent #s 005, and 017), and two, native (Respondent #s 005, and 013). Three respondents agreed with the statement, "When I'm angry at people, I feel more like hurting them than talking to them about why I'm angry," (Respondent #s 002, 010, and 013); all were native students, two from group "C." Seven respondents agreed, "When I'm really angry, other people better stay away from me"; three were native (Respondent #s 002, 011, and 015), four were immigrant (Respondents #s 006, 008, 016, and 017). Six students agreed, "When I have a disagreement with someone, it is usually hard for me to talk calmly about it without getting upset"; two were immigrant (Respondents #s 001, and 016), four native (Respondents #s 003, 012, 013, and 015). Students from group "C" most notably agreed with the multiple choice aggression statements. Respondents from groups "A" and "B" and immigrant students sometimes agreed, but not as prominently as those from group "C." Students from groups "A" and "B" were not higher in deviance, anger, or aggression. Indeed, the opposite was found: students from group "C" who did not express "negative opinions" about the school's preparation for their future had more thoughts of deviance, and were angrier and more aggressive.

DISCUSSION

Immigrant students overwhelmingly reported that they received less help than native students in preparing for college and every day in classes. The majority of immigrant students concluded that teachers do not personally care about them and that school has not prepared them for their future. Still, most of the students would like to attend college. Moreover, students also took part in extracurricular activities in and outside school. Indeed many students were not deterred from participating in extracurricular activities, AP classes, or in the planning to attend college.

Although the majority of students believed their teachers thought well of them personally and hoped they would live up to their potential, they also thought teachers generally regarded other students very negatively. One of the main concerns of students is to not be seen as another "apathetic" kid. These responses indicate that the respondents and the administrators might have low opinions of the student population. These negative views might be one of the reasons students receive little preparation for postsecondary education.

Regarding administrative fairness, immigrant students are concerned with attendance and

tardiness policies, while native students complain about having to attend school. While immigrant and native students were bothered by apathetic peers, the long school day, and school rules, immigrant students were also bothered by indifferent administrators and teachers. Immigrant and native students reported being stressed by the amount of homework. These results indicate that even though immigrant students express higher levels of strain, school remains their main focus. The fact that these Latin American immigrant females, despite strain, continue to strive for an education shows their commitment to improvement through education.

There were few differences between the deviant acts of native and immigrant students. However, native-born students who did not express dissatisfaction with the school's preparation for their future approved of such deviant acts as lying and fighting. Immigrant students reported being angered by difficulty in classes and student immaturity, whereas native students were angered by students who had crossed them. Virtually all students claimed they resolved their conflicts by "talking" while they reported that other students solved theirs by "fighting or arguing." However, approval of deviance and aggression came primarily from native students who were unconcerned about the school's college and job counseling. These findings indicate that female immigrant students disapprove of deviance more than native females and males. However, it must be noted that the study sample was very small. Although an equal number of females and males were randomly selected to take part on the study, all but three of the respondents were females, including all of the immigrant students in the study. All but two of the respondents were Hispanic. The student population in Elizabeth High School is primarily Hispanic and largely immigrant. For the most part, this study represents the thoughts and opinions of Hispanic immigrant and native-born females.

CONCLUSION

This study explored whether school dissatisfaction and stress increased student strain. The majority of students experienced strain caused by disappointment with college and job counseling and negative dealings with students, teachers, and administrators. Immigrant students noted higher levels of strain. We anticipated that students who felt more strain would have higher deviance and anger levels. However, the deviance and anger levels were similar for both immigrant and native students; except for students who did not care about the inferior advisement they received (Respondents #s 002, 010, and 011). The last group of students ("C") reported more deviance, aggression, and anger than those students who felt strain in school. Several reasons may account for these results. (1) Of the respondents only three were males, two in group "C." Males tend to express higher levels of anger and aggression than females, even if females may be stressed more (Agnew, 2002). (2) The number of respondents to this study was very limited. (3) There could be other stressors and strains in and outside of school that made Respondent #s 002, 010, and 011 higher in deviance and anger. (4) Students who do not care or feel depressed about their future may report more deviant thoughts and behavior than students who feel invested in themselves and the future. These results call for additional investigation of the strains that native and immigrant female and male students experience.

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A. LEBERATTO: SCHOOL STRAIN DIFFERENCES NATIVE AND IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

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ENDNOTES

¹Anomie is rooted in Greek, prefix *a-* "without," and *nomos* "law." During the 19th century, Emile Durkheim used the French word *anomie* meaning "without norms" to explain the psychological condition that resulted when social disruption left citizens without norms or purpose.

² This study was approved by the IRB at The College of New Jersey in April 2008.