

Criminal Justice Perspectives

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Research Articles

Comprehensive Reliability Analysis of the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs in a Rural Ohio Drug Court Sample

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Abstract

The Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN) is a comprehensive evaluation tool relied upon by many drug courts. Considerable research to date has served to justify the GAIN's validity and reliability. We build upon this research in two ways: First, we perform comprehensive reliability analysis on nearly all established response scales using a novel sample of 231 participants from rural Ohio. Second, we systematically assemble and test over 141,000 theoretical subscales, which are abbreviated versions of the established response scales. Our findings confirm the item reliability of the GAIN for participants in the rural Midwest, and indicate that abbreviated subscales may be developed without loss of item reliability.

Introduction

The Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN) is a psychometric evaluation tool. It is designed to assess a participant's physical and mental health, as well as their behaviors relating to drug use. It is often used in the context of drug courts.

Because a participant's experience with the drug court may be at least partially dependent on their performance on the GAIN, there is considerable justified interest among stakeholders to ensure the GAIN is a valid and reliable tool. To date, much research has been done to support this assertion.

This study builds upon that research by making two distinct methodological contributions. One is that we perform a comprehensive reliability analysis on the GAIN using a 231-participant sample of data from rural Ohio. While the GAIN has been tested in many other niche contexts before, to the best of the authors' knowledge this represents the first time the GAIN is being tested with a sample specific to the rural Midwest.

Our second methodological contribution is to advance research in GAIN subscales, abbreviated versions of established response scales using only some of the response items. These abbreviated versions or subscales may save time to administer, but risk losing validity and

reliability. We construct and perform reliability analysis on over 141,000 theoretical subscales to the GAIN's actual established response scales, with the goal to identify which are the most reliable and how they compare to the original scale.

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Literature Review

The Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN) is "a screening instrument evaluating internalizing/externalizing behaviors" (Martínez-Loredo et al., 2023). The GAIN uses psychometric testing to measure a wide variety of items including substance use, mental health, and crime. "Many psychometric tests include both an omnibus assessment of a neurobehavioral function or successful neurodevelopment as well as subtests assessing specific domains related to that function," according to White et al. (2022), and the GAIN clearly falls within this category. The GAIN is administered in two forms, the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs Short Screener (GAIN-SS) and the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs- Initial (GAIN-I). The GAIN-SS is shorter 23 item assessment that is usually administered around in 5 to 10 minutes (Dell & Sprong, 2017). In contrast, the GAIN-I is described by Titus et al. as "a comprehensive standardized biopsychosocial assessment battery of reliable and valid measures designed to support clinical decision making" (Titus et al., 2008).

Reliability is the capacity of a multi-item assessment tool to produce dependable and reproducible scoring when applied to a specific population (Babin & Svensson, 2012). Validity, however, is defined as "the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure" (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Another important metric is individual amenability, which in prior research has been related to one's willingness to engage in a treatment and how much one would benefit from an available treatment (Kimonis et al., 2011).

When examining the reliability of the GAIN-I, Titus et al. found a high degree of reliability in studies involving adolescents and adults when using both short-term and long-term scales (2008). The study found that the Behavior Complexity Scale (BCS) returned alpha scores of .91 for adolescents and .96 for adults. Martinez-Loredo et al. found the GAIN-SS to be reliable even when translated to Spanish. (2023)

Furthermore, Coleman-Cowger et al. obtained results that the GAIN showed good internal consistency with all GAIN measures reaching a .70 or greater alpha score except for the Illegal Activity Scale which received a .66 (2013). In terms of validity, through observing relationships between scales of the GAIN's BCS, through correlations between the Substance Problem Scale, HIV Risk Scale, Emotional Problems Scale, and Recovery Environment Risk Index, Conrad et al.

indicated finding support of BCS having criterion validity (2012). Finally, the research of Khanano et al. not only indicated finding evidence that supports the concurrent validity ("the effectiveness of test to estimate a participants performance on another outcome measure") of the GAIN-SS by comparing it to the internalizing disorder screener (IDScr), but through their own analysis they found the GAIN-SS to yield Cronbach's Alpha of .91 (2021) which also indicates a high level of reliability.

This study addresses two distinct gaps in the research. First, while the aforementioned works validate the GAIN and have shown high levels of internal consistency, their studies utilize data gathered in whole or in part outside of our area of interest, the rural Midwest. While those living in large areas with large systems in place may be able to trust the GAIN because of previous research, there is concern that a Midwestern rural landscape's unique circumstances and challenges place it outside of the scope of prior research. This study's first methodological contribution will directly address the GAIN's reliability in this context.

Second, the two versions of the GAIN which have been developed to date (the GAIN-I and the GAIN-SS) are dramatically far apart in length and context. This precludes study of a potential medium-length GAIN application, and the nuanced tradeoff between thoroughness and brevity for the administrator. This study's second methodological contribution will lay the groundwork for the potential development of such a medium-length GAIN application, which may be valuable to rural drug courts which must content with limited resources but desire the thoroughness of the GAIN's instruments.

Methods

Data

The data utilized for the present analysis consist of a multi-year sample of 231¹ participants in a rural Ohio Drug Court who were administered the GAIN. This data was provided to the authors in collaboration with Chestnut Health Systems. The authors received data in an anonymized form, and respect all Chestnut/GAIN data policies.

The sample contains 67 females and 163 males (one participant has the numeral -4 listed for the gender variable B1). The sample is over 94% Caucasian. Median participant age is 30, with the youngest being 18 and the oldest being 70.

Removal of missing data was only necessary for participants 2, 104, 109, 144, and 171's responses to item M1b2. These observations are removed for response scales utilizing item M1b2, resulting in a reduced sample size of 226 for only the General Individual Severity Scale

¹ The original data sample was of length 237, but included six rows with improper data types.

(Code: GISS), the General Mental Distress Scale (Code: GDMA26), the Internal Mental Distress Scale (Code: IMDS), and the Depressive Symptom Scale (Code: IDMS-DSS9).

Reliability Analysis

We decide to perform reliability analysis on the sample, due to its unique relevance to psychometric assessment and its prevalence in the existing literature. Reliability analysis yields Cronbach's Alpha, a decimal metric of the internal reliability of a set of response items.

Reliability analysis is performed using the *ltm* package in R for Latent Trait Modeling. Cronbach's Alpha is reported, as well as its 95% confidence interval. Finally, we also standardize and report Cronbach's Alpha. These estimates and confidence intervals could not be produced for seven of the response scales utilized in this study,² and therefore must be excluded. The authors are able to confirm that the data for these item sets do not include *NA* or *NaN* values. Clearly, there exists a failure in data manipulation which has yet to be identified. The matter certainly merits further study.

Established Response Scales

The GAIN-I utilizes hundreds of questions, which are grouped into 94 distinct scales and indexes, most of which are summarized in Table 1.³ The response scales consist of an average of 11.57 items, ranging from 2 to 90. The response scales can be further classified according to which section of the GAIN they appear in: "Background and Treatment Arrangements," "Environment and Living Situations," "Legal (Civil and Criminal)," "Mental and Emotional Health," "Physical Health," "Risk Behaviors and Disease Prevention," "Substance Use," and "Vocational (Work, School, Financial)." A few response scales span multiple sections, and are classified for the purposes of the present analysis as "Other/Multiple." Many response scales utilize the same questions; 9 questions are used in 5 response scales, 79 questions are used in 4 response scales, 32 questions are used in 3 response scales, and 152 questions are used in 2 response scales.

Note that GAIN variable coding sometimes intentionally skips numbers or letters, so the number of items for a particular scale may not be intuitively reflective of the range of items for that scale.

Additionally, for ease of analysis the authors have added the GAIN code for each subscale's parent scale to the subscale name, separated by a hyphen. For example, the Substance Use

² These are the Parental Activity Index (PAI), the Substance Problem Scale (SPS) and its subscales, and the Tobacco Dependence Scale (TDS).

³ This table was synthesized by the authors from information in our provided data, variable reference, and the GAIN-I evaluation manual. The most recent version of the GAIN-I manual can be found at <https://chestnut.app.box.com/v/GAIN-I-Materials> (GAIN Coordinating Center).

Disorder Scale (Code: SUDS) is a subscale of the Substance Problem Scale (Code: SPS) and is given the code "SPS-SUDS" for our purposes. We do not do the same for the much larger Crime-Violence Scale (CVS) or General Individual Severity Scale (GISS) which are aggregated from the scales [GCTS, PCS, ICS, DCS] and [SPS, IMDS, BCS, CVS], respectively.

The Blood Alcohol Content Scale (Code: BAC) is excluded from this analysis due to its inclusion of data types which are not conducive to Reliability Analysis; question B1 records the respondent's gender identity, which is not coercible to an interval numeric scale. Similarly, the Cognitive Impairment Screen (Code: CIS) is also excluded because its evaluation does not place equal weight on each of the component items.

Constructed Subscales

With particular regard to Titus et. al's groundbreaking work, which produced uniquely high Cronbach's Alpha scores, we are also interested in expanding reliability analysis of the GAIN into shorter constructed subscales.

Rather than adopt an optimally designed set of subscales, we maintain the "comprehensive" scope of our reliability analysis by considering all possible subscales for most of the response scales provided by the GAIN. The number of possible subscales for any particular response scale of length n can be determined according to the following modified version of the expression for mathematical combinations:

$$\sum_{i=2}^{n-1} (n!)/(i!(n-i)!)$$

The bounds of the summation must be narrowed simply because selecting all items in an established response scale does not constitute a "subscale," nor does merely selecting one of the items. We assemble every such possible subscale, and conduct reliability analysis on each. The subscale which returns the highest value for Cronbach's Alpha is recorded.⁴ We term this the "ideal subscale."

Due to computational limitations, this process is only performed for the GAIN's established response scales with ≤ 15 items. This leaves 63 of the 92 GAIN established response scales considered during the first part of our methodology, amounting to more than 141,000 constructed subsets.

One practical limitation to this comprehensive approach is that it disregards the thematic cohesion otherwise present in GAIN subscales. For example, the Reasons for Quitting subscales are distinguished between personal motivations and interpersonal motivations. While it is

⁴ The authors have also saved the results of reliability analysis for all of the subscales, including those which are not maximally reliable but may still be an improvement compared to the original scale. We recognize the inherent value for further research this poses.

plausible to expect thematically related items to demonstrate greater levels of inherent reliability, our comprehensive approach is nearly certain to identify coincidental outliers. As such, manual review would be recommended in an application context.

Results

Established Response Scales

Results are summarized in Figure 1, and included in full in the Appendix via Table 2. Most established response scales perform considerably well, with only a few falling into professionally inadvisable ranges. It is also important to consider that many of the less reliable response scales, such as Financial Instability Scale, are not fundamentally psychometric measurements.

Standardization has very little effect on the most reliable response scales. This is consistent with our expectations based on prior research; as Tavakol & Dennick (2011) explain, "In practice, Cronbach's alpha is a lower-bound estimate of reliability because heterogeneous test items would violate the assumptions of the tau-equivalent model." More reliable response scales then have less room for improvement as a result of standardization. Indeed, the effect of standardization is much more pronounced for less originally reliable response scales, with a mostly positive effect; standardizing Cronbach's Alpha decreases 19 response scales with $\alpha \leq 0.5$ to only 9.

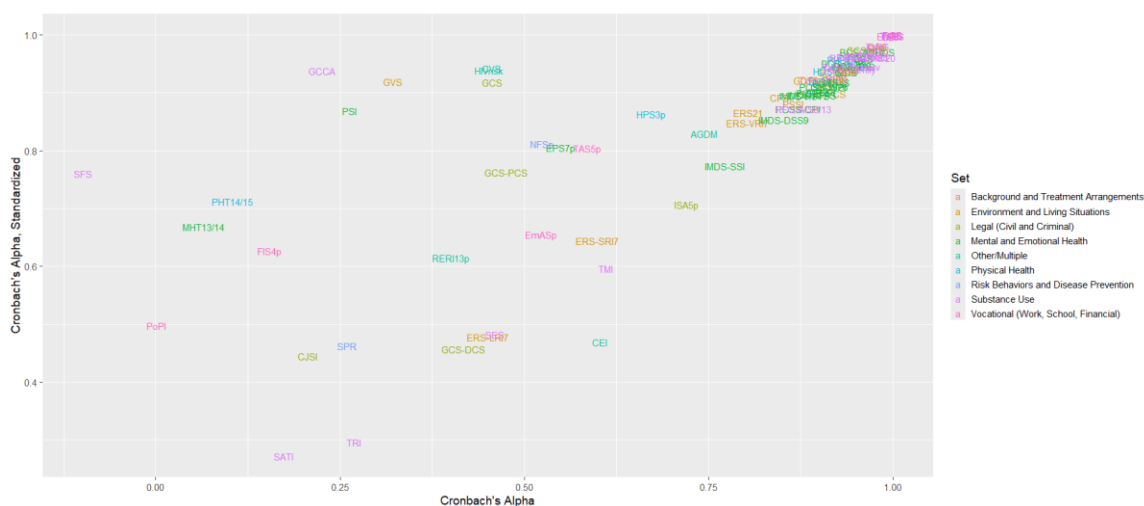


Figure 1: Default and Standardized Results of Reliability Analysis for GAIN Established Response Scales

As seen in Figure 2, which provides a 95% confidence interval for each response scale, the precision in reliability analysis also increases for the response scales estimated to be more reliable. While there is a considerable amount of variation within the range, most of the

response scales are contained below a standardized α value of 0.8 have longer margins of error. Conversely, all response scales with both a default α value and a standardized α value greater than 0.8 have very narrow margins of error. This further supports our findings of reliability.

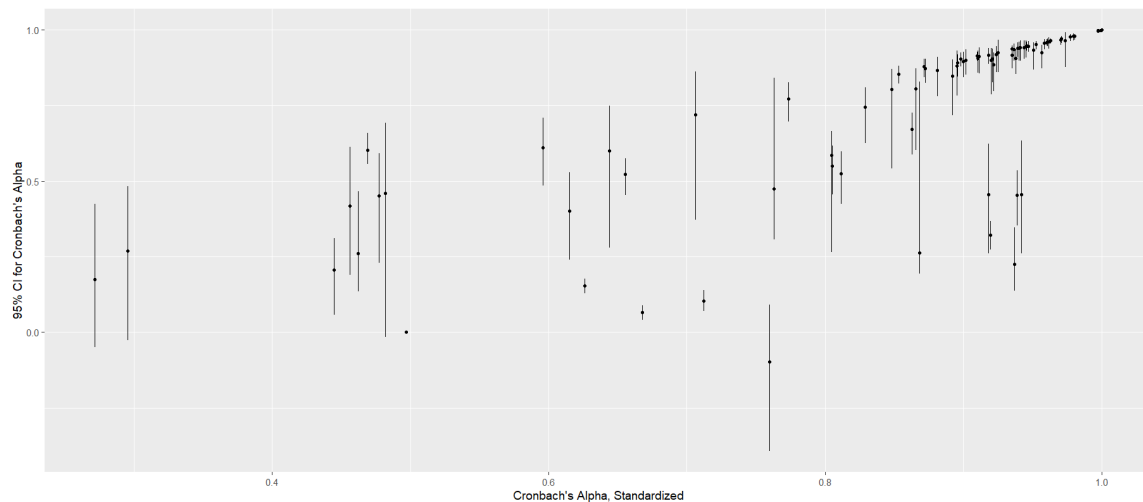


Figure 2: 95% Confidence Intervals of Cronbach's Alpha for GAIN Established Response Scales

The number of items composing each response scale is also considered as a predictive factor to its Cronbach's Alpha. Here, we find generally null results. Figure 3 provides a scatterplot and overlaid linear model for the relationship between the number of items and Cronbach's Alpha. No relationship is found when utilizing the default (i.e., non-standardized) value for Cronbach's Alpha. The standardized value, however, yielded a significant yet small magnitude relationship, with an F-statistic's p-value of 0.001136 but an adjusted R-squared of only 0.1112.

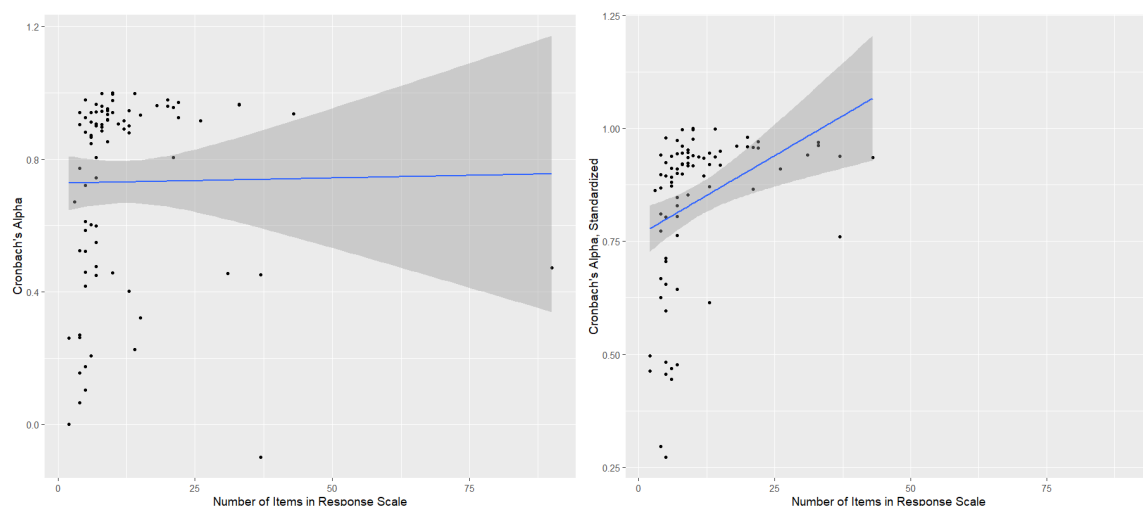


Figure 3: Relationship between Number of Items in a Response Scale and Cronbach's Alpha, both Default and Standardized

These findings generally affirm the previous literature, while expanding it into the new context of rural Ohio adults. Our range of α values is mostly consistent with the expectations of Khanano et al. In particular, producing $\alpha > 0.9$ for the Behavior Complexity Scale is consistent with the findings of Titus et al. Our findings differ only slightly from those of Coleman-Cowger et al.; we find some individual response scale reliability below 0.7, but conversely find a higher reliability for the Illegal Activities Index (0.7200 compared to Coleman-Cowger et al.'s 0.66).

Overall, our comprehensive reliability analysis of the established response scales of the GAIN confirms their reliability, especially those most directly relied upon for psychometric evaluation. These results not only contribute to the growing scientific consensus of the general efficacy of the GAIN, but provide solidifying evidence for its reliability with rural and Midwestern participants, which to the best of the authors' knowledge has not yet been independently justified.

Constructed Subscales

As illustrated in Figure 4 and detailed in the Appendix via Table 3, our comprehensive reliability analysis of all potential subscales was almost always capable of producing an ideal subscale with greater reliability than the original. The concentration of points in the upper right corner of the graph with considerably more variation towards the left is a feature shared with the original response scales.



Figure 4: Comparison between Original Cronbach's Alpha and that of the Ideal Subscale

Treating the number of items in the subscale as a predictive variable again yields null results, potentially in part because the determination process restricts the scope of the resulting subscales. It is also noteworthy that there is no tendency for longer or shorter subscales to be ranked highest in reliability for a particular response scale, and there is little to no correlation

with the length of the original response scale (that is, even some of the longest and most reliable response scales had ideal subscales of only two items).

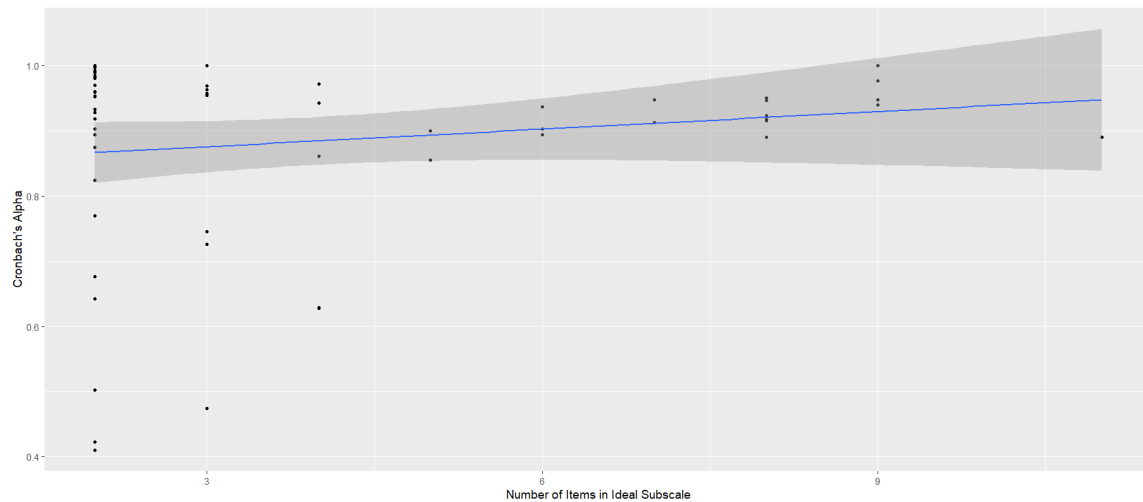


Figure 5: Relationship between Number of Items in an Ideal Subscale and Cronbach's Alpha

Overall, our comprehensive theoretical construction of subscales for the GAIN not only further supports the overall item reliability, but helps to justify that abbreviated versions of certain GAIN response scales could be developed without sacrificing item reliability. Further, the range of item counts among the ideal subscales supports similar findings for the established response scales, and merits further research.

Conclusion

Drug courts are highly specialized courts that focus on solving the problem of drug use and addiction, as well as helping drug offenders reenter into the community. When many people all over the United States and their families rely on the efficiency of drug courts, it is important that the treatment they receive is as reliable and trustworthy as possible. That trust is built through sources like the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN) that drug courts use, which make it apparent that any screening or assessment tools that the courts use need to be reliable.

While the drug courts are a promising avenue to confront drug epidemics, it is imperative that highly reliable screening instruments be utilized. This study has furthered the scientific evidence that the GAIN is highly reliable. This study also lays significant foundation to justifying the reliability of the GAIN specifically for the population of the rural Midwest. These findings are supportive of previous conclusions made on the subject by Titus et al. (2008), Khanano et al. (2021), and Coleman-Cowger et al. (2013).

In addition, in recent years the GAIN has been shown to be highly reliable when it is administered in other cultures and languages as supported by Martinez-Lorendo et al. (2023).

Its application to other cultures supports that the GAIN is equal in assessing people based on what it is claiming to assess rather than assessing local issues.

While the scope of our study (i.e., rural Midwest) justifies the uniqueness of our contribution to the existing literature, it is also the source of our study's primary limitation. A sample size of 231 may be prohibitive of robust statistical inference, especially for the theoretical subscales computed in the second portion of our study. Additionally, the practical significance of our study is slightly limited by our decision to consider only Cronbach's Alpha as a measure of reliability, and our decision not to consider other metrics such as validity at all.

We identify two major branches for further research which may result from this study: 1) validation with increased geographic and demographic versatility, and 2) optimization of the length-reliability tradeoff in subscale construction. In concluding, we will briefly address both of these avenues.

First, our reliability findings may be more thoroughly justified with further focused data collection and synthesis. This may turn on the basis of either urbanicity or the Midwestern region, or ideally, the intersection of the two. Such research would support our general findings, and begin to delineate how, if at all, (and to what extent) trends in item reliability are different between participants in our rural Midwestern population of interest and those outside it.

More pressingly, further research on the tradeoffs between length and item reliability with abbreviated response scales is needed. While we believe our study is a major first step in proving that a considerably abbreviated version of the GAIN-I could be developed without losing item reliability, this study is far away from actually proposing such a new version. This process could even be explored with the data already gathered or constructed for this study, of which only a small percent is reported here (see footnote #4).

Acknowledgements

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Appendix

Table 1: GAIN-I Established Response Scales

GAIN Code	Scale	N	Items
AGDM	Average General Denial & Misrepresentation Scale	7	S12, P15, R9, M8, E18, L12, V14
AGHS	Average General Help Scale	7	S10, P13, R7, M6, E16, L10, V12
AGUR	Average General Urgency Rating Scale	7	S11, P14, R8, M7, E17, L11, V13
BCS	Behavior Complexity Scale	18	M3a1-18
BCS-ADHDS	BCS subscale: ADHD Scale	33	M3a1-18, M3b1-15
BCS-CDS	BCS subscale: Conduct Disorder Scale	15	M3b1-15
BCS-HIS	BCS subscale: Hyperactivity-Impulsivity Index	9	M3a10-18
BCS-IDS	BCS subscale: Inattentive Disorder Scale	9	M3a1-9
CAS	Child Activity Scale	5	E4j-p
CEI	Controlled Environment Index	6	S7e2, P11g, M5g, E2f, L6c-d
CFS	Child Functioning Scale	6	E4a1-6
CJSI	Criminal Justice System Index	6	L6a-e
CVS	Crime-Violence Scale	31	E8a-n, L3a1-7, L3a8-14, L3a15-19
CWS	Current Withdrawal Scale	22	S3c1-99
EmASp	Employment Activity Scale	5	V6k-q
EmPS	Employment Problem Scale	8	V3a-j
EPS7p	Emotional Problem Scale	7	M1e-g, M2, M2a, M3, M3c
ERS21	Environment Risk Scale	21	E5a-g, E6a-g, E7a-g
ERS-LRI7	ERS subscale: Living Risk Index	7	E5a-g
ERS-SRI7	ERS subscale: Social Risk Index	7	E7a-g
ERS-VRI7	ERS subscale: Vocational Risk Index	7	E6a-g
FIS4p	Financial Instability Scale	4	V8, V8m, V9, V9m
FNEI	Family Night Environment Index	10	S7m1-10
FPS	Financial Problem Scale	10	V8a-k

GAIN Code	Scale	N	Items
GCCA	General Continuing Care Adherence Scale	14	S7e3-4, S6a, S7g4-5, S7g7-8, S7g10-15, S7g17
GCS	General Crime Scale	19	L3a1-19
CGS-DCS	GCS subscale: Drug Crime Scale	5	L3a15-19
CGS-ICS	GCS subscale: Interpersonal Crime Scale	7	L3a8-14
GCS-PCS	GCS subscale: Property Crime Scale	7	L3a1-7
GCTS	General Conflict Tactic Scale	12	E8a-n
GCTS-PHCS	GCTS subscale: Physical Conflict Scale	8	E8e-n
GCTS-VCS	GCTS subscale: Verbal Conflict Scale	4	E8a-d
GEI	Group Environment Index	10	S7kk1-10
GISS	General Individual Severity Scale	90	S9cc-ua, M1a1-4, M1b1-10, M1c1-5, M1d1-12, M2a-p, M3a1-18, E8a-n, L3a1-7, L3a8-14, L3a15-19
GMDS26	General Mental Distress Scale	26	M1a1-4, M1b1-10, M1c1, M1d1-12
GSI	General Satisfaction Index	6	E15a1-6
GSSI	General Social Support Index	9	E12c1-9
GVS	General Victimization Scale	15	E9a-r
HDS	Health Distress Scale	11	P3, P3a-k
HIS	Hyperactivity-Impulsivity Scale	9	M3a10-18
HIVrisk	HIV Risk Scale	37	R1a-j, R2a-n, E9a-r
HPS3p	Health Problem Scale	3	P9, P9a, P9b
ISA5p	Illegal Activities Scale	5	L3, L3d-g
IMDS	Internal Mental Distress Scale	43	M1a1-4, M1b1-10, M1c1-5, M1d1-12, M2a-p
IMDS-AFFS	IMDS subscale: Anxiety-Fear Symptom Scale	12	M1d1-12
IMDS-DSS9	IMDS subscale: Depressive Symptom Scale	9	M1b1-10
IMDS-HSTS	IMDS subscale: Homicidal Suicidal Thought Scale	5	M1c1-5
IMDS-SSI	IMDS subscale: Somatic Symptom Index	4	M1a1-4
IMDS-TSS	IMDS subscale: Traumatic Stress Scale	13	M2a-p

GAIN Code	Scale	N	Items
MHT13/14	Mental Health Treatment Index	4	M5f-h1
NFSp	Needle Frequency Scale	4	R1, R1k-n
NPS	Needle Problem Scale	9	R1a-j
OSSI	Other Symptoms of Stress Index	9	E11_1-99
PAI	Parental Activity Index	5	B2e-j
PCSS	Personality Coping Styles Scale	21	M4a-x
PCSS-CPI	PCSS subscale: Cautious Personality Index	6	M4a-f
PCSS-IPI	PCSS subscale: Impulsivity Personality Index	8	M4g-q
PCSS-WPI	PCSS subscale: Worrying Personality Index	7	M4r-x
PGS	Pathological Gambling Scale	10	V9a-k
PHPI	Physical Health Problem Index	22	P6a-e, P10a-s
PHT14/15	Physical Health Treatment Index	5	P11f-j1
PoPI	Percent of Poverty Index	2	V11r-s
POS	Problem Orientation Scale	5	S8s-w
PSI	Para-Suicidal Index	4	M4z1-4
PSSI	Sources of Personal Stress Index	6	E10_1-99
RERI13p	Recovery Environment Risk Index	13	S6a, E1b, E1d, E2c-e, E3, E8, E8p, E9t-u, E14a-b
RFQ26/33	Reasons for Quitting Scale	33	S9ab1-20, S9ac1-13
RFQ-IMS8/13	RFQ subscale: Interpersonal Motivation Scale	13	S9ac1-13
RFQ- PMS18/20	RFQ subscale: Personal Motivation Scale	20	S9ab1-20
SATI	Substance Abuse Treatment Index	5	S7e2-99
SES	Self-Efficacy Scale	5	S8k-q
SFS	Substance Frequency Scale	37	S2a1-r1, S2s1a-3
SPR	Sex Protection Ratio	2	R2r, R2s
SPS	Substance Problem Scale	17	S9cc-ua
SPS-SAI	SPS subscale: Substance Abuse Index	4	S9ch-m
SPS-SDS	SPS subscale: Substance Dependence Scale	7	S9cn-u
SPS-SII	SPS subscale: Substance Issues Index	5	S9cc-g
SPS-SUDS	SPS subscale: Substance Use Disorder Scale	11	S9ch-u

GAIN Code	Scale	N	Items
SSEI	Strength of Self-Efficacy Index	10	E12a1-10
SSSI	Spiritual Social Support Index	6	E13c1-e
SxRS	Sexual Risk Scale	13	R2a-n
TAS5p	Training Activity Scale	5	V3k-q
TDS	Tobacco Dependence Scale	11	R4cch-ua
TMI	Treatment Motivation Index	5	S8e-j
TPS	Training Problem Scale	8	V3a-j
TRI	Treatment Resistance Index	4	S8a-d
TxPI	Treatment Pressure Index	8	B4a-h
TxRS	Treatment Received Scale	20	S7g1-99
TxRS-Direct	TxRS subscale: Direct Treatment Services	8	S7g3-6, S7g9-10, S7g19,S7g99
TxRS-Extserv	TxRS subscale: External Treatment Services	8	S7g2, S7g11-14, S7g16-18
TxRS-Family	TxRS subscale: Family Treatment Services	4	S7g1, S7g7-8, S7g15
TxSS	Treatment Satisfaction Scale	14	S7jj1-14

Table 2: Reliability Analysis Results

GAIN Code	Cronbach's α	Standardized	95% Confidence Interval
AGDM	0.7443	0.8288	(0.6304, 0.8180)
AGHS	0.8994	0.9106	(0.8489, 0.9353)
AGUR	0.9424	0.9440	(0.9079, 0.9619)
BCS	0.9607	0.9607	(0.9473, 0.9703)
BCS-ADHDS	0.9658	0.9704	(0.9483, 0.9760)
BCS-CDS	0.9327	0.9507	(0.8623, 0.9585)
BCS-HIS	0.9172	0.9182	(0.8854, 0.9394)
BCS-IDS	0.9457	0.9469	(0.9231, 0.9603)
CAS	0.9794	0.9796	(0.9628, 0.9877)
CEI	0.6027	0.4447	(0.5538, 0.6599)
CFS	0.8465	0.8919	(0.7070, 0.9035)
CJSI	0.2064	0.4447	(0.0617, 0.3147)

GAIN Code	Cronbach's α	Standardized	95% Confidence Interval
CVS	0.4554	0.9419	(0.2527, 0.6289)
CWS	0.9706	0.9709	(0.9558, 0.9798)
EmASp	0.5226	0.6554	(0.4574, 0.5749)
EmPS	0.9973	0.9974	(0.9930, 1.000)
EPS7p	0.5490	0.8050	(0.4594, 0.6169)
ERS21	0.8046	0.8654	(0.6020, 0.8751)
ERS-LRI7	0.4503	0.4475	(0.2104, 0.5938)
ERS-SRI7	0.5992	0.6442	(0.2552, 0.7497)
ERS-VRI7	0.8039	0.8481	(0.5686, 0.8680)
FIS4p	0.1546	0.6263	(0.1332, 0.1748)
FNEI	0.9987	0.9994	(0.9629, 0.9848)
FPS	0.9970	0.9974	(0.9629, 0.9848)
GCCA	0.2254	0.9371	(0.1434, 0.3591)
GCS	0.4564	0.9182	(0.2670, 0.6368)
CGS-DCS	0.4176	0.4565	(0.1928, 0.6082)
CGS-ICS	0.9646	0.9735	(0.8774, 0.9891)
GCS-PCS	0.4753	0.7628	(0.3094, 0.8568)
GCTS	0.9164	0.9352	(0.8727, 0.9408)
GCTS-PHCS	0.9032	0.9209	(0.8291, 0.9382)
GCTS-VCS	0.9042	0.8982	(0.8780, 0.9248)
GEI	0.9950	0.9972	(0.9936, 0.9964)
GISS	0.4715	NA	(0.2996, 0.6245)
GMDS26	0.9146	0.9102	(0.8995, 0.9278)
GSI	0.9113	0.9115	(0.8553, 0.9449)
GSSI	0.9355	0.9366	(0.9034, 0.9546)
GVS	0.3215	0.9196	(0.2736, 0.3725)
HDS	0.9053	0.9381	(0.8540, 0.9340)
HIS	0.9172	0.9182	(0.8890, 0.9381)
HIVrisk	0.4523	0.9390	(0.3492, 0.5417)
HPS3p	0.6718	0.8626	(0.5852, 0.7274)
ISA5p	0.7200	0.7063	(0.3504, 0.8652)

GAIN Code	Cronbach's α	Standardized	95% Confidence Interval
IMDS	0.9372	0.9353	(0.9254, 0.9468)
IMDS-AFFS	0.8915	0.8957	(0.8617, 0.9479)
IMDS-DSS9	0.8525	0.8532	(0.8199, 0.8796)
IMDS-HSTS	0.8810	0.8953	(0.7870, 0.9289)
IMDS-SSI	0.7724	0.7736	(0.6876, 0.8322)
IMDS-TSS	0.9470	0.9458	(0.9279, 0.9596)
MHT13/14	0.0650	0.6679	(0.0425, 0.0900)
NFSp	0.5243	0.8114	(0.4225, 0.5972)
NPS	0.9516	0.9527	(0.9344, 0.9635)
OSSI	0.9190	0.9236	(0.8617, 0.9479)
PCSS	0.9564	0.9584	(0.9362, 0.9681)
PCSS-CPI	0.8714	0.8723	(0.8210, 0.9018)
PCSS-IPI	0.8958	0.8998	(0.8455, 0.9245)
PCSS-WPI	0.9052	0.9106	(0.8598, 0.9325)
PGS	1.0000	1.0000	(1.0000, 1.0000)
PHPI	0.9254	0.9568	(0.8655, 0.9496)
PHT14/15	0.1041	0.7123	(0.0687, 0.1406)
PoPI	0.0016	0.4971	(0.0012, 0.0020)
POS	0.9242	0.9249	(0.8605, 0.9643)
PSI	0.2630	0.8685	(0.1944, 0.8229)
PSSI	0.8651	0.8812	(0.7717, 0.9144)
RERI13p	0.4011	0.6510	(0.2282, 0.5232)
RFQ26/33	0.9640	0.9630	(0.9542, 0.9715)
RFQ-IMS8/13	0.8793	0.8715	(0.8474, 0.9080)
RFQ-PMS18/20	0.9589	0.9602	(0.9460, 0.9685)
SATI	0.1739	0.2719	(-0.0511, 0.4162)
SES	0.4599	0.4819	(-0.0138, 0.6844)
SFS	-0.0985	0.7598	(-0.3969, 0.1117)
SPR	0.2598	0.4624	(0.1435, 0.4487)
SSEI	0.9401	0.9403	(0.9010, 0.9604)
SSSI	0.9399	0.9394	(0.9123, 0.9591)

GAIN Code	Cronbach's α	Standardized	95% Confidence Interval
SxRS	0.9004	0.9200	(0.7659, 0.9435)
TAS5p	0.5850	0.8045	(0.2878, 0.6754)
TMI	0.6111	0.5961	(0.4993, 0.7066)
TPS	0.9973	0.9974	(0.9921, 1.0000)
TRI	0.2694	0.2958	(-0.0232, 0.4841)
TxPI	0.8855	0.9219	(0.8088, 0.9273)
TxRS	0.9794	0.9806	(0.9670, 0.9864)
TxRS-Direct	0.9595	0.9615	(0.9356, 0.9756)
TxRS-Extserv	0.9442	0.9452	(0.9083, 0.9664)
TxRS-Family	0.9411	0.9412	(0.8957, 0.9630)
TxSS	0.9984	0.9995	(0.9980, 0.9987)

Table 3: Ideal Subscales

GAIN Code	Subscale	Cronbach's α
AGDM	E18, M8, P15, R9, V14	0.8550
AGHS	E16, L10, M6, P13, R7, V12	0.8941
AGUR	E17, L11, M7, P14, R8, V13	0.9366
BCS-CDS	M3b5, M3b6, M3b7	0.9636
BCS-HIS	M3a10, M3a11, M3a12, M3a14, M3a15, M3a16, M3a17, M3a18	0.9174
BCS-IDS	M3a2, M3a3, M3a4, M3a5, M3a6, M3a7, M3a8, M3a9	0.9463
CAS	E4j, E4k, E4n, E4p	0.9716
CEI	E2f, L6c	0.8942
CFS	E4a5, E4a6	0.9895
CJSI	L6d, L6e	1.0000
EmASp	V6p, V6q	0.9928
EmPS	V3e, V3f, V3h	1.0000
EPS7p	M1e, M2, M2a, M3	0.6284
ERS-LRI7	E5b, E5d	0.8745
ERS-SRI7	E7b, E7d	0.9283
ERS-VRI7	E6f, E6g	1.0000

GAIN Code	Subscale	Cronbach's α
FIS4p	V9, V9m	0.4230
FPS	V8a, V8b, V8c, V8d, V8e, V8f, V8g, V8h, V8k	0.9766
GCCA	S7g4, S7g5	0.9811
CGS-DCS	L3a15, L3a16	0.6759
CGS-ICS	L3a11, L3a12, L3a13	1.0000
GCS-PCS	L3a1, L3a6	0.9025
GCTS	E8m, E8n	0.9593
GCTS-PHCS	E8m, E8n	0.9593
GCTS-VCS	E8a, E8b, E8c	0.9543
GEI	S7kk5, S7kk6	1.0000
GSI	E15a1, E15a2, E15a3, E15a5, E15a6	0.9004
GSSI	E12c1, E12c2, E12c3, E12c4, E12c5, E12c6, E12c7, E12c8	0.9229
GVS	E9c, E9k	0.9605
HDS	P3b, P3c	0.9537
HPS3p	P9a, P9b	0.8242
IMDS-AFFS	M1d1, M1d11, M1d12, M1d2, M1d3, M1d4, M1d5, M1d6, M1d7, M1d8, M1d9	0.8900
IMDS-DSS9	M1b2, M1b7	0.9330
IMDS-HSTS	M1c4, M1c5	0.9524
IMDS-SSI	M1a1, M1a3, M1a4	0.7264
IMDS-TSS	M2a, M2b, M2d, M2e, M2h, M2j, M2m, M2n, M2p	0.9476
MHT13/14	M5f, M5g	0.7696
NFSp	R1k, R1n	0.6425
NPS	R1a, R1b, R1d, R1e, R1f, R1g, R1h, R1j	0.9510
OSSI	E11_1, E11_2, E11_3, E11_4, E11_5, E11_6, E11_7, E11_8	0.9155
PCSS-CPI	M4a, M4b, M4d, M4e	0.8612
PCSS-IPI	M4g, M4h, M4j, M4k, M4m, M4n, M4p	0.9122
PCSS-WPI	M4r, M4s, M4t, M4u, M4v, M4w	0.9025
PGS	V91, V9b, V9c, V9d, V9e, V9f, V9g, V9h, V9j	1.0000
POS	S8s, S8t, S8u	0.9571
PSI	M4z2, M4z3	0.9848

GAIN Code	Subscale	Cronbach's α
PSSI	E10_1, E10_2, E10_4, E10_99	0.8607
RERI13p	E1b, E8, E9t	0.4742
RFQ-IMS8/13	S9ac1, S9ac10, S9ac12, S9ac13, S9ac2, S9ac3, S9ac4, S9ac9	0.8899
SATI	S7e4, S7e99	0.4100
SES	S8m, S8n, S8p, S8q	0.6274
SSEI	E12a1, E12a10, E12a2, E12a3, E12a4, E12a5, E12a6, E12a8, E12a9	0.9400
SSSI	E13d1, E13d2, E13d3	0.9686
SxRS	R2e, R2f	0.9181
TAS5p	V3p, V3q	0.9974
TMI	S8f, S8g, S8j	0.7457
TPS	V3e, V3f, V3h	1.0000
TRI	S8a, S8b	0.5025
TxPI	B4a, B4b, B4d, B4e	0.9432
TxRS-Direct	S7g4, S7g5	0.9812
TxRS-Extserv	S7g11, S7g13, S7g14, S7g16, S7g17, S7g18, S7g2	0.9475
TxRS-Family	S7g7, S7g8	0.9696
TxSS	S7jj3, S7jj5	1.0000

Hispanic populations and political participation: A macro-level examination of the Hispanic paradox and minority threat perspective

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Abstract

Existing research suggests areas with larger Hispanic populations may not increase crime as theory might predict, but may work to stabilize social and economic institutions, increasing mechanisms of informal social control and decreasing rates of criminal offending. Many states have recently passed voting laws which place additional requirements for individuals to vote that may disproportionately disenfranchise minorities and impact the reflection of their interests in the law. The current study attempts to analyze the effects of Hispanic populations and political involvement on crime using 2006 to 2010 county-level data from the American Community Survey (ACS), Uniform Crime Report (UCR), and Dave Leip's 2010 Senate, House, and Gubernatorial voting data to examine the effect of Hispanic population concentrations and political involvement on rates of violent and property crime in U.S. counties using ordinary least squares regression. The results show that two of the Hispanic-specific measures and voter participation were negatively related or not significantly associated with all crimes included in this study. In the future, research should examine the interaction effects of Hispanic origin and political participation.

Keywords: Hispanic population, crime, voter participation

Introduction

The Hispanic population in the United States has greatly increased since the 1980s (Hobbs & Stoop, 2000). In fact, Hispanics accounted for over 50 percent of the population growth in the United States between 2000 and 2010 (Ennis Rios-Vargas & Albert, 2011; Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). They have become the largest minority group in the United States making up over 16 percent of the population (Passel et al., 2011; Lopez, Motel, & Patten, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Although Hispanics make up 16 percent of the population, they only make up 11 percent of the eligible voters in the United States (Lopez et al., 2012). This may be because they do not have the required documents needed to register to vote. Multiple states have passed or attempted to pass laws making it harder to vote, such as regulations on voter registration drives, eliminating same day registration, and requiring photo identification or proof of citizenship to vote (Weiser & Norden, 2011). The changes in voting laws affect minorities because they are less likely to have the required photo identification or proof of citizenship (Weiser & Norden, 2011). Laws requiring proof of citizenship stop people from voting illegally but inhibit many

United States citizens from voting at the same time (Weiser & Norden, 2011). Other recently passed laws also affect minorities more than whites. For example, a law in Florida that introduced new requirements for voter registration drives may affect minorities more than whites because minorities depend more on the drives to register to vote (Weiser & Norden, 2011; Florida §97.0575).

Previous studies have examined the relationship between the Hispanic population and crime (Martinez & Lee, 2000; Lee, Martinez, & Rosenfeld, 2001; Barranco, 2013; Shihadeh and Barranco, 2013; Burchfield and Silver 2013) as well as the relationship between political participation and crime (Coleman 2002; Lee and Bartowski 2004). Existing research has not studied the combined effects of Hispanic populations and political involvement on crime. The current study attempts to fill this gap in the literature using data from the 2006 to 2010 county-level American Community Survey (ACS), 2006 to 2010 Uniform Crime Report (UCR), and Dave Leip's 2010 Senate, House, and Gubernatorial voting data to examine the effect of Hispanic population concentrations and political involvement on rates of violent and property crime in U.S. counties.

Literature Review

Hispanics face disadvantages that, based on social disorganization theory, might lead one to believe Hispanic concentrations result in increased crime rates (Martinez & Lee, 2000). These disadvantages are similar to those faced by African Americans and it has been found that Hispanic neighborhoods had higher levels of concentrated disadvantage and resource instability than non-Hispanic neighborhoods (Cancino, Varano, & Schafer, 2007; Cancino, Martinez, & Stowell, 2009; Burchfield & Silver, 2013). Hispanics face disadvantages such as living in neighborhoods with high poverty, labor market discrimination, ethnic heterogeneity, and a multitude of young males as well as language barriers and acculturation issues that are not encountered by native-born Americans (Burns et al 2009; Martinez & Lee, 2000; Feldmeyer 2010; Martinez & Lee, 2000).

Based on minority threat perspective, the group in power may pass laws intended to keep less dominant groups from increasing their power (Turk, 1976). Many Hispanics are not eligible to vote because they are under 18 years of age or not citizens of the United States (Lopez & Minushkin, 2008; Lopez et al., 2012). In 2012, Hispanics made up 16.7 percent of the population in the United States, but only 11 percent of the eligible voters (Lopez et al., 2012). A smaller percentage of Hispanics tend to be registered to vote and turnout to vote than African Americans or Whites (Lopez & Minushkin, 2008; Lopez et al., 2012). In 2012, only 48 percent of Hispanics who were registered voters turned out to vote in the Presidential election in the United States while approximately 64 percent of whites and 67 percent of African Americans who were registered to vote turned out to vote (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013).

Voting laws have recently been passed that may disproportionately affect minorities' ability to vote. One such law is the requirement to show identification at the polls. North Dakota's §16.1-05-07 does not allow someone to vote if that person cannot or refuses to show the proper identification. Other states, such as Missouri (§115-427) and Alabama (§17-9-30) allow people who do not have the proper identification to vote if election officials recognize them. Still other states allow people without proper identification to vote if they can provide proof in a certain number of days (Arizona §16-579(A); Tennessee §2-7-112). Minorities are less likely to possess the forms of identification required (Weiser & Norden, 2011). The requirement to show proof of citizenship also makes it more difficult to register to vote. As with the photo identification requirement, many people do not possess acceptable documentation for proof of citizenship (Weiser & Norden, 2011). Making voter registration more difficult may also affect the turnout of minority voters. Minorities are more likely to use same-day registration and to register through drives (Weiser & Norden, 2011). Passing legislation that makes it more difficult for minorities to vote could further strengthen the power of certain political groups while decreasing the ability of minority groups to gain political power. If minorities cannot vote, legislation that reflects their interests is less likely to become law, which makes socioeconomic improvement in areas with high minority populations more difficult. This may lead to these areas experiencing higher levels of disadvantage.

This increase in difficulty registering to vote is important because a low number of people turning out to vote is frequently seen as political disaffection and instability (Rosenfeld, Messner, & Baumer, 2001). Research has found mixed results concerning the relationship between political participation and crime. Voter turnout has been found to be negatively associated with homicide, robbery, rape, aggravated assault, and burglary. Lee and Bartowski (2004) examined the relationship between civically engaged religious denominations and juvenile homicide. They ran additional analyses that separated the variables used to define a civically engaged denomination and found that voter turnout was negatively related to the juvenile homicide rate in rural counties. In other words, as voter turnout increased, the homicide rate decreased both for juveniles in rural counties (Lee and Bartowski 2004) and overall. Coleman (2002) found the relationship between homicide and voter turnout was negative. Contrarily, Coleman (2002) found that robbery, rape, aggravated assault, and burglary rates increased as voter participation increased. This only occurred until a certain voter turnout percentage was reached, however; then crime rates decreased as voter participation increased for robbery, rape, aggravated assault, and burglary rates. One study, Buonanno, Montolio, and Vanin (2009), found that voter turnout was not significantly related to robbery, automobile theft, or theft. If minorities cannot vote, legislation reflecting their interests is less likely to become law, making socioeconomic improvement in areas with high minority populations difficult.

Despite the disadvantages faced by Hispanics, they may not be associated with increased crime as one might predict. Large numbers of immigrants in the 1990s that coincided with a decrease in crime suggest immigration is not positively related to crime (Sampson, 2008). In a meta-analysis Ousey and Kubrin (2018) concluded that most research conducted on the immigrant-crime relationship found a nonsignificant or significantly negative association. Light, He, and Robey (2020) compared crime rates in Texas among undocumented immigrants, legal immigrants, and U.S. born citizens. The results showed that legal immigrants and undocumented immigrants had lower rates of offending compared to U.S. born citizens for traffic violations, drug violations, property crime, and violent crime.

Research has found Hispanic concentration is also not positively related to crime and may even be related to lower rates of crime for homicide, robbery, youth violence, and intimate partner violence (Lee et al., 2001; Wadsworth, 2010; Desmond & Kubrin, 2009; Wright & Benson, 2010). Homicide and robbery rates did not increase in cities with the highest increase in foreign born and new immigrants between the years 1990 and 2000 and immigration was negatively related to both Hispanic and non-Hispanic white homicide between 1980 and 2000 (Wadsworth, 2010; Martinez, Stowell, & Lee, 2010). Lee, Martinez, and Rosenfeld (2001) found the percentage of recent immigrants in the neighborhood is negatively related with Hispanic homicide in El Paso and that immigration is not related to homicide levels in El Paso, San Diego, or Miami. Desmond and Kubrin (2009) found that immigrant concentration was negatively related to violence for Hispanic youth. Ibañez et al. (2017) examined the relationship between offending and the foreign-born from Cuba, South America, Puerto Rico, Central America and other countries. They discovered that the foreign-born criminal justice clients were less likely than U.S. born criminal justice clients to report a lifetime of criminal offending for multiple drug-related crimes, weapons offenses, illegal gambling, pimping or prostituting, and assault or aggravated assault.

Furthermore, research has found that concentrated immigration is not associated with higher rates of victimization, specifically robbery victimization and, depending on the location, homicide victimization (Burchfield & Silver, 2013; Barranco, 2013; Shihadeh & Barranco, 2013). When comparing Hispanic and non-Hispanic neighborhoods in Los Angeles, Burchfield and Silver (2013) found concentrated disadvantage was only significantly related to robbery victimization in non-Hispanic neighborhoods. Barranco (2013) and Shihadeh and Barranco (2013) compared immigrants in traditional destinations, destinations immigrants had settled in for decades, with those who moved into new immigrant destinations, nontraditional immigrant destinations. Both studies found that when Hispanic immigration was separated into new and traditional destinations, homicide victimization was only positively related to immigration in new destinations. Homicide victimization rates of Hispanic immigrants in traditional destinations were similar to those of non-Hispanic whites, while Hispanic immigrants in new

destinations were higher and similar to those of black neighborhoods (Shihadeh & Barranco, 2013).

Recent immigrants may not disorganize neighborhoods, but conversely create stabilizing social and economic institutions (Martinez & Lee, 2000). It is possible immigrants commit less crime because they move to the United States based on positive characteristics, such as motivation to work (Sampson, 2008). A study done in Los Angeles found that collective efficacy had mediating effects on robbery victimization for Hispanic and non-Hispanic neighborhoods, but the mediation was not as strong in Hispanic neighborhoods (Burchfield & Silver, 2013). Despite living in disadvantaged neighborhoods, immigrants having higher levels of intact families and having consistent interaction in the labor market may provide a buffer against additional decline in the community (Martinez & Lee, 2000). Lee, Martinez, and Rosenfeld (2001) found that poverty was positively related to Hispanic homicide in all three cities in their study and female-headed households to be negatively related to homicide victimization in Miami and San Diego. The instability index, made up of population turnover and vacancy rates, was positively related to Hispanic homicide (Lee et al., 2001).

Barranco (2013) found that as Hispanic immigration increased, Hispanic homicide victimization also increased. Feldmeyer (2010) found that segregation from whites has similar effects for both Hispanics and blacks by concentrating disadvantage. Hispanic segregation was higher for new destinations with immigrants in traditional destinations being two times more likely to interact with whites and four and half times more likely to interact with native Hispanics (Barranco, 2013).

Extant research suggests the Hispanic population may not be associated with higher crime rates (Lee et al., 2001; Wadsworth, 2010; Desmond & Kubrin, 2009; Wright & Benson, 2010).

Previous studies also suggest that areas with higher voter turnout are associated with lower crime (Lee and Bartowski 2004; Coleman 2002). Existing research has not studied the effects of Hispanic populations and political involvement on crime. The current study attempts to fill this gap in the literature using 2006 to 2010 county-level data from the American Community Survey (ACS), 2006 to 2010 Uniform Crime Report (UCR), and Dave Leip's 2010 Senate, House, and Gubernatorial voting data to examine the effect of Hispanic population concentrations and political involvement on rates of violent and property crime in U.S. counties.

Methods

The current study seeks to examine the relationship between the Hispanic population, political participation, and crime rates at the county level in the United States. This is done by examining the relationship between percent of Hispanics, the percent of Hispanics born in the United States, and the percent voter turnout, and crime rates in 3,007 counties across the United

States. The researcher uses one primary research question and three secondary research questions. The primary research question is:

What is the effect of the Hispanic population and voter participation on crime rates at the county level in the United States?

The secondary questions are as follows: (1) What effect does the Hispanic population have on violent crime rates? (2) How does voter participation affect violent crime rates? (3) How does the Hispanic population affect property crime rates? and (4) How does voter participation influence property crime rates?

Data Sources

The data sources for the current study include the 2006 through 2010 Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), 2006 through 2010 American Community Survey (ACS), and Dave Leip's 2010 Senate, House, and Gubernatorial voting data. The 2006 to 2010 UCR data was used to create the seven dependent variables. Next, the 2006 to 2010 ACS data was used to create the three Hispanic-specific predictor variables and the control variables. To create the percent voter-turnout, the and Dave Leip's 2010 Senate, House, and Gubernatorial voting data was used.

Variables

The current study includes seven dependent variables, four key predictor variables, and four control variables. The dependent variables include: murder rate, robbery rate, rape rate, aggravated assault rate, burglary rate, larceny rate, and motor vehicle theft rate. The key predictor variables included three Hispanic-specific variables and the percent voter-turnout. The control variables seek to measure social disorganization at the county level.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables for the current study are crime rates at the county level in the United States. For the current study, the crime rates included the index crimes of the UCR (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft). To create the dependent variables, counts for each crime were summed for each county for the years 2006 through 2010. The data were then aggregated into a total count for the five years. Crime rates per 100,000 were calculated using the five-year count for each crime. The rates for rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft were transformed by taking the natural log of the variable and adding 0.01 to deal with the high frequencies of 0s in some counties.

Key Predictor Variables

The current study examined four key predictor variables, three Hispanic-specific variables and one political participation variable. The Hispanic-specific variables include the percent of people in the county who considered themselves of Hispanic descent, the percent of Hispanics who were born in the United States, and the percent of Hispanics who speak English “very well” in the county. Each of these variables were created using the 2006 to 2010 ACS data. The percent of people who are Hispanic was created using the “Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)” variables in the ACS. Similarly, the percent of Hispanics born in the United States was formed using the number of Hispanics 18 years of age or older who were born in the United States.

The number of Hispanics who reported speaking English “very well” was used to create a percent of the Hispanics who speak English “very well”. The final primary predictor variable, percent voter turnout, was created using Dave Leip’s 2010 Senate, House, and Gubernatorial voting data. To form this variable, the number of people who turned out to vote in the 2010 Senate, House, and Gubernatorial elections was divided by the total population of the county and multiplied by 100.

Control Variables

The current study also controlled for social disorganization and resource deprivation. Both were measured using indices created with a principal components analysis using a promax rotation. To control for social disorganization, the percent of people who moved in the last year, the total population, and the percent of people ages 15 to 24 were included in the regressions. The percent of people who moved in the last year was created using the “Geographical Mobility in the Past Year by Sex for Current Residence in the United States” for both males and females. The natural logarithms of the total population and percent ages 15 to 24 years were used because of a non-normal distribution. The geographic mobility variable was also transformed by taking the square root to adjust for a non-normal distribution.

The total population variable used in the current study was the total population of males and females in the “Sex by Age” section of the ACS. The percent of people ages 15 to 24 years was created using males and females who were between the ages 15 and 24 years of age. These four variables were put into an index measuring social disorganization using a principal components analysis with the factor loadings ranging from 0.685 to 0.774 and had an eigen value of 2.417.

Resource deprivation was also measured using an index. First, the counts of each variable were converted to percentages. The percent of the county who reported their race as black was formed using both males and females in the “Sex by Age (Black or African American Alone)”. The natural logarithm plus 0.01 was then taken to adjust for a non-normal distribution. Another

variable used to measure resource deprivation was the percent of people with less than a high school education. This variable was created using males and females 25 years and older who completed no schooling, nursery to the fourth grade, fifth and sixth grade, seventh and eighth grade, ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade with no diploma. A third variable used to measure resource deprivation was the percent of female-headed households in the county. To create this variable, the number of households with a female head with children was used.

The percent of people who are unemployed in the county was a fourth variable included to measure resource deprivation. This variable was formed by combining the number of 16 to 19 years old, 20 and 21 year old, 22 to 24 year old, 25 to 29 year old, 30 to 34 year old, 35 to 44 year old, 45 to 54 year old, 55 to 59 year old, 60 to 61 year old, 62 to 64 year old, 65 to 69 year old, 70 to 74 year old, and 75 years and older males and females who reported they were unemployed. The resource deprivation index was then created using a principal components analysis. The factor loadings range from 0.634 to 0.845 with an eigen value of 1.447.

Two variables that did not factor into the principal components analysis were also included in the analysis. First, the regression controlled for the median household income, which was measured using the county-level median household income in the past 12 months. The other control variable that did not factor into the principal components analysis was the percent of vacant houses in the county. This variable was created using the number of houses that were reported to be vacant. The natural logarithm was used for this variable due to a non-normal distribution.

Analytic Strategy

The current study used ordinary least squares regression (OLS) to examine the relationship between the Hispanic population, voter participation, and crime rates at the county level in the United States. Two regressions were conducted for each of the seven dependent variable. First, the natural logarithm of the homicide rate was regressed on the social disorganization index, the resource deprivation index, the natural logarithm of the percent of Hispanics, the percent of Hispanics born in the U.S., and the percent of Hispanics who speak English very well. In the second regression, the natural logarithm of the homicide rate was regressed on the social disorganization index, the resource deprivation index, the natural logarithm of the percent of Hispanics, the percent of Hispanics born in the U.S., the percent of Hispanics who speak English very well, and the percent voter turnout. Each of the dependent variables was regressed on the predictor variables in this way so that the changes in the effects of the two indices and Hispanic-specific variables could be observed when the percent voter turnout was added to the regression.

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics in the current study. The average county had a population of 98,979 people. On average, 13.3 percent of the county population was between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Females headed an average of 25 percent of the households in the county. An average of almost 4.5 percent of the county population was unemployed. Approximately 14 percent of the population, on average, moved in the last year while about 17 percent of the population had less than a high school education.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev
Homicide Rate	3040	3.0729267	3.6572054
Rape Rate	3040	23.777368	19.0171761
Robbery Rate	3040	37.7611295	59.3087571
Aggravated Assault Rate	3040	188.59533	162.589701
Burglary Rate	3040	540.848737	357.363973
Larceny Rate	3040	1410.07	906.048181
Motor Vehicle Theft Rate	3040	132.214322	122.553277
Individual Level Explanatory Variables			
Median Household Income	3040	44131.58	11275.57
Percent of Vacant Houses	3040	17.1650365	10.145274
Percent ages 15-24	3040	13.274644	3.4053481
Percent Black	3040	8.7341432	14.3495697
Percent with less than high school education	3040	17.4174067	7.628001
Percent who moved in last year	3040	14.0921655	4.5836083
Percent Female Head of Household	3040	24.8429668	10.6001875
Percent unemployed	3040	4.4497266	1.7689589
Total Population	3040	97946.7	312638.79
Turnout Percentage	3040	31.3577982	8.2844051
Percent Hispanic	3040	7.9026595	13.0105469
Percent Hispanics born in U.S.	3009	70.3272389	18.8487826
Percent who speaks English "very well"	3007	29.2578287	15.7119984

Concerning race and ethnicity, the average county was almost nine percent black and about eight percent Hispanic. Of the Hispanic population, an average of about 70 percent was born in the United States and approximately 29 percent reported speaking English very well. Regarding the percent voter turnout, the average county had approximately 31 percent of the population vote in the Senate, House, and Gubernatorial elections in 2010.

The results of the ordinary least squares regression analysis are shown in Table 3. Model 1 examined the relationship between the predictor variables and the county-level rape rate. This model explained almost 19 percent of the variance in the rape rate for the counties included in the current study. In model 1, resource deprivation (0.639) and the race-specific urban (0.178) indices were both significantly associated with the county-level rape rate at the $p \leq 0.001$ significance level. The median household income was related to the rape rate at $p \leq 0.01$. As for the Hispanic-specific variables, the percent of people who were Hispanic and the percent of Hispanics born in the United States were not significantly associated with the rape rate. The percent of Hispanics who speak English “very well” (-0.008) was negatively associated with the rape rate at the county level at $p \leq 0.001$, though. The percent voter turnout (-0.028) was also significantly and negatively associated with the rape rate at $p \leq 0.001$.

Table 2: Ordinary Least Squares Regression

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Social Disorganization						
Resource Deprivation	0.63943*** (0.03982)	1.18317*** (.04656)	0.3795*** (0.02763)	0.34245*** (0.02154)	0.44429*** (0.02499)	0.39322*** (0.02806)
Race-Specific Urban Index	0.17791*** (0.04633)	1.16414*** (0.05417)	0.35174*** (0.03214)	0.2495*** (0.02505)	0.1254*** (0.02907)	0.26934*** (0.03265)
Median Household Income ^a	0.69505*** (0.19342)	2.30839*** (0.22616)	0.29541* (0.13419)	0.07659 (0.10461)	0.59025*** (0.12136)	0.66598*** (0.13631)
Percent Vacant Houses ^a	0.06136 (0.07309)	-0.20061* (0.08546)	0.21727*** (0.05071)	0.17155*** (0.03953)	0.04469 (0.04586)	0.0407 (0.05151)
Voting Specific						
Percent Voter Turnout	-0.02798*** (0.00497)	-0.02092*** (0.00581)	-0.01033** (0.00345)	-0.0057* (0.00269)	-0.00839** (0.00312)	-0.0106** (0.00350)
Hispanic Specific						
Percent Hispanic ^a	-0.01897 (0.03027)	0.02162 (0.03539)	0.11449*** (0.02100)	0.04886** (0.01637)	0.0036 (0.01899)	0.07205*** (0.02133)
Percent of Hispanic Born in U.S.	-0.00123 (0.00176)	-0.00604** (0.00206)	-0.00028715 (0.00122)	-0.00189* (0.00095214)	-0.00327** (0.00110)	-0.0033** (0.00124)
Percent Who Speaks English Very Well	-0.00831*** (0.00218)	-0.00963*** (0.00255)	-0.00311* (0.00151)	-0.00222† (0.00118)	-0.00084312 (0.00137)	-0.00402** (0.00154)
R-Square	0.1867	0.4845	0.0818	0.2211	0.2081	0.2046
^a natural log transformation ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10 ^b Regression coefficient reported with standard error in parentheses (SE)						

Model 2 examined the county-level robbery rate as the dependent variable. Over 48 percent of the variance in the robbery rate was explained by the variables included in this model. Both the resource deprivation (1.183) and race-specific urban (1.164) indices were associated with the robbery rate at $p \leq 0.001$. The median household income of the county was also related to the robbery rate at $p \leq 0.001$ in model 2. The percent of vacant houses (-.201) was significantly and negatively associated with the robbery rate at $p \leq 0.05$. Two of the Hispanic-specific variables were significantly related to the county-level robbery rate. The percent of Hispanics born in the United States (-0.006) was significantly and negatively associated with the robbery rate at the $p \leq 0.01$ significance level. Contrarily, the percent of Hispanics who speak English “very well” (0.010) was significantly and positively associated with the robbery rate at $p \leq 0.001$. The percent voter turnout (-0.021) was also negatively significantly related to the robbery rate at the $p \leq 0.001$.

Model 3 explained 22.3 percent of the variance in the county-level aggravated assault rate. Resource deprivation (0.379), race-specific urban index (0.352), and the percent of vacant houses (0.217) were all significantly and positively related to the aggravated assault rate at $p \leq 0.001$. The median household income (0.295) was also associated with the aggravated assault rate, but at $p \leq 0.05$. The percent of Hispanics who lived in the county (0.114) and the aggravated assault rate were significantly and positively associated at $p \leq 0.001$. The percent of Hispanics who speak English “very well” (-0.003) and the aggravated assault rate were significantly and negatively related at the $p \leq 0.05$ significance level. The percent voter turnout (-0.010) was also negatively associated with the aggravated assault rate, but at $p \leq 0.01$.

Model 4 examined the relationship between the independent variables and the burglary rate at the county level. This model explained approximately 22 percent of the burglary rate for the sample included in the current study. The resource deprivation (0.342) and race-specific urban (0.249) indices, as well as the percent of vacant houses (0.172), were significantly and positively related to the burglary rate at $p \leq 0.001$. All three Hispanic-specific variables were significantly associated with the burglary rate. The percent of Hispanics in the county (0.049) was positively associated at $p \leq 0.01$. The percent of Hispanics born in the United States (-0.002) was negatively related at $p \leq 0.05$ and the percent of Hispanics who speak English “very well” (-0.002) was negatively associated at $p \leq 0.10$. The percent voter turnout (-0.006) was negatively associated with the burglary rate at the $p \leq 0.05$ significance level.

The county-level larceny rate served as the dependent variable in model 5. This model explained almost 21 percent of the variance in the larceny rate. Both the resource deprivation (0.444) and the race-specific urban (0.125) indices were positively associated with the larceny rate at the $p \leq 0.001$ significance level. The median household income (0.590) was also significantly and positively associated with the larceny rate at $p \leq 0.001$. The percent of Hispanics

born in the United States (-0.003) and percent voter turnout (-0.008) were both negatively and significantly related to the larceny rate at $p \leq 0.01$.

The final model included in the current study, model 6, examined the relationship between the independent variables and the motor vehicle theft rate. This model explained 20.5 percent of the variance in the motor vehicle theft rate at the county level for the sample included in the current study. Three of the four social disorganization variables were significantly and positively associated with the motor vehicle theft rate at $p \leq 0.001$. These three variables were the race-specific urban index (0.269), the resource deprivation index (0.393), and the median household income (0.666). All three Hispanic-specific variables were significantly related to the motor vehicle theft rate. The percent of Hispanics (0.072) in the county was positively associated at $p \leq 0.001$ while the percent of Hispanics born in the United States (-0.003) the percent of Hispanics who speak English "very well" (-0.004) were negatively associated at the $p \leq 0.01$ significance level. Finally, the percent voter turnout (-0.011) was also negatively related to the motor vehicle theft rate at $p \leq 0.01$.

Discussion and Conclusion

Consistent with the idea of the Hispanic paradox that Hispanic concentration is not related to higher crime rates, two of the three Hispanic-specific measures were negatively related or not significantly related to all crimes included in the current study. In conformity with previous literature (Wadsworth, 2010; Martinez et al., 2010), the rape rate was not significantly associated with the percent of Hispanics living in the county. In addition, the percent of Hispanics born in the United States was negatively related to robbery, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft rates. The percent of Hispanics who speak English "very well" was negatively associated with the rape, robbery, burglary, aggravated assault, and motor vehicle theft rates. It was not significantly related to the homicide and larceny rates. Inconsistent with the Hispanic paradox, but consistent with the minority threat perspective that concentrations of minorities leads to higher crime rates because of the threat presented politically (Turk, 1976), the percent of people who are Hispanic in the county was found to be positively associated with the homicide rate, larceny rate, aggravated assault rate, burglary rate, and motor vehicle theft rate when controlling for the percent voter turnout.

Also in line with the minority threat perspective, the percent voter turnout was consistently negative across all crimes included in the current study except larceny and burglary. This is consistent with the idea that when a group votes and puts its ideas into play, they will be less likely to have a high crime rate in that area (Turk, 1976). This is interesting in that an increase in percent voter turnout is associated with a decrease in the four violent crimes, but only with one of the three property crimes included in the current study. Consistent with the minority threat perspective, the strength of the effect decreased when the percent voter turnout was included

to the regression for the aggravated assault, rape, and homicide rates. Also, consistent with the minority threat perspective, the strength of the effect for motor vehicle theft, burglary, and homicide rates decrease with the addition of the percent voter turnout. The new voting laws that make it more difficult for minorities to vote may contribute to this. By increasing the difficulty of registering to vote or voting in elections, the political participation of these groups may decrease. This could contribute to the values of minorities not becoming policy. It is possible that when the group in power passes its ideas, that those ideas are contradictory to those of Hispanics and other minorities; therefore, when a higher percentage of people vote, the law will better reflect everyone's values. Based on minority threat (Turk, 1976), this could lead to minorities committing crime because the law does not match with their beliefs. If, as previous research suggests, a lack of political participation leads to social disorganization, then the areas where minorities have such difficulties participating politically may also experience more social disorganization, which may then lead to an increase in crime.

In accordance with social disorganization theory, both the resource deprivation and race-specific urban concentration indices were consistently positively associated across all crimes included in the study. Also consistent with social disorganization theory, the percent of vacant houses was positively associated with homicide rates, when controlling for the percent voter turnout, as well as the robbery, aggravated assault, and burglary rates. Not consistent with social disorganization theory, the median household income was positively associated across all crimes included in the current study.

There are some limitations to the current study. First, there is concern with the dark figure of crime. The Uniform Crime Report only covers those crimes reported to the police and for which the police made an arrest. This lack of reporting may be more of an issue for the immigrant population. Many crimes are not reported to the police, especially in Hispanic areas where people may fear deportation (Khashu, Busch, & Latif, 2005; Menjivar & Bejarano, 2004). Non-citizens and foreign-born residents have been found to be related to a decrease in reporting both property crimes and violent crimes (Gutierrez & Kirk, 2017). This issue could suggest that the crime rate may be higher than the official data shows. Also, when more than one crime is committed, only the most serious offense is reported in the UCR. The study could also not identify the Hispanic-specific percent voter turnout. This means that it cannot be said whether the people voting were Hispanic or not. People voting in areas with a high voter turnout may not be Hispanic, or those with low voter turnout could all be Hispanic voters.

In conclusion, the current study found some support for both the Hispanic paradox and the minority threat perspective. These findings support the idea that Hispanic populations are not necessarily associated with increases in crime rates, as well as that the percent of people voting is associated with decreases in crime rates. Future research should examine the possibility of an

interaction effect between the Hispanic population and political participation to better understand the combined effect of the Hispanic population and political participation. While some support was found for the Hispanic paradox, future research should examine the possibility that these results may vary by country of origin. Hispanics come from a variety of countries, each with different characteristics (Motel & Patten, 2012). These different characteristics may mean that the association with crime rates also differ.

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Book Reviews

Book Review

The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life by Parker Palmer

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In *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, Parker Palmer presents an insightful analysis of a teacher's life and the challenges they face when the heart to teach is lost. Drawing on several decades of teaching experience, Palmer accentuates the importance for teachers to be connected with their students, their subjects, and importantly, themselves. This connectedness, as Palmer notes, is at the heart of good teaching. Moreover, the central premise of the book is clear - good teaching cannot be condensed to technique alone. Instead, it is deeply rooted in the integrity and identity of the teacher's self and the community in which good teaching depends. Palmer reflects on these notions throughout the book and presents a thoughtful examination of the implications to teachers and the field of education.

The first chapter in the book examines the heart of a teacher and, more specifically, the importance of identity and integrity in teaching - both concepts that help to underscore Palmer's emphasis on teaching beyond technique. It is argued that some of the most effective teachers possess a unique ability to connect with themselves as well as their students and subjects. These individuals, according to Palmer, establish these personal connections not via their methods or teaching techniques but through their own hearts and selfhood.

Sometimes, however, educators can lose their heart and courage to teach. When this occurs, they tend to disconnect themselves from the profession. Palmer boldly claims that this is often the result of the academic bias against truth and selfhood. How can teachers regain their heart to teach? Is the teacher within a reality, and if so, how can it be unearthed? To address these questions, Palmer contends that we can reclaim our selfhood by reflecting on some of the entities (i.e. mentors, a particular area of study) that influenced our decision to enter the field of academia. When these areas are revisited, teachers can renew and strengthen their heart and passion to teach. This argument is compelling because it recognizes that teaching is ultimately about people and rooted in personal experiences. In today's educational climate, where so much attention is focused on learning outcomes and measurable data to determine success, Palmer offers an important reminder that teaching is not simply a technical task. It can

be easy to lose sight of the human element of education. His focus on purpose and personal identity reminds us that effective teaching is built not only on skill and knowledge but also investment and a deep commitment to student learning and growth.

Chapter Two explores the element of fear in academia and its impact on good teaching. To develop community and a strong sense of connectedness in teaching, Palmer declares that we must be cognizant of, and resistant to, the notion of a 'disconnected' life. It is suggested that this type of life is often emboldened by an academic culture that helps to perpetuate fear in learning and teaching. While fear can be a healthy aspect on occasion, it too often serves as a major obstacle to learning and good teaching. When this occurs, it frequently makes us less receptive to learning and more likely to lose connectedness with ourselves and others.

But where exactly does this fear arise? Palmer suggests that this fear tends to occur in the lives of students, in our inner self, and in our way of knowing. Students and teachers alike often possess a level of fear that undermines selfhood and tends to lead us away from active learning and good teaching. This fear is frequently brought to the classroom and helps to characterize our objective way of knowing, which in turn, broadens the disconnect between teachers and their students. An additional aspect that drives this disconnect is our commitment to thinking in paradox, which is the focus of Chapter Three. In this chapter, Palmer contests that our society is too engrossed in either-or thinking, and as a result, our sense of truth and reality has become distorted. So has our ability to connect with selfhood, the area in which good teaching depends. Despite its drawbacks, the concept of paradox can be particularly useful as it pertains to pedagogical design. Paradox, according to Palmer, can serve as a guide for us as we consider how best to design our courses and the space necessary for classroom instruction.

In Chapters Four through Six, Palmer turns his focus toward the concept of community as it applies to the principles of knowing, teaching, and learning. Within these three chapters, a guiding principle materializes - that is, teaching requires a platform that allows teachers to reflect and practice truth. Palmer urges that this concept of community cannot occur outside of the undivided self, for it is crucial to our inner landscape and foundation of knowledge. The community of truth reaches deeper into the realm of knowing as it embraces the notion that we can only know reality when we are in community with our own identity and integrity. This community is organized around what Palmer terms "the grace of great things", which are those subjects that are critical to us in our pursuit of knowledge and learning in the community of truth. Chapter Five further analyzes the community of truth, specifically as it relates to teaching and a subject-centered education. In this chapter, Palmer suggests that if a community of truth is to be introduced in the classroom, we must place not the teacher or student but the subject as the primary focus of our attention and teaching efforts. This model embraces the student and teacher alike, bringing both groups closer together in such a way that builds connectedness

and genuine community in the classroom. Palmer thoughtfully asserts that teachers must find a way to create, rather than occupy, space so that the community of truth can be practiced.

Learning, a key aspect in the community of truth, occupies a central role in Chapter Six. More specifically, this chapter explores a range of issues relating to pedagogy, collegial dialogue, and the need for leadership in academia. Good teaching, according to Palmer, happens through meaningful reflections and conversations about critical moments in teaching and learning. These moments involve instances in which student learning is propelled or occasionally impeded. When given the opportunity to openly discuss and reveal these moments with colleagues, teachers can reflect on their own personal identity and integrity, which can ultimately influence good teaching practices. Palmer warns, however, that such dialogue needs to be guided by principles that foster collegiality, respect, and trust and lessen vulnerability. There is also the need for this kind of communication to be encouraged rather than coerced by leaders in education. Palmer contends that this type of open dialogue, when invited and embraced by leaders, can transform the educational experience and further strengthen a community of truth that supports effective teaching and active learning.

The last chapter of the book shifts focus to educational reform through social movement. A straightforward yet demanding question seems to guide the chapter: Can we apply our knowledge of teaching and learning to some type of social movement to stimulate the current state of academia? Palmer addresses this inquiry and subtly hints that while it can be accomplished, we must first have an awareness of what a movement is and what it entails. To this end, four stages that help to characterize a movement are discussed. It is noted that movements begin when persons decide to live life 'divided no more' and progresses through a final stage in which the movement's vision is upheld through a system of rewards that helps to convey the need for institutional change. Many individuals may find their place in this reform movement. Palmer suggests that some will decide that they don't want to live a divided life, while others may want to publicly seek out others who share similar viewpoints. This movement provides people with an avenue to pursue self-discovery via a reform method that, according to Palmer, does not conflict with our desires or love to teach and learn.

Although originally published more than two decades ago, Palmer's central arguments remain highly relevant in the current academic environment. Issues such as teacher burnout, emotional exhaustion, mental health, and increasing administrative demands have become even more pronounced in recent years. Palmer's call for teachers to reconnect with their concept of identity and community serves as a response to the educational environment that often prioritizes assessment metrics and other measurable outcomes over reflection and the human side of teaching. Accordingly, many of the themes presented in the book may resonate even more strongly with teachers today than when the book was first published.

The book does have some limitations. Palmer's arguments are largely grounded in reflection, personal experience, and anecdotal discussions rather than empirical research. From a pedagogical standpoint, readers seeking evidence-based recommendations or specific classroom strategies may find parts of the book too ambiguous. Similarly, some of the concepts surrounding personal identity, integrity, and community are discussed in vague terms. This may leave some educators who read the book wanting more concrete, practical guidance on how to apply these concepts to their own teaching. Nonetheless, these limitations do not diminish the book's overall value to education. Palmer's primary objective is not to provide a prescriptive teaching manual but rather to encourage deeper reflection of teaching and learning.

Overall, *The Courage to Teach* makes an important contribution to education by challenging teachers to examine the relationship between identity, professional integrity, and effective teaching. Emphasizing the premise that teaching is so much more than technique, Palmer provides a wealth of knowledge about the art of teaching, encouraging teachers to explore their inner self to help foster identity, reflection, and deep learning. While the book's reflective style may not appeal to readers seeking specific teaching strategies, its value lies in its ability to inspire educators to reflect on why they teach and how their inner-self shapes the learning experiences of students. No matter how much experience and love for education a teacher has, the passion or courage to teach can be lost. For teachers experiencing burnout or a diminished sense of self, Palmer offers a compelling framework for rekindling passion for teaching and finding renewed purpose in the profession.

Reference

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The New True Crime, Diana Rickard

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The book, “The New True Crime: How the Rise of Serialized Storytelling Is Transforming Innocence” published in September 2023, by Diana Rickard, provides a case study-like way of looking at “New True”. “New True” a term coined by the author is essentially a true crime series focusing on wrongful convictions and innocence. Through analysis of eight “New True” series, Rickard struggles with the overarching theme of truth, punishment, and social oppression. The eight “New True” that Rickard centralizes her ideas on are *Serial*, *The Paradise Lost Trilogy*, *The Staircase*, *The Case Against Adnan Syed*, *Making a Murderer*, *Atlanta Monster*, *Atlanta’s Missing and Murdered*, and *The Innocent Man*. While this is not a comprehensive study of all “New True”, the connections she has drawn are impactful and can be applied as we see the genre of True Crime continue to grow. Rickard also acknowledges that these eight cases are not exhaustive of the “New True” genre but the impact of these series seems to be culturally significant. The biggest takeaways from this book involve themes of deviance, truth, and the impact that “New True” has on people and systems.

“The New True Crime: How the Rise of Serialized Storytelling Is Transforming Innocence” consists of an introduction, nine chapters, and a conclusion. The introduction explains her interest in “New True”, an explanation of how wrongful convictions happen, and the public's fascination with wrongful convictions. Rickard's credentials and interest in wrongful convictions shine through in this introduction. Rickard is a consumer of “New True” and a professor of Criminal Justice at Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY with an interest in wrongful conviction. Chapter one titled “True Crime” serves as a timeline leading up to what we know as “New True”. She describes the relationship between the media and crime as well as the education and entertainment that crime stories (especially “New True”) give audience members. Between the introduction and the conclusion, Rickard speaks on a plethora of topics such as the dehumanization of victims and their families, evidence as a medium, “New True” upholding racist stereotypes while simultaneously breaking cultural barriers, social oppression, deviance, the dramatization of “New True”, the lack of objectivity in “New True”, state misconduct, the importance of the presumption of innocence, appearance versus reality, and social justice. The conclusion packages up these ideas into a conscience theme of the ambiguity of what is true. Rickard states that we are storytelling around the truth of a situation.

I found Rickard's take on the lack of objectivity in the “New True” field as a refreshing take. Oftentimes, we forget that people are paid to make content and that they may have ulterior motives. A lot of times, we only hear from the defense in crime documentaries which changes how the story is told and perceived. This is important to keep in mind, especially with the

dramatization of crime told through media. Rickard also touches on this idea. An example that comes to mind that is somewhat current is the Dahmer – Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story which was put out on Netflix. Victims' families have come out and said that events did not happen or that they were dramatized. As Rickard mentioned, I also believe that we neglect to see the victims as human in a way. We dehumanize the victims while we try and humanize offenders. To us, these crime documentaries are stories but to someone's family, it is their reality. In saying this, I feel as though Rickard did a good job of respecting the victim's families except in the introduction of the book where she says, "We can no longer agree on facts any more than we can agree on whether Adnan Syed killed Hae Min Lee." (pg. 14) I feel as though this was a way to hook true crime readers but it does Hae Min Lee and the case of Adnan Syed a disservice by boiling them down to a cheeky one-liner.

I appreciated how Rickard deeply explored the role of social oppression in perceived deviance. "New True" seems to value social oppression as a means to humanize their subjects. While the criminal justice system (prosecutors) relies on social oppression to dehumanize the offenders and portray them as deviant. In Rickard's case studies, we primarily see this through the social oppression of poverty. I believe that as a society we tend to attribute bad behaviors to those who are oppressed by society in some way because it is easier to accept that they would do something deviant as opposed to someone who is in high social standing. This is a common occurrence when someone who is perceived as "good" commits a crime, people tend to make excuses as to why they could not have committed the crime such as their social standing.

As a true crime viewer myself, I enjoyed Rickard's take on state misconduct. Through "New True" viewers can see the state as the villain or deviant. I do believe that this contributes to society's mistrust of the criminal justice system and as "New True" becomes popular in different circles this will likely increase. Rickard explains that this is not necessarily a bad thing as more reforms can take place because of the increased interest in wrongful convictions and how criminal justice can sometimes fail the innocent.

Rickard brings up a phenomenal point of what a true crime viewer looks like, there is an extreme (redditors) viewer and a casual viewer. Due to different viewership, we do rarely know what the average person thinks about criminal justice system issues. On top of this, Rickard acknowledges her own bias in being a true crime viewer. She can attribute bias to streaming platforms in the fact that not everyone has the same streaming platform or is watching the same things; in a way, we all exist in our echo chambers. In stating this, we are unable to form a collective truth which in a way is what "New True" aims for.

In conclusion, I found that *The New True Crime: How the Rise of Serialized Storytelling Is Transforming Innocence* has great readability. All criminal justice and prosecutorial jargon were thoroughly explained. I do think this book is meant for a true crime consumer audience as

there are a lot of cases to follow. Even though they are well explained in the book, it may be hard to follow if you have never watched a piece of "New True". I feel as though discussions around the topics of deviance, truth, and the impact that "New True" has on people and systems were well discussed. Social oppression as deviance allows readers to see how social oppression is spun in a negative way that plays to the advantage of the prosecutor. The idea that truth is not objective is a thread throughout this book. The impact of how people view the criminal justice system with distrust can be moderately attributed to the viewership of "New True". This book leaves you with something to think about: the absence of a universal truth.