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Are You Happy Yet? Examining College Student Satisfaction with Campus Diversity

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Abstract

Using a national longitudinal dataset of college students, this study examines satisfaction with diversity of the student body and identifies predictors of White, Black, Latino/a, and Asian American student satisfaction at Predominantly White Institutions. Across races, students at more diverse institutions were the most likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with student body diversity. The strongest predictor of diversity satisfaction for White and Asian American students was the percent of students of color enrolled; the strongest predictor for Black and Latino/a students was contentment with community, peer interactions, and the overall college experience. Additionally, students of all races attending college on the West Coast were significantly less likely to be satisfied with the diversity of the student body. The findings suggest that while increasing the number of students of color is an essential component of nurturing a positive campus racial climate, so is supporting positive peer interactions and a sense of community.

Introduction

During the deliberation of the Supreme Court rulings in the University of Michigan affirmative action cases, students around the country demonstrated their reactions to the controversy in varying ways. Student coalitions such as Michigan's "Students in Support of Affirmative Action" and the national group "By Any Means Necessary" led the charge to show student support for continued race-conscious admissions policies (Young, 2003). Holding up the other end of the spectrum, conservative student organizations rallied against affirmative action policies. Campus groups even held bake sales charging different prices to students of different races to symbolize the varying costs that students pay at the expense of such policies (CNN.com, 2003). And somewhere in the middle were students who did not protest through visible means, but nonetheless held opinions on diversity and how their campuses were handling it.

Many institutions have come out in support of diversity as a compelling educational interest (Brief of Carnegie Mellon University et al., 2003; Brief of Columbia University et al., 2003; Brief of Harvard University et al., 2003), pointing to the educational benefits of racially diverse student body on learning and democracy outcomes (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002), cross-racial interaction (Chang, 1999; Pike & Kuh, 2006), and complex thinking (Antonio, Chang, Hakuta, Kenny, Levin, Milem, 2004) for all students. However, beyond the headlines, we know less about how students themselves evaluate and perceive campus diversity. What factors cause one student to join a sit-in protesting the low enrollment of Black students and another student to feel that the campus is diverse enough? Although students may benefit from diversity, another piece of the puzzle is to understand how they react to diversity, or lack thereof. This study aims to examine predictors of student satisfaction with the ethnic diversity of the student

body for White, Black, Latino/a, and Asian American students at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs).

Background and Framework

Little research exists on how campuses can effectively evaluate student reactions towards diversity. Some studies have examined factors that contribute to students' openness to diversity during the first, second, and third years of college (Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, and Nora, 2001; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996). Such studies point to the potential that campuses have in reaching students, but do not capture their reactions to diversity at the end of college. Guided by literature on student satisfaction and campus climate, this study posits that student satisfaction with diversity of the student body is an important part of the perceptions that students hold about campus diversity, a key component of the greater campus racial climate (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson & Allen, 1998). In turn, other components of campus climate influence student satisfaction or dissatisfaction with student body diversity.

Student Satisfaction and Diversity

The effect of student satisfaction on persistence and academic achievement (Bennett & Okinaka, 1991; Astin, 1993; Cabrera, Nora, & Castaneda, 1993) suggests that a focus on student satisfaction is critical to creating a climate that is more conducive to student development and retention. Several studies have examined overall satisfaction with college in relation to campus demographics and dynamics. For instance, Bonous-Hammarth and Boatsman (1996) found that having a higher percentage of Black students in the student body was a positive predictor of overall satisfaction for Black students at PWIs. In their research on the relationship between student involvement, interaction, and satisfaction for Black students at HBCUs and PWIs, Outcalt and Skewes-Cox (2002) found that Black students reported higher overall satisfaction at

HBCUs than at PWIs. Even though Black students at PWIs reported greater satisfaction with measures such as student-faculty interaction, quality of instruction, and campus facilities, when environments were controlled for using logistic regression analysis, attending an HBCU almost doubled the odds that a Black student was satisfied with his or her overall college experience. The authors attribute much of this satisfaction to a unique environment of reciprocal engagement at HBCUs, noting that besides the importance of students becoming involved on campus (Astin, 1991) that "campus communities must embrace their students in their diversity, particularity, and uniqueness" (p. 334). The study points to the significance of the college environment in shaping student satisfaction.

Other studies focus on satisfaction with diversity or with the racial climate. In their study of the overall satisfaction of college seniors, Einarson and Matier (2005) identified that Asian American and Black students reported significantly lower overall satisfaction than White and Latino/a counterparts and that satisfaction with campus diversity was a significant positive predictor of overall satisfaction for Black students. While they found through descriptive analyses that Black and Latino students were significantly less satisfied with campus diversity, they focused on identifying predictors of overall satisfaction with the college experience.

Using a sample of academically talented Latino students, Hurtado (1994) identified predictors of students perceiving racial/ethnic tension on their campuses. Latino students who attributed societal inequalities for Hispanic to greater systematic inequalities, discussed racial issues, and were involved in Latino student groups were more likely to perceive racial tension on campus. Students on larger campuses and campuses with higher Latino student enrollments were less likely to perceive racial tension. Although her study examines a different outcome than

student satisfaction with diversity of the student body, it covers similar territory by pointing to multiple, varying factors that shape student perceptions of diversity and the campus climate.

Campus Climate

The framework guiding the selection of variables for this study is Hurtado et al.'s (1998) conception of campus climate as being made up of four interrelated components: structural diversity, historical legacy, psychological dimensions, and behavioral interactions. Structural diversity points to the number of students of color, faculty, and administrators on campus. The historical factor involves the institution's legacy of racial discrimination. Behavioral interactions include relationships and encounters between groups and individuals regarding diversity, and psychological dimensions include student perceptions and attitudes towards diversity.

The importance of demographic diversity stems from Kanter's (1977) research on a critical mass representation of underrepresented groups. First used to describe the presence, or lack thereof, of women in legislative bodies, the term has since been applied to other environments affected by diversity. Without a certain threshold of representation, minority group members will likely experience a token, marginalized status within the group. Chang (1999) argues against defining diversity as merely the presence of students of color on campus, noting that such a definition is deficient because a campus can be made up of almost all students of color, but still lack opportunities for cross-racial interaction. Still, the presence of a diverse student body, if well-fostered and supported, is linked to multiple positive outcomes (Gurin et al., 2002; Chang, 1999; Antonio et al., 2004).

The historical track record of how an institution handles diverse populations also influences the climate for diversity. Hurtado et al. (1998) point to how Minority Serving Institutions such as HBCUs have a historic commitment to serving underserved populations

(Allen & Jewell, 2002). PWIs themselves have a legacy of segregation and exclusion towards students of color (Braddock, 1980; Hardin, 1997).

The interactions that students do or do not have across race also shape the campus climate. Even though White students and students of color may attend the same institutions, they may have completely different experiences based on the tendency to self-segregate or participate in activities that are dominated by one racial group. D'Souza (1991) decries the self-segregation and balkanization that students of color supposedly perpetuate, but White students also may intentionally or unintentionally self-segregate by race (Sidanius, Van Laar, Levin, & Sinclair, 2004), thus affecting their college experiences and perceptions of the racial climate. For example, Pascarella et al. (1996) found that participation in (predominantly White) Greek life has a significant negative effect on the development of openness to diversity for White students.

Student perceptions of campus racial dynamics may frame how they perceive cross-racial interaction and other racial dynamics. Antonio (2001) discovered that students at a highly racially diverse campus thought that self-segregation was pervasive at their institution, even though they actually reported high levels of interethnic friendships. His findings reflect the significance of perception in shaping students' attitudes towards diversity. Also, different populations may experience and perceive diversity differently. In general, students of color tend to have less favorable perceptions of campus race relations and existing support for diversity than White students (Loo & Rolison, 1986; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000), as well as differing opinions on race-related issues (Sax & Arredondo, 1999).

Hurtado et al.'s (1998) framework for the campus racial climate suggests the component of diversity that generally receives the most attention, structural diversity, is dependent on other factors to produce a positive campus racial climate. For instance, an institution can have a high

minority student enrollment, but many students may still be dissatisfied if they experience negative inter-group relations or if the institution still suffers from its historical legacy of discrimination. In the context of this study, it is thought that student assessments of structural diversity will be dependent on multiple facets of climate, including the number of students of color, attitudes on racial issues, and student participation in diversity-related activities. While student satisfaction with the diversity of the student body is just one of many opinions that students hold of campus racial dynamics, it reflects multiple facets of campus climate.

Objectives

This study asks what differences, if any, exist between ethnic/racial groups' rates of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with ethnic/racial diversity at PWIs and if this satisfaction varies by the racial composition of the student body. The analysis focus on students at PWIs due to preliminary analyses which showed that Black students at HBCUs were much more likely to be satisfied with student body diversity than their counterparts at PWIs, echoing research on how students at the two types of institutions face drastically different campus racial climates (Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002; Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996). Second, what are the pre-college, institutional, experiential, and attitudinal predictors of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with diversity for students of different racial groups? I hypothesize that there are differences in the rates of satisfaction between racial groups, with White students being most likely to indicate satisfaction with diversity. Also, the higher the proportion of students of color in an institution, the more likely students would be satisfied, although structural diversity alone is insufficient in providing a positive campus racial climate (Hurtado et al., 1998). Furthermore, Whites and students of color will likely share certain predictors of satisfaction, such as structural diversity

being related to increased satisfaction across groups, but will differ in other aspects, such as how they are affected by diversity experiences during college.

Methodology

Data Source Data for the study came from two nationwide surveys, the Fall 1994 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey and the Spring 1998 follow-up survey, the College Student Survey (CSS). Both surveys were administered by the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute. The 1994 Freshman Survey includes information about the student's personal and academic background information, pre-college characteristics, attitudes, expectations, and values. The 1998 CSS is the post-test for the 1994 Freshman Survey; it also requests information regarding the college experience such as academic performance, student-faculty interaction, extracurricular activities, and perceptions.

The final sample was limited to students who completed both surveys. After listwise deletion of missing data, the sample consisted of 20,559 students from 266 PWIs: 18,455 White students, 523 Black students, 628 Latino/a students, 892 Asian American students, 252 American Indian students, and 380 students who marked "Other." As noted earlier, the decision to examine only students from PWIs was made after finding that Black students at HBCUs were much more likely to be satisfied with the diversity of the student body than Black students at PWIs. Because Black students at the two types of institutions face such drastically different racial climates, the decision was made to limit the exploration to students at PWIs. American Indian and students who marked "Other" were not included in the multivariate analysis.

Variables The dependent variable for the study is self-reported student satisfaction with the ethnic diversity of the student body. Respondents who responded "can't rate" (n=661) were dropped from the sample. The variable was recoded a scale of 1 (dissatisfied) to 4 (very

satisfied). Independent variables were blocked into four groups that were entered into the equation in the order that they were thought to influence the dependent variable (see Appendix A). In order to control for previous experiences, the first block included background information (parents' education, gender) and pre-college characteristics (freshman values, political orientation, and attitudes towards race and diversity issues). The second, third, and fourth blocks of independent variables were each selected based on Hurtado et al. (1998)'s conception of campus climate being made up of various components. The second block represented structural diversity/legacy of the institution (percent students of color, region, selectivity, percentage of women faculty). The third block included represented college experiences pertaining to diversity (cross-racial interaction, activities and experiences having to do with race and diversity). Variables in the fourth block were related to attitudes and perceptions of the climate (senior year values, political orientation, and attitudes towards race and diversity measures, as well as other satisfaction measures).

Analyses Cross-tabulations were used to answer the question of whether differences exist between different racial groups in satisfaction with the student body's ethnic diversity, as well as investigate how satisfaction varies by the racial composition of institutions. Due to high multicollinearity between a student's race and the percent of students of color in an institution, separate regressions were run for each racial group. In order to prevent multicollinearity among variables, a minimum tolerance level was set at .50.

The four blocks of variables were entered using forced-entry hierarchical regression analysis in order to compare the effects of the variables as a block. In lieu of the contrast in sample sizes between the White student population and other racial groups, different significance levels were used ($p<.001$ for White students and $p<.01$ for other racial groups). ANOVAs were

used to compare changes in the R^2 between each block. Variables were also force entered one at a time in the same order as blocks in order to observe individual changes in beta coefficients when other variables enter the equation; such instances are noted in the text. Observing step-by-step beta changes can assist us in understanding how the strength of certain variables changes when other variables are controlled (Higher Education Research Institute, find cite).

Findings

Table 1 displays the distribution of student satisfaction with ethnic diversity of the student body by race at PWIs. Black students are the most likely to be dissatisfied (51.0%) and least likely to be neutral on their satisfaction with diversity (18.8% versus over 30.0% for all other groups). American Indian and White students were least likely to be dissatisfied; White students are also most likely to be neutral on the issue (38.1%).

Table 1. Satisfaction with Racial Diversity of Student Body by Percentage of Students of Color

		Dissatisfied (%)	Neutral (%)	Satisfied (%)	Very Satisfied (%)
White	(n=17,925)	23.0	38.1	31.4	7.5
Black	(n=463)	51.0	18.8	24.2	6.0
Am Indian	(n=238)	25.6	34.5	32.8	7.1
Asian	(n=844)	27.3	30.8	32.5	9.5
Latino	(n=628)	33.9	31.1	28.5	6.5
Other	(n=307)	32.2	30.0	28.7	9.1

These findings indicate that White and students of color, and in particular, Black students differ in their satisfaction with campus diversity, with Black students being more than twice as likely to be dissatisfied than are White students.

Because of recent conversations surrounding affirmative action and the need for structural diversity in American higher education, it is important to examine how satisfaction varies by the racial composition of PWIs among different racial groups. Supporters of affirmative action point to the need for a “critical mass” of students of color in order to provide

support networks for students of color and avoid tokenism (Allen & Solózano, 2001). A variable was created that ranked the total percentage of non-White students into four quartiles, in which the first quartile is made up of the 25.0% of institutions in the sample with the lowest percentages of people of color and the fourth quartile consisting of the 25.0% of institutions with the highest percentages of students of color.

Table 2: Percent Reporting Satisfaction with Diversity of the Student Body by Percentage of Students of Color

	White			Black			Latino/a			Asian American		
	D[a]	N[b]	S[a]	D	N	S	D	N	S	D	N	S
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
First Quartile Diversity	28.5	39.2	32.4	66.3	15.7	18.1	43.3	32.0	24.7	53.3	30.7	16.0
Second Quartile Diversity	23.0	41.5	35.5	61.0	18.3	20.7	36.3	40.0	23.8	32.0	40.0	28.0
Third Quartile Diversity	23.6	37.6	38.8	60.8	15.0	24.2	42.4	28.1	29.5	33.0	34.0	33.0
Fourth Quartile Diversity	13.1	34.0	52.9	33.7	24.4	43.9	26.2	30.3	35.3	17.2	28.1	54.7

[a]Dissatisfied

[b]Neutral

[c]Satisfied or Very Satisfied

Further disaggregation of the respondents in Table 1 by the racial composition of the institution indicates that satisfaction does vary both by race and the proportions of students of color. Pearson's chi-square confirmed that the differences between each group were significant. Across races, students in schools in the bottom quartile of diversity are most likely to feel dissatisfied with the racial diversity of the student body, while students in the top quartile, attending schools with the most demographic racial diversity, are most likely to feel satisfied or very satisfied. Differences between the quartiles of diversity were particularly pronounced for Black students. Approximately two-thirds of students in the first three quartiles of diversity indicated dissatisfaction, but only 33.7% of students in the top-quartile. There was also a marked difference in satisfaction for White, Black, and Asian American students between the third and fourth quartiles of diversity. From the third to fourth-quartile, the percentage of students marking

that they were satisfied or very satisfied with student body diversity rose 14.1% for White students, 19.7% for Black students, and 21.7% for Asian American students.

Regression analyses can help decipher whether structural diversity and satisfaction with diversity maintain their positive relationship after controlling for background and environmental characteristics, as well as college experiences. Regression analyses can also identify other significant predictors of satisfaction with diversity, as well as clarify whether and how White, Black, Latino/a, and Asian American students differ in the predictors of their satisfaction with ethnic diversity.

Regression Analyses

Table 3 displays changes in R^2 with the addition of each block of variables.

Table 3. R^2 Change by Block for Satisfaction with Diversity of Student Body.

		R2 Change and Test of F Change		
Block	Whites	Blacks	Latino/a	Asian American
1. Background characteristics	.025***	.015ns	.027*	.016*
2. Structural diversity/institutional characteristics	.059***	.083***	.120***	.134***
3. Inter-group dynamics	.014***	.026***	.047***	.017**
4. Perceptions and attitudes	.106***	.141***	.120***	.112***
Total Model R^2	.205	.265	.315	.280

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

Almost all blocks significantly contributed to the variance in satisfaction with ethnic diversity of the student body for all four racial groups at the p<.001 level. The blocks that explained the most variance were the fourth block, made up of student perceptions and attitudes, and the second block, which contained variables pertaining to structural diversity and the institutional characteristics. The background characteristics block had the weakest contribution to the variance, suggesting that student experiences during college and encounters with the

college environment have a greater impact on shaping student perceptions of student body diversity than students' previous experiences or backgrounds.

Table 4 exhibits the variables that were found to be significant at p<.001 for White students and p<.01 for other racial groups. More variables were significant for White students than students of other groups, likely because of the difference in sample sizes.

Table 4. Final Standardized Regression Coefficients for Significant Predictors of Satisfaction with Diversity.

	Regression Weights--Standardized Beta-weights and *t* tests[a] (Unstandardized beta coefficients currently not included)			
	A	B	C	D
	White	Black	Latino/a	Asian
Variables	n=	n=	n=	n=
Block 1. Background characteristics				
Parental education	-.04***	-.03	-.03	-.01
Gender (Female)	-.03***	.03	-.03	-.03
1994 Racial discrimination not a problem	.03(C)***	.04	.12(A)**	.03
1994 Commitment to promoting racial understanding	-.03**	-.04	.03	.02
1994 Political orientation (Liberal)	.02	.05	-.01	-.02
Block 2. Structural Diversity/Institutional Characteristics				
Percent students of color	.20(C)***	.24***	.26(A)***	.30***
Percent women faculty	.07(B)***	-.06(A)	.05	.07
Student-faculty ratio (Larger)	0.03***	.00	.08	.08
Selectivity	-.07(D)***	-.06(D)	.01	.11(A,B)***
Size of city (Smaller)	-.03(C,D)***	-.04	-.11(A)**	-.16(A)***
Region: West	-.11***	-0.17**	-.17***	-.15***
Region: Midwest	-.03(D)***	-.00	-.02	.06(A)
Region: South	-.01	-.08	.02	-.06
Block 3. Diversity Experiences				
Cross-racial interaction	.08(D)***	-.04	.09(A)*	-.01

Attended racial/cultural workshop	-.06***	-.14**	-.13**	-.07
Took Ethnic Studies	-.03(C)***	.05	-.13(A,B,D)**	-.02(C)
Roommate of diff. race	.01(D)	.07	-.02(D)	.11(A,C)**
Block 4. Perceptions and Attitudes				
1998 Commitment to promoting racial understanding	-.12***	-.02	-.07	-.10*
1998 Support for affirmative action	-.09***	-.10	-.12***	-.11***
1998 Growth in knowledge/ acceptance of other races/cultures	.15***	.04	.16***	.12***
1998 Political orientation (Liberal)	-.08***	-.05	-.03	-.04
Self-rated critical thinking ability	-.02*	.00	.02	-.04
1998 Racial discrimination not a problem	.15(C,D)***	.05	.01(A)	.06(A)
Satisfaction with community and peer interactions	0.18(B,C,D)***	.36(A)***	.24(A)***	.27***

[a]Results of t tests shown by letters in parenthesis, e.g., (A) indicates an effect that differs significantly from the unstandardized beta-weight for group A (White students)
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Background Characteristics

Two background variables remained significant only for White students: parental education and gender. Women are more likely to be dissatisfied with the racial diversity of the student body even when pre and post-college political orientation are controlled. Possibly following their more liberal leanings (Astin, Oseguera, Sax & Korn, 2002), women are more conscious of and dissatisfied with the lack of racial diversity in some PWIs. White and Latino/a students who indicated that they did not believe that racial discrimination was a problem at the beginning of their first year of college were more likely to be satisfied with campus diversity. A *t*-test between unstandardized beta coefficients indicates that the coefficient for Latino students was significantly different from the coefficient for White students. White students who indicated

a commitment to promoting racial understanding as freshmen were slightly less likely to be satisfied with student body diversity.

Except for Latino/a students who did not believe that racial discrimination is a problem as first-year students, no other background variables were significant for students of color. This may have occurred because of the lower sample sizes, or it may suggest that perhaps these pre-college attributes play less of a role in shaping how students of color perceive student body diversity.

Structural Diversity/Institutional Characteristics

The strongest predictor of satisfaction with ethnic diversity of the student body for White and Asian American students was the percent of students of color in the institution; it was also the second strongest predictor for Black and Latino/a students. The strength of standardized beta coefficient for the variable indicating percent students of color rose steadily after background characteristic variables were controlled. This change signifies that regardless of a student's background and prior attitudes, an institution's demographic diversity has an impact on how satisfied students are with the diversity of the student body. The significance of the variable also parallels the cross-tabulations that reveal how satisfaction varies by the racial composition of the institution (see Table 2).

A particularly interesting finding is the sign change and step-by-step changes in beta coefficients for the West Coast variable for all racial groups. The simple correlation for the West Coast is slightly positive; it remained the same when all background characteristic variables were controlled. However, once the racial composition of the student body was controlled, the beta coefficient turned negative and remains so when the rest of the variables entered the equation. The final beta coefficient shows that students of all races on the West Coast tend to be less

satisfied with the ethnic diversity of the student body. Two key examinations of college students and cross-racial interaction on highly diverse West Coast institutions (Duster, 1991; Antonio, 2001) highlight student perceptions of racial self-segregation and balkanization on campus, a possible source of discontent for students. However, the data for the surveys were collected in 1994 and 1998, in the midst of rising controversy over affirmative action in California due to the passage of Proposition 209 in 1996. The lower rate of satisfaction could be from students expressing discontent with the drastic drop in the number of underrepresented minorities in the University of California system after Proposition 209 (Solórzano, Allen & Carroll, 2002).

White students who attended institutions with higher percentages of women faculty and higher student-faculty ratios were slightly more likely to be satisfied with student body diversity. White, Latino/a, and Asian American students who attended college in smaller cities were less likely to be satisfied with campus diversity, with the effect being more pronounced for Asian American and Latino/a students than White students. Asian American and Latino populations tend to be highly concentrated in metropolitan centers (Asian American Justice Center, 2006; Davis, 2000). Thus, attending college in a smaller city or rural area that lacks a local ethnic community and the resources that they can provide may lead Asian American and Latino/a students to be less satisfied with student body diversity. Interestingly, selectivity was a significantly negative predictor of satisfaction for White students, but positively predicted satisfaction for Asian American students. Although Asian American students attend a variety of institutions (Chang & Kiang, 2002), they are also well-represented at many selective institutions such those in the University of California system.

Diversity Experiences

Two diversity experience variables were significant predictors for only White and Latino/a students. The level of cross-racial interaction positively predicted satisfaction for both groups, while White and Latino/a students who took Ethnic Studies classes were slightly less likely to be satisfied with campus diversity. White, Black, and Latino/a students who attended a racial or cultural workshop were significantly less likely to be satisfied with the diversity of the student body. Perhaps students who engage in these activities become more critical of the racial composition of the university. Having a roommate of a different race was a significant positive predictor of satisfaction with diversity for only Asian Americans.

Perceptions and Attitudes

The standardized beta coefficients for the 1998 CSS post-tests "commitment to promoting racial understanding" and "racial discrimination is no longer a problem" are much stronger than their 1994 SIF counterparts for White students, demonstrating that the influence of these student attitudes on satisfaction with diversity is strengthened during college. White college seniors who self-report a stronger commitment to promoting racial understanding are more likely to be dissatisfied with racial diversity, while those who believe that racial discrimination is not a problem anymore are more likely to report satisfaction with diversity. Perhaps students who want to promote racial understanding feel that campuses need to be more diverse or have more interaction between the races, while those who feel that racial discrimination is not an issue anymore feel that campuses have sufficient racial diversity. Asian American students who reported a commitment to promoting racial understanding as college seniors were also less likely to be satisfied with student body diversity, even though the pre-test variable for the group was non-significant.

Except for Black students, all racial groups who reported support for affirmative action policies as college seniors were less likely to be satisfied with student body diversity at the $p<.001$ level. However, the variable would be a significant predictor for Black students with a less stringent significance level ($p<.10$). A likely explanation is that students who support affirmative action do so in part because they feel that the current level of student diversity is insufficient. Also, White, Latino/a, and Asian American students who reported that they had grown in knowledge and acceptance of other races and cultures during college were significantly more likely to report satisfaction with diversity of the student body. White students who reported a more liberal political orientation as college seniors were slightly less likely to report satisfaction with campus diversity.

Lastly, students from all racial groups who reported higher satisfaction with a sense of campus community, interactions with other students, and their overall college experiences were significantly more likely to be satisfied with campus diversity. This composite variable was the strongest significant predictor for Black and Latino/a ($B_B=.36$, $B_L=.24$) and was also highly significant for White students and Asian American students ($B_W=.19$, $B_A=.27$). While the percent of students of color was the strongest predictor of satisfaction for White and Asian American students, a reported satisfaction with community, peers, and overall college experiences was the strongest predictor for Black and Latino students.

Summary and Discussion

The primary finding of this study, that *both* satisfaction with community, peers, and college itself and the percent of students of color at an institution were the two strongest predictors of satisfaction with diversity for students of all races points to the need to foster a more holistic campus racial climate that reflects the interplay between a student's background,

institutional characteristics, cross-racial interaction, structural diversity, and attitudes and perceptions related to diversity.

Another interesting finding is the varying effects of diversity experience variables on satisfaction with racial diversity. In previous research utilizing the same CIRP/CSS datasets from different years (Chang, 1999; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin 2002), variables measuring encounters with diversity in college such as cross-racial interaction, attending a racial/cultural awareness workshop, and enrolling in Ethnic Studies tended to have similar positive impacts on measures such as student satisfaction, learning outcomes, and civic engagement. In this study, the variables that measure cross-racial interaction ("Ethnic Experience" scale) and increased knowledge and acceptance of other races and cultures ("Know Accept" scale) have a positive effect on satisfaction with ethnic diversity, while attending a racial/cultural workshop and taking Ethnic Studies classes had negative effects on satisfaction. Although all four variables have positive simple correlations with each other, attending a racial/cultural workshop and taking an Ethnic Studies class had a negative relationship with the dependent variable of satisfaction with student body diversity throughout the regression.

The varying effect of these variables, which typically operate in a similar fashion on outcome variables, raises questions about student interpretations of their college diversity experiences. For instance, one could suggest that many White students who are reporting frequent cross-racial interaction still maintain relatively homogeneous friendship groups, even though they may have friends of other races. Students who report positive changes in knowledge and acceptance of other cultures could be embracing of a type of multiculturalism that may embrace learning about other countries, but lacks a specific social justice orientation or race-conscious lens (Banks, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). While cross-racial interaction and

growing in knowledge and acceptance of other cultures are important parts of developing an anti-racist ethic, they can also occur in a depoliticized or even colorblind context.

In contrast, racial/cultural awareness workshops and Ethnic Studies classes are more likely to include a critical, race-conscious approach. Ethnic Studies has its roots in the 1960's student protests against institutional ethnocentrism (Louie, 2001). Such courses could cause the student to critique the campus racial climate and hence, be less satisfied with the diversity of the student body. In the final Diversity Project report issued by Institute for the Study of Social Change, Duster (1991) writes:

> …while both African-American and White freshman students want more interracial experiences and contacts, they want them on different terms. African Americans want more classes and programs and institutional commitments and responses. Whites want more individual personal contacts developed at their own time and leisure. (p. 14)

Perhaps the significant positive relationships between cross-racial interaction and knowledge and acceptance of other cultures with satisfaction of racial diversity for students echoes Duster's finding that some students tend to seek and evaluate diversity on a level that is more individualized than institutionalized.

Limitations

A key limitation in this study is the difference in sample sizes between White students and the other racial groups. A less stringent p-level for these groups was used in order to compensate for the disparity in sample sizes. Although American Indian students are included in the cross-tabulation examining the variance of student satisfaction with diversity by race, they are not included as a group in the regression analyses because of their exceptionally small numbers.

Another limitation is the possible variance in student interpretations of the dependent variable. Some students may mark that they are satisfied with the racial diversity of their campus because it is exceptionally diverse, some students may be satisfied because their campus is relatively homogeneous. In general, the assumption was made that satisfaction meant that students felt that their campuses were adequately diverse, and dissatisfaction meant that their campuses were not diverse enough. Cross-tabulations which showed that students of all races were more likely to be satisfied at more racially diverse campuses and less satisfied at more homogeneous campuses provide support for this interpretation of satisfaction with student body diversity. Lastly, due to the substantial overlap in the presence of Black, Latino/a, and Asian American students on campuses, students of color were aggregated in the "percent people of color" measure in order to prevent multicollinearity between variables representing different student populations. It is likely that different populations play different roles in shaping perceptions of campus racial climate. For instance, Asian American students make up over a third of the student population at multiple campuses in the University of California system. The racial climate at such schools may differ from Hispanic Serving Institutions, where Latino/a students make up at least a quarter of the student population, even though the aggregate percent of students of color may be similar. Such differences in how students of color are perceived can be explored in future research.

Conclusion

Overall, this study affirms other work that points to the different rates of satisfaction that students of different races from different institutional contexts have with student body diversity and charts out new territory by investigating which factors from the students' background characteristics and college experiences predict satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the ethnic

diversity of the student body. Although the finding that the percent of students of color was the strongest predictor of satisfaction for White and Asian American students and the second strongest predictor for Black and Latino/a students may not be surprising, it refutes arguments that a more racially diverse student body is detrimental to student satisfaction (Rothman, Lipset, & Nevitte, 2003). Rothman et al. (2003) suggest that students are more likely to encounter racial discrimination in a more racially diverse student body, a pattern that is unsurprising considering that an increase of students in color would naturally lead to a rise in the number of students who would be victims of discrimination. However, the current findings demonstrate that a racially diverse student body is an important component of student satisfaction with diversity.

While structural diversity is an essential factor of satisfaction with diversity, other significant predictors highlight the need to nurture the multiple components of campus racial climate, such as positive cross-racial interactions and a sense of community on campus. Further research is also needed on the possible differing effects of cross-racial interaction versus attending a racial/cultural workshop and taking Ethnic Studies on satisfaction with diversity and other outcomes. Interestingly, while cross-racial interaction and taking an Ethnic Studies class had similar positive effects across the board in Gurin et al. (2002) for White students, taking an Ethnic Studies class was a negative predictor of some learning and democracy outcomes for Black students in the study.

The discovery that taking an Ethnic Studies class and attending a racial/cultural awareness workshop were negative predictors of satisfaction for both various groups of students should not be interpreted as a call for the removal of such classes and activities in order to promote racial satisfaction. It is difficult to know whether or not students who took Ethnic Studies classes and attended racial/cultural awareness workshops were already conscious of

diversity issues, which possibly led them to take Ethnic Studies, or if this awareness was actually bred within Ethnic Studies. It should be noted that another variable, participating in an ethnic/racial student organization, was not found to be significant in preliminary regressions. Still, freshman pre-test questions on attitudes such as “racial discrimination is no longer a problem” and “commitment to promoting racial understanding” were controlled, suggesting that the experience of taking Ethnic Studies or participating in a workshop during college has a unique effect on predicting dissatisfaction with student body diversity. The preservation of such forums, which can promote critical thinking and provide support for students, is important. They may lead students to critique the university rather than whole-heartedly embrace it, but such voices also serve as a barometer of the more nuanced components of campus` racial climate.

The finding that students on the West Coast were significantly less likely to be satisfied with the diversity of the student body, even when racial composition of the student body was controlled, also merits additional research. The fact that voters passed two measures, Proposition 209 in California and Proposition 200 in Washington, to strike down affirmative action in this region of the country in between the two points of data collection must be remembered. It would be interesting to analyze data from different time points to see if and how the broader political climate shapes students’ attitudes towards the diversity of the student body.

The outcomes of this study confirm previous work on the multiple components of campus racial climate (Hurtado et al., 1998). Satisfaction with the racial diversity of the student body, a psychological dimension of climate, was predicted by structural diversity (percent people of color), historical components (institutional characteristics), behavioral diversity (cross-racial interaction), and other student attitudes about diversity, reflecting the multifaceted nature of campus racial climate. Future research will investigate other variables that may contribute to

satisfaction with diversity of the student body and other components of diversity. This study suggests that satisfaction with diversity is a complicated phenomenon, incorporating, but not being limited to the actual number of students of color on campus. In order to truly capture its complexity, researchers need a better understanding of how different populations of students perceive and experience campus racial climate.

Appendix A: Variable Definitions and Coding

Dependent Variable	
Satisfaction with ethnic diversity of the student body	Four-point scale: 1=”dissatisfied” to 4=”very satisfied”
Block 1: Background characteristics	
Parental education	Fifteen-point scale: 2=“both parents less than grammar school” to 16 “both parents have graduate degrees”
Gender	1=“male,” 2=“female”
1994 “Racial discrimination is not a problem”	Four-point scale: 1=“disagree strongly” to 4=“agree strongly”
1994 “Goals and Values: Promoting racial understanding”	Four-point scale: 1=“not important” to 4= “essential”
1994 Political orientation	Five-point scale: 1=“far right” to 5 “far left”
Block 2: Structural Diversity/Institutional Characteristics	
Percent students of color	Ranges from 0 to 100, combined total of percent Black, percent Latino, percent Asian, and percent Native American
Percent women faculty*	Percent of female faculty at institution
Student-faculty ratio	Ratio of student per faculty member
Selectivity	Average SAT (or ACT equivalent) of entering freshmen divided by 10
Size of city	Seven-point scale: 1=“large city” to 7=“rural”
Region: West Coast	1=not marked, 2=marked
Region: Midwest*	1=not marked, 2=marked
Region: South*	1=not marked, 2=marked
Region: East Coast*	1=not marked, 2=marked
Block 3: Diversity Experiences	
Cross-racial interaction	Five item factor scale (see Appendix B)
Attended a racial/cultural workshop	1=not marked, 2=marked
Took an Ethnic Studies course	1=not marked, 2=marked
Had roommate of different race/ethnicity*	1=not marked, 2=marked
Block 4: Perceptions and Attitudes	
1998 “Goals and Values: Promoting racial understanding”	Four-point scale: 1=”not important” to 4= “essential”

1998 Race should be a criteria in admissions	Four-point scale: 1=”disagree strongly” to 4=“agree strongly”
1998 “Racial discrimination no longer a problem”	Four-point scale: 1=”disagree strongly” to 4=“agree strongly”
Know Accept scale	Two item factor scale (see Appendix B)
Satisfaction with community and peer interactions	Two item factor scale (see Appendix B)

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Appendix B: Items Constituting Factor Scales

Cross-racial interaction	5=“never” to 15=“most frequently”
How often you studied with different racial/ethnic group How often you dined with different racial/ethnic group How often you dated with different racial/ethnic group How often you interacted with different racial ethnic group How often you socialized with different ethnic group	1=“not at all” to 3=“frequently”
Know accept	2=“most weak” to 10=“strongest”
Changes in self-rating: knowledge of different races/cultures	1=“much weaker” to 5=“much stronger”
Changes in self-rating: acceptance of different races/cultures	
Satisfaction with community and peer interactions	3=“dissatisfied with both” to 12 “very satisfied with all”
Satisfaction with sense of campus community	Four-point scale: 1=”dissatisfied” to 4=”very satisfied”
Satisfaction with peer interactions	
Satisfaction with overall college experience	

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