



[Back to All Proposals](#)

Proposal Details

Personal Information

Name	Sarah Ryan
Informal Name	Sarah
Institution / Affiliation	University of California at Riverside
Unit / Department	Graduate School of Education
Title	Doctoral Student
Preferred Mailing Address	4038 Locust St
City	Riverside
Country	United States
State	CA
Zip/Postal Code	92501-0000
Email	sarah.ryan@email.ucr.edu
Phone	909-450-3078
Fax	

Faculty Advisor

Name	Dr. Robert K. Ream
Informal Name	
Institution / Affiliation	University of California at Riverside
Unit / Department	Graduate School of Education
Title	Associate Professor
Preferred Mailing Address	900 University Avenue 1207 Sproul Hall
City	Riverside
Country	United States
State	CA
Zip/Postal Code	92521
Email	robert.ream@ucr.edu
Phone	951-827-6054
Fax	951-827-3942

Financial Representative

Name	Jane Gunter
Informal Name	
Institution / Affiliation	University of California at Riverside
Unit / Department	Graduate School of Education
Title	Senior Contracts and Grants Analyst
Preferred Mailing Address	900 University Avenue 1207 Sproul Hall

City	Riverside
Country	United States
State	CA
Zip/Postal Code	92521
Email	jane.gunter@ucr.edu
Phone	951-827-2605
Fax	

Project Description I

Title:

(Mis)Aligned Ambitions?

Parent Resources, Student Alignment, and Piecing Together the Puzzle of Latino Postsecondary Attainment

Statement of the research problem and national importance:

With a Latino population of 48.4 million as of July 1, 2009, the United States is home to the second largest Latino population worldwide. Yet, as Latinos make up a greater share of prospective college enrollees, and despite the increase in their college enrollment rates, they trail all other racial and ethnic groups in the percentage who earn a bachelor's degree. While the percentage of Latinos completing a bachelor's degree grew from 5 percent in 1971 to 12 percent in 2008, during that same period the attainment gap with their White counterparts grew by 11 percentage points (Aud et al., 2010) [1]. Numerous studies document this persistent bachelor's degree completion gap (Astin, 1985; Campuzano, 2004; Vernez & Mizell, 2001), a gap which has actually grown over the past thirty years (Alon, Domina, & Tienda, 2010).

That Latina/o [2] students are losing ground to their White peers even as Latino college enrollment and graduation rates are at an all time high has been coined "the puzzle of lagging Hispanic college degree attainment" (Alon, Domina, & Tienda, 2010). Yet, how are we to piece together this puzzle? The question assumes critical importance at a time when Latinos comprise an increasing share of the U.S. population and the demand for an educated and skilled labor force remains high. Emergent research fits a few pieces into place, focusing on certain kinds of parent resources that influence children's postsecondary attainment (Long & Kurlaender, 2008; O'Connor, 2009). However, all the more puzzling is the recent finding that even when income and education levels of Latino parents are on par with their White counterparts, something hinders the transmission of educationally advantageous resources from parent to child during the college choice process (Alon, et al., 2010). Further, even when Latino students have high expectations and are at least minimally academically qualified to attend a four-year institution (Fry, 2004; Kurlaender, 2006; Swail, Cabrera, Lee, & Williams, 2005), they often begin their college pathways on a lower trajectory (Fry, 2004). Addressing these concerns, the proposed study contributes three pieces currently missing from the Latino college attainment puzzle.

The first missing piece is the measure of parents' formal and informal social ties. The odds of enrolling in college and obtaining a degree are influenced not only by parents' economic and human capital resources, but also parents' access to a variety of additional resources through their social networks. According to social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988), the interpersonal ties and communal affiliations that bind people together can facilitate or hinder the exchange of resources.

The second missing piece is the measure of *alignment* between students' expectations of obtaining a bachelor's degree on the one hand, and the actions they have taken toward the fulfillment of these ambitions on the other. Over a decade ago, work by Schneider and Stevenson (1999) revealed the existence of an "ambitious generation" of youth who aspired to a college degree but were often misguided about how to get there. This makes especially concerning research demonstrating that the single most important obstacle to college access for Latino students is a lack of knowledge about the sequence of actions necessary to get there (Gándara, 2002). Placing actions within the context of student expectations, the proposed study investigates the role expectation-action alignment may play in the college choice process.

The third puzzle piece connects the first two. Specifically, I hypothesize the sequence of their association such that parent resources bolster students' alignment, which in turn impacts the transition from high school to initial postsecondary enrollment. It is expected that the extent to which students demonstrate alignment mediates this process, facilitating or hindering the transmission of parent resources known to influence postsecondary transitions. Prior research has suggested parents' unequal ability to leverage their resources to confer status advantage is responsible for growing racial gaps in college enrollment and attainment. However, this body of research overlooks the roles that both the social exchange of resources, as well as the alignment between college expectations and preparation, may play in the status attainment process.

As a predominantly White generation of baby boomers continues to settle into retirement, educating the youth—a significant proportion of whom will be Latino—who will replace them in the labor market constitutes a pressing policy issue. Improving the educational attainment of Latinos is critical to individual social mobility, but is also critical to preserving and enhancing the vitality of the U.S. economy and labor force.

[1] While the attainment gap between non-Latino Whites and Blacks has grown during this same period (from 12 to 17 percentage points), the growth has been less dramatic. Further, the attainment gap between Latinos and non-Latino Blacks also increased during this period, from 2 to 8 percentage points. These patterns suggest that while non-Latino Whites continue to experience significantly higher levels of postsecondary attainment compared to both of these other two groups, Latinos are particularly disadvantaged in the field of higher education.

[2] The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably in this proposal. All racial identifiers such as “White” and “Black” refer to non-Latinos.

Review the literature and establish a theoretical grounding for the research:

Recent work conducted by Alon, Domina, and Tienda (2010), examines two of the most widely cited reasons for the differential patterns of postsecondary enrollment and attainment among Latino youth—namely, the education level and nativity status of parents. Broadly, their results indicate that the main difference between Latinos and Whites stems from differential access to four-year institutions, but that group-level differences in parent education and nativity only offer a partial explanation. While prior scholarship largely attributes this phenomenon to family background—often parents' education and/or income—Latino students with college-educated parents were significantly less likely than White students with similarly educated parents to enroll at any college, but particularly at a four-year institution. O'Connor (2009) has observed similar patterns when using parent income as a predictor of enrollment.

Less clear are the mechanisms which may be operating to hinder the transfer of both money and college-relevant information from parent to child among Latinos. The proposed study suggests one overlooked mechanism is the degree of alignment between high school students' postsecondary expectations and the preparatory actions they take during high school in reach of those ambitions.

Postsecondary Expectations and Alignment

Students' postsecondary expectations exert a marked impact on the educational attainment process (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2001). Yet, while most students report expecting to go to college many students, particularly first-generation college-goers and underrepresented minority youth, do not fully understand what sequence of preparatory actions are required to get there (Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003). In other words, their college expectations and the actions they take during high school in pursuit of these expectations are not aligned.

In *The Ambitious Generation*, Schneider and Stevenson (1999) refer to youth whose occupational goals and educational goals are complementary as having *aligned ambitions*. The proposed research offers a slightly different conceptualization of alignment *vis-à-vis* the college choice process. Here, alignment will refer to the match between students' stated postsecondary expectations of obtaining at least a bachelor's degree, on the one hand, and the number of influential actions (Berkner & Chavez, 1997) they have taken during high school toward the fulfillment of those expectations, on the other.

Access to timely and accurate college-relevant information helps students take those steps which increase their chances of fulfilling their expectations. Unfortunately, policies and practices ensuring that *all* students and parents receive the information they need are often not in place, giving those who have already learned how to negotiate the system a leg up. Among Latino students in particular, one consequence of this lack of complete information may be their overrepresentation in community colleges. While about 61 percent of college students begin at the sub-baccalaureate level, approximately 68 percent of Latinos do so (Melguizo, 2009). Previous studies (Brint & Karabel, 1989) have concluded that the chances of obtaining a bachelor's degree decrease for students who start at a two-year college, including Latino students (Swail, Cabrera, William & Lee, 2004).

In summary, prior research suggests that the expectations students hold for college, as well as the actions they take (or not) during high school aligned with their expectations, both play an important role in the college choice process. Further, this research demonstrates that access to information about preparing for college, including the influence exerted by the type of institution in which a student first enrolls, has a nontrivial impact on postsecondary outcomes. However, this information appears to be inequitably distributed across student groups. Finally, the various resources parents command on behalf of their offspring share a relationship with these factors, as well as with children's ultimate status attainment. With this in mind, the theoretical approach to the proposed research conceptualizes parents' resources as forms of capital and views the role of social capital as particularly important, yet often overlooked, in the college choice process.

Social Capital and the Puzzle of Latino College Degree Attainment

Research on Latinos and the college choice process suggests that factors such as generational differences and economic resources merit consideration as important influences, but that these factors alone cannot fully account for enrollment and attainment gaps between Whites and Latinos (Alon et al., 2010; Tienda, in press). Social resources have been noticeably absent from research on Latino students' postsecondary transitions (Perna & Titus, 2005) and this research attempts to address that gap. In this investigation, social capital refers to individuals' capacity to gain access to scarce resources—including economic capital and employment or educational opportunities (Granovetter, 1982), as well as knowledge and information (Becker, 1964)—by virtue of their membership in groups and participation in broader structures of society (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988). [\[1\]](#)

In the proposed study, it is recognized that college-educated and high-SES Latino parents may evidence lower rates of transmission of various kinds of economic and human capital (Alon et al., 2010; O'Connor, 2009). Compared to their White counterparts, Latino parents may also experience reduced access to college-relevant resources through their social networks. This may be due either to the type and quantity of resources embedded in those networks and/or the positions held by parents and their social ties within social structures.

Using social capital theory as a guide, this research seeks to reexamine and extend previous results demonstrating that human and economic forms of capital are transmitted at differential rates from parent to child when comparing Latinos and Whites. Moreover, this study places particular emphasis on less tangible resources that inhere in parental relations. This emphasis shines a light on whether the social exchange of resources may also impact alignment between students' expectations and actions as well as their postsecondary trajectories. In the next section, I outline the design of the proposed research and the methods which will be used to pursue the analysis of the data.

[\[1\]](#) This definition attempts to capture elements of both Coleman's functional and Bourdieu's more critical work on social capital. Coleman views parents' roles as predominant in promoting their children's status attainment, while Bourdieu's approach describes the restrictions imposed by structural barriers.

Describe the research method that will be used:

The attached figure depicting the conceptual model for this study provides a visual representation of the hypothetical links between parent resources, alignment, and postsecondary enrollment, illustrating the role alignment plays in mediating the influence of parent resources on outcomes. The model allows for the investigation of the following five associated research questions:

Research Question 1. Does the alignment between 12th grade students' postsecondary expectations and actions vary between Latinos and non-Latino Whites?

Research Question 2. Is variation in students' initial postsecondary enrollment related to parent resources, as measured when students are in 10th grade?

Research Question 3. Is alignment in 12th grade associated with parent resources?

Research Question 4. Do parent resources indirectly influence students' initial postsecondary enrollment?

Research Question 5. Do associations among parent resources, student alignment, and initial postsecondary enrollment vary between Latinos and non-Latino Whites?

The statistical model which follows from the conceptual model is:

$$\text{Outcome}_{14_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Align}_{12_i} + \beta_2 \text{ParentRes}_{10_i} + \beta_3 \text{Background}_{10_i} + e_i,$$

where Outcome_{14_{*i*}} represents initial postsecondary enrollment status for student *i*. Align represents "postsecondary action" group assigned to student *i* in the 12th grade year. ParentRes represents 10th grade measures of material, human, and social capital at the family level. Finally, Background represents 10th grade student background in the form of prior achievement, prior expectations, gender, family composition, number of siblings, and select school characteristics.

Research Method

Dependent Variable. The outcome of interest in this investigation is the type and selectivity of the institution in which a

student initially enrolled. Previous research has demonstrated that both the type and level of selectivity of the institution in which a student first enrolls have important implications for persistence and ultimate degree attainment. The *ELS* restricted variable F2PS1SLC provides information about both the type and level of selectivity of the student's first attended postsecondary institution.

Control Variables. In addition to limiting the sample to students who expect to complete a bachelor's degree, a number of controls are included in the models to reduce the probability of unmeasured selection processes accounting for the influence of parent resources on both alignment and postsecondary enrollment.^[1]

Measuring Parent Resources. Measures of three kinds of parent resources, as reported by parents in the *ELS:2002* base-year parent questionnaire, are included. Three forms of parent social capital are measured as latent constructs. These include two measures of *informal* social capital reflecting parents' capacity to access college-relevant information and parents' relationships with their children and parents of their children's friends. A third measure indicates *formal* social capital reflected in parents' relations with institutional (school) agents. The indicators used for the various parent social capital constructs in this research follow a number of scholars who have attempted to carefully conceptualize and measure this rather complex sociological notion (Perna & Titus, 2005; Ream & Palardy, 2008).

Economic capital is represented by a single indicator of parents' income from all sources, which to some degree reflects their actual ability to pay for college. Given that parents vary in their attitudes and beliefs about paying college, three indicators of parents' college financing orientation are also included as measures of economic capital. Human capital is represented by a single indicator of parents' level of education completed.

Measuring Alignment. The alignment variable will be created by situating students' level of college preparation and academic performance as of the first follow-up (when most students were in 12th grade) within the context of their degree expectations. Data regarding students' actions are based primarily on student report, with cross-verification using institutional data. Academic performance data is based on students' high school transcripts. These action and performance measures have been selected based on the literature describing those steps which serve as necessary and/or influential precursors to enrollment in four-year institutions of higher education (Berkner & Chavez, 1997; Fry, 2004; Kurlaender, 2006). Attempting to measure alignment poses methodological and conceptual challenges. Therefore, rather than imposing *a priori* assertions about how these actions may fit together such that they engender expectation-action alignment, I employ latent class analysis to examine the structure of these relationships. Latent class analysis enables the characterization of latent variables from an analysis of the structure of the relationships among various manifest indicators (McCutcheon, 2002). This technique can be used to find groups or subtypes of cases in multivariate categorical data. These latent groupings will be used to create the mediating measure of alignment, with the categories of this variable indicating the extent and/or kind of alignment the students in each action group demonstrate.

Analysis

This research will employ structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques (Mplus statistical software, Version 6.0, Muthén & Muthén, 2010) to test associations among the variables and constructs of interest. Specifically, I employ the four-step process outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986) to investigate whether alignment between students' postsecondary expectations and actions during high school mediates the impact of parent resources on postsecondary outcomes (Baron & Kenny, 1986; James, Mulaik, & Brett, 2006).

Since variability across racial/ethnic groups in the mediation of the influence of parent resources on initial postsecondary enrollment is expected (Alon et al., 2010; O'Connor, 2009; Perna & Titus, 2005), I will analyze a series of multigroup models using invariance tests. This technique indicates whether a fixed unit change in exogenous variables in the models corresponds to a statistically similar change in an endogenous variable(s), independent of whether the sample member was Latino or non-Latino. Analytic weights will be utilized to compensate for nonrandom sampling techniques and unequal selection probabilities and to allow for the extrapolation of the results to the represented target population. Missing values will be handled using multiple imputation techniques. Additionally, because the *ELS* sampling design results in students' being nested in schools, the assumption of the statistical independence of observation is likely violated, which can result in underestimation of standard errors (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). The Mplus command "complex" will be used to adjust the standard errors and model fit indices to account for cluster sampling (Muthén & Muthén, 2010).

[1] These variables are listed in Appendix A, along with the figural model. A listing of all variables used from *ELS:2002* is included in Appendix B.

Uploaded Appendix Document(s):

- [Figural Model](#)

Project Description II

Will you use NCES target dataset? Yes

Please check all NCES datasets that apply
- Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2002)

Explain why each dataset best serves this research. Include a variable list for each dataset used.

The proposed research will use data from the *Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002)*. The *ELS* dataset includes a nationally representative cohort of 10th graders in 2002 (see: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/els2002/>). Drawing from the base-year panel of 10th graders in 2002 who were resurveyed in 2004 and 2006 ($N = 13,221$), the proposed sample includes all students who had obtained a high school diploma or had completed an alternative credential by May of 2005 and who, in 2004, reported ultimately expecting to complete a BA or advanced degree ($N = 8,555$). This sample includes 1,027 Latino students and 5,425 non-Latino White students. The *ELS* dataset is especially suited to the proposed study for three reasons. First, *ELS* is designed to explore students' transitions from secondary school into postsecondary education or the workforce. Second, *ELS* contains variables that enable measurement of parent resources that are known to affect student postsecondary transitions. Third, *ELS* contains items that measure students' postsecondary expectations, as well as items that measure students' actions toward the fulfillment of expectations (e.g., complete college entrance exams); taken together, these items indicate alignment of students' postsecondary aspirations and preparation.

Variables used from the *Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002* dataset can be found in Appendix B (see Project Description I).

Will you use NSF target dataset? No

Explain why each dataset best serves this research. Include a variable list for each dataset used.

Will you address the NPEC focus topic? Yes

If yes, please briefly describe:

The use of a variety of data points to create a measure of the alignment between students' postsecondary expectations, on the one hand, and their actual preparation for postsecondary education, on the other hand, constitutes an innovative approach to using national level student data in order to gain better insight into measures of student success. The consideration of student expectations in conjunction with their postsecondary preparation shines a light on the access students and their parents have to accurate information about what it takes to gain entry into college, but also what it takes to succeed once through the doors.

Project Description III

Provide a timeline of key project activities:

May-June 2011: Prepare data

- Impute missing data in *ELS:2002*
- Clean data and recode and/or restructure where appropriate
- Prepare data for Mplus software

July-September 2011: Conduct data analyses

- Descriptive analyses
- Latent class analysis
- Full sample mediational analysis
- Sub-sample mediational analyses
- Model invariance testing
- Submit AIR Annual Forum and AERA Annual Meeting proposals

October-November 2011: Commence dissertation writing

- Begin Introduction, literature review, and theory chapters (building upon work already completed as a part of preparing the dissertation proposal)
- Submit Sociology of Education Association Annual Conference proposal
- Prepare mid-year report for AIR grant program

December 2011-February 2012: Continue writing and begin dissemination activities

- Complete data and interpretation chapters
- Revise introduction, literature review, and theory chapters
- Begin conclusions and implications chapters
- Re-run analyses or conduct additional analyses as necessary
- Submit mid-year report to AIR grant program
- Present preliminary findings at Sociology of Education Association Annual Conference

March 2012: Complete writing and commence review process

- Continue conclusions and implications chapters
- Continue ongoing chapter revisions
- Commence formal review and revision process with dissertation committee faculty chair

March 2012: Continue review and revisions

- Continue review and revisions with chair and committee members

April 2012: Dissemination

- Present at AERA Annual Meeting
- Prepare for dissertation defense

May-June 2012: Dissemination and defense

- Defend dissertation before committee
- Present at AIR Annual Forum
- Prepare and submit final report to AIR grant program

List deliverables such as research reports, books, and presentations that will be developed from this research initiative:

This research will result in research reports, conference presentations and peer-reviewed journal articles.

Research Reports:

- Mid-year and final research reports to AIR grant program office

Conference Presentations:

- Sociology of Education Association 2012
- AERA Annual Meeting 2012
- AIR Annual Forum 2012

Journal Articles:

Near the completion of the dissertation, one or more research papers will be developed for submission to peer-reviewed scholarly journals. These will likely include *American Education Research Journal*, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *The Journal of Higher Education*, *Research in Higher Education*, and *Sociology of Education*.

Describe how you will disseminate the results of this research:

Findings from this research will be disseminated through presentations at several national conferences and through the publication of the dissertation. Additionally, one or more research papers based on the dissertation research will be developed and submitted for publication. Proposals for presentations will be submitted to several professional conferences, including the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR), the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and the Annual Conference of the Sociology of Education Association (SEA). Mid-year and final project reports will be submitted to the AIR grant program office in December 2011 and June 2012. Scholarly journals to which findings may be submitted after a sufficient period of review and refinement include *American Education Research Journal*, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *The Journal of Higher Education*, *Research in Higher Education*, and *Sociology of Education*.

Research findings will be disseminated to a variety of audiences including scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. Findings from this research may inform policies which aim to help students, parents, and schools develop better understandings of the actions necessary before or during high school to fulfill postsecondary ambitions. Findings from this research may also inform policies designed to counter the effects of persisting stratification in college degree attainment. Dissemination efforts may also include local efforts at area junior high and high schools in conjunction with faculty colleagues with similar research interests.

Provide a reference list of sources cited:

Adelman, C. (2002). The relationship between urbanicity and educational outcomes. In W.G. Tierney & L.S. Hagedorn (Eds.), *Increasing access to college: Extending possibilities for all students* (pp. 35-64). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Alon, S., Domina, T., & Tienda, M. (2010). Stymied mobility or temporary lull? The puzzle of lagging Hispanic college degree attainment. *Social Forces*, 88(4), 1807-1832.

Astin, A. (1985). *Minorities in American higher education: Recent trends, current prospects, and recommendations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Aud, S., Hussar, W., Planty, M., Snyder, T., Bianco, K., Fox, M., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., Drake, L. (2010). *The Condition of Education 2010* (NCES 2010-028). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

Baron, R.M., & Kenny, D.A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173-1182.

Becker, G.S. (1964). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special emphasis to education*. New York: Columbia University Press for the National Bureau of Economic Research.

- Berkner, L., & Chavez, L. (1997). *Access to postsecondary education for the 1992 high school Graduates*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J.G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*, (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood Press.
- Brint, S., & Karabel, J. (1989). *The diverted dream: Community colleges and the promise of educational opportunity in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cabrera, A.F., & LaNasa, S.M. (2000). Overcoming the tasks on the path to college for America's disadvantaged. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 107, 31-44.
- Campuzano, L. (2004, November). *College attendance and completion, differences across and within races*. Working paper. Department of Economics, Rochester University.
- Coleman, J.S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 95-120.
- Fry, R. (2004). *Latino youth finishing college: The role of selective pathways*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.
- Gándara, P. (2002). A study of high school Puente: What we have learned about preparing Latino youth for postsecondary education. *Educational Policy*, 16(4), 474-495.
- Granovetter, M. (1982). The strength of weak ties: A network theory revisited. In P.V. Marsden and N. Lin (Eds.), *Social structure and network analysis* (pp. 105-130). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- James L.R., Mulaik S.A., Brett J.M. (2006). A tale of two methods. *Organizational Research Methods*, 9, 233–244.
- Kurlaender, M. (2006). Choosing community college: Factors affecting Latino college choice. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 133, 7-16.
- Long, B.T., & Kurlaender, M. (2008). *Do community colleges provide a viable pathway to a baccalaureate degree?* (NBER Working Paper No. 14367). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- McCutcheon, A.L. (2002). Basic concepts and procedures in single- and multiple-group latent class analysis. In J. A. Hagenaaars & A. L. McCutcheon (Eds.), *Applied latent class analysis* (pp. 56-89). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Melguizo, T. (2009). Are community colleges an alternative path for Hispanic students to attain a bachelor's degree? *Teachers College Record*, 111(1), 90-123.
- Muthén, L.K. and Muthén, B.O. (1998-2010). *Mplus User's Guide*. Sixth Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Muthén & Muthén.

O'Connor, N. (2009). Hispanic origin, socioeconomic status, and community college enrollment. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 80(2), 121-145.

Perna, L.W., & Titus, M.A. (2005). The relationship between parental involvement as social capital and college enrollment: An examination of racial/ethnic group differences. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76(5), 485-518.

Raudenbush, S.W., & Bryk, A. S. (2002). *Hierarchical linear models: Applications and data analysis methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Ream, R.K., & Palardy, G.J. (2008). Reexamining social class differences in the availability and the educational utility of parental social capital. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(2), 238-273.

Schneider, B., & Stevenson, D. (1999). *The ambitious generation: America's teenagers, motivated but directionless*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Swail, W.S., Cabrera, A.F., Lee, C., & Williams, A. (2005). *Pathways to the Bachelor's Degree for Latino Students*. Washington, DC: Educational Policy Institute.

Tienda, M. (in press). Hispanics and U.S. schools: Problems, puzzles and possibilities. In M.T. Hallinan (Ed.), *Frontiers in Sociology of Education*. New York: Springer.

Venezia, A., Kirst, M.W., & Antonio, A. (2003). *Betraying the college dream: How disconnected K-12 and postsecondary education system undermine student aspirations*. Retrieved September 12, 2010 from http://www.stanford.edu/group/bridgeproject/embargoed/embargoed_policybrief.pdf

Vernez, G., & Mizell, L. (2001). *Goal: To double the rate of Hispanic earning and bachelor's degrees*. Prepared for the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Education, Center for Research on Immigration Policy.

IRB Statement

Statement of Institutional Review Board approval or exemption:

I have contacted the Compliance Analyst in the UC-Riverside Office of Research and have been advised to submit the "HRRB Exempt 4 Application for the use of Existing Data". This application was submitted on January 4, 2011. According to Code of Federal Regulations, TITLE 45, PUBLIC WELFARE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, PART 46, PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (Revised January 15, 2009 and Effective July 14, 2009), this exemption applies to:

Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Statement of Use of Restricted Datasets

This research will require the use of restricted data from ELS:2002 given that several of the required variables are only available through the use of the restricted dataset. These variables include:

- F2PS1SLC: This variable provides the level and selectivity of the first postsecondary institution attended by the sample member, which is the outcome variable of interest;
- BYHISP: This variable provides the national origin of Latino sample members, data which will be used to create the Mexican-origin model covariate;
- BYRESZIP: This variable provides the residential zip code of the sample member at the time of base year data collection, data which will be used to create a measure of proximity to the nearest postsecondary institution;
- F1FACADC: This variable provides the level of academic coursework completed by the sample member, data which will be used in the creation of the alignment classification, and;
- F1RGPP2: This variable provides the cumulative high school grade point average of the sample member, data which will be used in the creation of the alignment classification.

I am included on a license for the use of the restricted ELS:2002 data that was approved by the NCES Institute of Education Sciences in October 2009. This license was submitted by Dr. Douglas Mitchell and the license number is 09080005.

Biographical Sketch

Sarah Ryan is in her fourth year of the doctoral program in Education Leadership and Policy in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California at Riverside. She advanced to candidacy in November 2010 after completing her written and oral qualifying examinations. Ms. Ryan has a bachelor of arts in Education and Spanish from Edgewood College (Madison, Wisconsin) and a master of science from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in English Language Acquisition and Bilingual Education. Prior to returning to UC-Riverside to pursue her doctoral degree, she worked as an English as a Second Language and bilingual education teacher, and then administrator, in public school systems in both Wisconsin and Colorado.

Broadly, Ms. Ryan's research interests encompass the impact of educational and social inequality on youth. This includes how to understand the persistence of inequality in a richly-endowed nation, particularly at all levels of its systems of education, and how policy can be devised to ameliorate it.

Ms. Ryan has sophisticated skills in quantitative research methods and techniques, including missing data imputation and structural equation and longitudinal modeling. Ms. Ryan has completed coursework in foundational statistical techniques including regression analysis, ANOVA techniques, and multivariate analysis techniques. She has also completed coursework in advanced methodologies, with a particular emphasis in structural equation modeling, at both UC-Riverside and the University of Kansas. Ms. Ryan has extensive experience working with NCES datasets and has engaged in independent coursework with faculty focusing specifically on the use of these datasets. Additionally, Ms. Ryan was selected as a participant in the NCES-sponsored August 2010 *ELS:2002* Database Training Seminar held in Washington, DC.

Ms. Ryan has served as a graduate student researcher on several projects during her tenure at UC-Riverside, all of which have focused on issues relevant to educational equity and access. Ms. Ryan has been involved in both quantitative and qualitative data analyses as a part of an NIH-funded project studying a federal program intended to promote the pursuit of advanced degrees among underrepresented minority students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields of study. She has also been involved in several research projects addressing opportunity/achievement gaps. Additionally, Ms. Ryan has served as an external evaluator for a United States Department of Education-funded initiative at an area community college.

Graduate Fellowships

2010	University of California Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship
2009-2010	University of California at Riverside Graduate Fellowship
2008-2009	University of California at Riverside Graduate Fellowship
2007-2008	University of California at Riverside Chancellor's Distinguished Fellowship

Research in Progress

Malcom, L., & Ryan, S. (in progress). *Racial inequality, wealth, and the college financing strategies of African Americans*. Paper accepted for presentation at the 2011 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Ream, R., Ryan, S., Espinoza, J., & Patterson, D. (in progress). Causes of, and debates about, gaps in educational opportunity and achievement. Chapter in T. Timar & J. Maxwell-Jolly (Eds.) forthcoming book on achievement gaps. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press

Ream, R., Lewis, J., & Ryan, S. (in progress). *Can I trust you? Examining the quality of interpersonal relationships among Latino/a STEM undergraduates and their mentors*. Paper accepted for presentation at the 2011 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Publications

Mitchell, D.E., Ream, R.K., Ryan, S., & Espinoza, J. (2008). *Organizational strategies for addressing California's educational achievement gap*. Report to the State Department of Education P-16 Council. Davis, California: UC Davis Center for Applied Policy in Education (CAP-Ed).

Mitchell, D.E., & Ryan, S. *Career technical, occupational and vocational education: A review of the professional and scholarly literature*. Unpublished manuscript.

Ream, R.K., Espinoza, J., & Ryan, S. (2009). The opportunity/achievement gap. In E.M. Anderman & L.H. Anderman (Eds.), *Psychology of Classroom Learning: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 657-654). Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA.

Presentations

Mitchell, D.E., Ream, R.K., Ryan, S., & Espinoza, J. (2010, March 9). *Organizational strategies for addressing California's educational achievement gap*. Hearing testimony given before the California State Senate Committee on Education, Subcommittee on Educational Governance and Accountability.

Hank, N., Sanchez, R., Guiberson, M., Ryan, S., Atherly, P., & Catlin, D. (2006, March). *Using multicultural consultation and assessment teams to support pre-referral and assessment processes for cognitively and linguistically diverse students*. Presentation at the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems Forum on Disproportionality, Scottsdale, AZ.

Ryan, S. (2001, March). *Factors Influencing the Success of Hmong Students in the American Education System*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the annual meeting of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, St. Louis, MO.

Budget Requirements

Salary/Stipend: \$0.00
Tuition and fees: \$15000.00
Travel: \$1300.00
Other travel related expenses: \$2500.00
Other research expenses: \$1000.00
Total Request: \$19800.00

Funding History

This project has not received any other funding. Proposals are currently pending with the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the Spencer Foundation. I have not received any prior funding from AIR.

Letter of Support from Dissertation Faculty Advisor

- [Letter of Support](#)