Proximity and Social Integration

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ABSTRACT
Research has linked integration to student persistence among college students. However, integration tends to be lower among commuter students, who make up a majority of college students. A separate body of research has linked schools to the formation of social ties. However, based on the role of proximity in shaping the likelihood of social tie formation, increased distance may decrease the formation of ties among students. Based on these findings, this study explores if physical proximity to campus influences integration into the campus community among college students. This study collected quantitative data about student participation, interaction, and proximity through a questionnaire distributed to students on a commuter campus. The findings did not support a correlation between proximity and integration. However, the data does show patterns related to these variables that may inform future research.

The focus of this study is to examine student integration into the campus community among commuter students. Integration refers to student involvement in the university's community, including academic and social activities (Ribera, Miller, and Dumford 2017). Both aspects are important for student success because they provide a sense of academic and social support, which can foster attachment to the campus community. As such, research has found that student integration influences the educational persistence of college students (Kirk and Lewis 2015; Ribera et al. 2017). Kirk and Lewis found that integration and a sense of community have a positive relationship with educational persistence. College students who feel more socially and academically integrated into their campus community are less likely to drop out of school and more likely to graduate. Therefore, integration is important in determining student retention and educational success.

Two factors that influence integration into the campus community are participation and interaction. Participation in campus events and ties to other members of the campus

community, such as peers and staff members, have been shown to support integration among students. As Ribera et al. (2017:549) explain, "[i]nvolving students early on in effective educational practices may help these students forge supportive academic and social relationships with members of the campus community and encourage positive intergroup dialogue among students from diverse backgrounds." Altogether, these factors are likely to create a feeling of social cohesion and belonging for students, leading to higher rates of persistence. However, students' integration varies based on several factors, including students' place of residency, on or off campus. Research has found that commuter students are less integrated into their educational institutions and feel a lower sense of attachment to the community (Kirk and Lewis 2013). Lower attachment can harm the educational success of commuter students and may lead to lower student retention at commuter campuses. This integration gap is significant because most college students live off campus and must commute to attend school (Kirk and Lewis 2013). Therefore, a substantial portion of students have a low retention rate, potentially leading to lower levels of educational success.

Although researchers have noted this lack of integration among commuter students, more research on the factors influencing this pattern is still needed. Research on commuter students and commuter campuses is more limited than research on non-commuter students and non-commuter campuses. Research has paid less attention to the issues that commuter students face and the factors that influence their educational experiences. Accordingly, this research aims to add to the current literature on commuter students and commuter campuses. This study examines the factors that shape commuter students' integration on commuter campuses. More specifically, it will explore if a student's proximity to campus influences their integration into the campus community. The dependent variable is integration into the campus community. Integration refers to participation in events and interactions with others on campus. Students are expected to build feelings of social support through interactions with other students in non-academic settings. Similarly, students are expected to build feelings of academic support through participation in academic activities and interaction with faculty.

Together, these measures are meant to gauge both academic and social involvement, which are key factors that determine feelings of integration.

The primary independent variable of interest is proximity to campus. Proximity refers to students' commute distance. Some other variables are also included as possible independent variables, such as commute time, commuter status, and mode of transportation. The hypothesis was that there would be a negative relationship between proximity and integration into the campus community. Therefore, interaction and participation are expected to decrease as commute distance increases. However, the study's findings do not support this hypothesis. The data analysis found that the relationship between proximity and integration was not statistically significant, which does not support a correlation between them. Despite these findings, the data revealed patterns about these variables. The data points toward a low level of integration among the respondents, most of whom were commuters. Furthermore, having to commute does appear to influence the amount of interaction among respondents based on participant responses but the extent of the influence is unknown based on the data within this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Proximity and Space

Hip, Corcoran, and Wickes (2014) explore the theory that physical proximity influences the likelihood of social cohesion and social tie formation by focusing on the impact of proximity, using the distance decay function as a theoretical basis. According to the distance decay hypothesis, "residents are most likely to form ties to those living near them, and this likelihood drops sharply when moving further away from the residence" (Hip et al. 2014:3). Based on this hypothesis, proximity is expected to influence social tie formation positively. Small and Adler (2019:115) examine the role of space in determining social ties and social integration through the relationship between social ties and proximity, explaining how physical proximity is widely studied as a variable that may influence social relations, noting that the "importance of propinquity to tie formation has been uncovered empirically many times." Findings also suggest the likelihood of forming social ties

is higher with closer physical proximity between people. These findings support the hypothesis of the distance decay function with empirical backing for the relationship between physical proximity and the likelihood of social tie formation. As the theory hypothesizes, closer proximity is correlated with the formation of social ties.

Research has also shown the importance of spaces that promote social tie formation, with Small and Adler (2019:118) writing, "studies have found that participation in establishments is associated with the characteristics of the ties formed." These studies have found that participation is linked to stronger ties formed because of homophily. Establishments that produce stronger ties include schools, indicating that schools are sites that will promote social tie formation. In a study focusing on neighborhood features and community ties, Hip et al. (2014) found support that proximity to establishments that promote or dissuade social tie formation also influences social ties. Since Hip et al. (2014) find that proximity to these establishments influences the likelihood of tie formation, the researchers expected that those who live farther away from campus are less likely to form social ties and, therefore, be less integrated into the campus community.

Integration

Ribera et al. (2017) explore the relationship between a sense of community and participation by analyzing quantitative survey data. The authors draw upon secondary data from first-year students attending forty-four different 4-year colleges. The study focused on participation and college characteristics as independent variables and feelings of belonging as the independent variable. Ribera et al. (2017:560) found that along "with one co-curricular activity (serving as a student leader), participating in a learning community and engaging in a service-learning project was found to be positively related to students' sense of peer belonging and institutional acceptance." Therefore, participation in activities on campus is associated with increased feelings of belonging. Similarly, Procentese, Gatti, and Falange (2019:258) used survey data to examine the same variables, finding that "individuals' participation is predicted by their emotional and affective bond to the community and

representations about the relationships and responsibility-taking within it, via this emotional bond." Unlike Ribera et al. (2017), Procentese et al. (2019) used participation as their independent variable and bond to the community as the dependent variable. Although the direction of this relationship remains unclear, the findings support a correlation between this set of variables. Based on these findings, Procentese et al. (2019) included participation and sense of belonging as measures of integration, although it focused more on participation.

Factors Influencing Integration

Persistence theory understands "'integration' and 'patterns of interaction' as two key components that distinguish students who persist with their education from those who do not" (Kirk and Lewis 2015:49). Kirk and Lewis (2015) examined how a student's integration into their educational institution is influential on student persistence through how different variables influence integration at a commuter campus. The study uses a mixed method design, with a questionnaire portion and a focus group study. The findings indicate that students who are more integrated are more likely to continue their education than those who are less integrated. However, commuter status influences how integrated students are. Kirk and Lewis (2015:54) find that students "who lived on campus reported higher [collegiate sense of community] CSOC than those living off-campus." This finding indicates that commuter students were less likely to feel integrated into their campus communities. Based on this finding, it is expected that there will be a low level of integration and sense of community from commuter students.

Kirk and Lewis (2015) also examined the role of other identities in influencing integration, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and marital status; however, the study found that only sexual orientation is a predictor of integration. These variables provide insight into factors influencing integration among all students, including those who commute. One finding explains lower integration and a sense of community among commuting students. Based on qualitative data from a case study, Kirk and Lewis (2015:56) found time to be an influence, and these "time gaps were more pronounced among commuting students who

acknowledged limitations with transportation and scheduling." This finding points to extra time constraints faced by students who do not live on campus compared to those who do. Constraints include the time spent commuting, which can be longer based on commute distance or method of transportation.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

The main research question is: does proximity influence integration into the campus community among commuter students? Two different bodies of research have influenced the research question: research on space and college students' sense of community. The focus on proximity is based on literature that examines how space influences the formation of social ties. This study will expand the distance decay hypothesis to examine proximity to campus. The distance decay function examines the role of geographical proximity in shaping the formation of social ties. According to the hypothesis, the closer the proximity between a person and a space, the more likely they are to form social ties within that space. The study aims to examine if proximity will influence the social ties formed on campus and student integration by applying the distance decay hypothesis to distance from campus. Based on the distance decay hypothesis, it is expected that students who live closer to campus will be more likely to form social ties on campus and therefore, will be more integrated within the campus community. The study measures proximity as the distance between where students live and their campus based on commute distance in miles, including commute time as a separate measure of proximity. The findings of Ribera et al. (2017) and Procentese et al. (2019) informed the conceptualization of integration into the campus community. Both studies found a relationship between social ties to the campus community and participation. Furthermore, Ribera et al. (2017) noted that participation and interaction shaped social tie formation between students, strengthening the feeling of community. As a result, the study included participation and interaction as a measure of student integration.

H0: proximity to campus will not impact integration into the campus community. H1: proximity will have a negative relationship with integration. H2: proximity will have a negative

relationship to interaction with students. H3: proximity will have a negative relationship to interaction with staff members. H4: proximity will have a negative relationship to participation in events on campus. The null hypothesis, H0, predicts no correlation between proximity and integration is expected. Based on the literature on proximity, physical proximity is expected to influence social tie formation, therefore as students are farther from campus, they will be less integrated. Since the study operationalized integration as interaction with others and participation in campus events, H1 will be analyzed through proximity's correlation with the measures of integration.

An alternative hypothesis is that only commuter status will affect student integration. It is possible that there will be no difference in integration based on proximity to campus between commuter students. The difference may only be between commuter students and non-commuter students. It is also possible that a separate variable, such as responsibilities outside of school, influences this relationship. As Kirk and Lewis (2015:49) note, "[m]ost commuter students are faced with additional responsibilities beyond just being a student." Responsibilities such as work can lead to less free time for students, decreasing the time that they spend on campus. As a result, these students would be less likely to interact with others or participate in events on campus. Accordingly, they would also be less integrated into the campus community due to their lack of social ties with peers and staff members.

METHODS

Data

This project emerged from a secondary analysis of survey data collected from a target population of students enrolled at commuter campuses. The sampling frame for the original data collection was students at California State University-Los Angeles, since the university is a commuter campus serving the greater metropolitan Los Angeles area; of note, the university also has a large female population. The sampling process focused on recruiting students enrolled in required undergraduate courses within the College of Natural and Social Sciences (NSS). The sample was recruited through non-probability sampling. The

recruitment process involved emailing professors and asking them to share the recruitment flyer with their students. Initially, the recruitment process focused on contacting professors who were teaching seminar courses with high numbers of students. However, this later started to involve professors teaching courses with multiple open sections. Those who agreed shared the recruitment flyer by posting it on Canvas or distributing a printed copy in class. Emailing professors began on October 12, 2023, and ended on October 22, 2023. Out of 37 professors who were emailed, 5 replied and agreed to share the recruitment flyer with their class. Overall, professors' responsiveness was low, making it difficult to gather participants for the questionnaire. The questionnaire was open to from October 12, 2023, to October 31, 2023. Altogether, the sampling process took 20 days to complete. The response rate was also low among students, with most students from these courses not taking the questionnaire. As a result, the final sample included 37 students, much lower than the targeted sample of 100 respondents. Of the 37 responses, only 30 were valid. The sample was drawn from classes in different schools within the College of NSS. Most of the respondents were commuter students; 4 lived on campus, and 30 did not live on campus, which was expected due to the demographics of the university. 25 respondents were female, 9 were male, 3 were non-binary; the larger proportion of female respondents was expected due to the school's demographics. The sample included 10 freshmen, 18 sophomores, 4 juniors, and 3 seniors; characteristics which were also expected since the sample was drawn from lower division courses with higher enrollment.

Methods

The data from this study is quantitative data collected through responses to a questionnaire. At the beginning of the questionnaire, respondents were presented with an informed consent form, ensuring that participants freely gave consent. The survey also asked participants if they were over the age of 18. Those who answered "no" were not shown any of the following questions from the questionnaire. The following questions were ordered based on the topic. The topics were interaction and ties to other students, participation in campus activities, interaction and

ties to staff and faculty members, and demographic questions. The questionnaire consisted of 31 questions, including 30 closed-ended questions and 1 open-ended question. The open-ended question allowed respondents to type in their commute time in minutes. The closed-ended questions consisted of Likert scale items, multiple-choice items, select-all-that-apply items, and slider items with set parameters.

Questions collecting information about integration, the dependent variable, gathered data related to interaction and participation on campus. First, participants were asked about interaction with other students. Frequency of interaction was on a scale ranging from "every day" to "never." Students' likeliness to seek or offer support to other students was on a scale ranging from "extremely likely" to "extremely unlikely." Participants were also asked about interaction with staff members, with students' likeliness to seek academic or personal support from staff being on a scale ranging from "extremely likely" to "extremely unlikely." Participants were asked how often they participated in events on campus, including club events, office hours, departmental events, and campus-wide events. Participation is a discrete variable using a slider to indicate the number of times students participated in each event in a semester.

There were also questions within the questionnaire that measure the independent variable, proximity. The study measures proximity to campus as distance to campus in miles. Commute time was measured in minutes. Respondents were also asked if proximity influences their behavior. Perceived influence of proximity is split into two dichotomous variables, asking participants to choose "Yes" or "No" to indicate if proximity influenced participation or interaction on campus.

After the data collection period, the data was transferred to SPSS and cleaned. The variable values for the slider questions and select-all-that-apply questions had to be manually inserted in SPSS. The variable measures were also adjusted for each item when needed. After cleaning the data, data analysis for this project began. Secondary data analysis was conducted through cross-tabulations and chi-square tests. Data analysis focused on examining the correlation between independent and dependent variables.

RESULTS

The data analysis consisted of chi-square tests and cross-tabulations of the data collected. The chi-square tests aimed to measure the relationship between proximity and the study's measures of integration. Chi-square tests whether there is a significant association between two categorical variables, such as nominal or ordinal. Unlike regression, chi-square testing does not model the relationship between a dependent and independent variable. A total of three chi-square tests were conducted. These tests focused on proximity and interaction with peers, proximity and interaction with staff, and proximity and participation. The chi-square tests include Pearson chi-square, likelihood ratio, and linear-by-linear association. Within these tests, a significance of <.05 is considered statistically significant and rejects the null hypothesis. Conversely, a significance of >.05 is statistically insignificant and does not reject the null hypothesis.

The first analysis examined the relationship between proximity and interaction with peers. The cross-tabulation was run on items that measured proximity and the frequency of respondents spending time with their classmates in their free time. The results of the analysis on the 30 valid cases are included in Table 1 and Table 2 (see Appendix). The chi-square value was 64.750 with a p-value of .173, indicating that the relationship between the variables is not statistically significant. The likelihood ratio value was 44.206 with a p-value of .851. Finally, the linear-by-linear association value was .096, with a p-value of .757. None of these tests found a significant relationship between the variables and the analysis supports the null hypothesis that there would be no relationship between proximity and interaction with peers on campus.

The second analysis examined the correlation between proximity and interaction with staff members. Another cross-tabulation was run on the items measuring proximity and the likelihood that respondents would seek support from staff about academic concerns. Table 2 and Table 3 show the results of the analysis. There were 30 valid cases in this analysis. The chi-square value was 41.510, with a p-value of .579. The likelihood ratio value was 42.770, with a p-value of .524. Finally, the linear-by-linear association value was 2.066, with a p-value of .151. Again,

none of the tests found a significant relationship between the variables, reinforcing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between proximity and interaction with staff members on campus.

For the final analysis, the data was examined through another cross-tabulation. This analysis focused on proximity and participation in events on campus. The cross-tabulation was run on data collected about proximity and those who indicated participating in no campus activities. Table 5 and Table 6 show the results of this analysis. There were 30 valid cases included in the analysis. The chi-square was 9.225 with a p-value of .601. The likelihood ratio value was 12.052, with a p-value of .360. The linear-by-linear association value was 1.023, with a significance of .312. None of these values were statistically significant, meaning the null hypothesis could not be rejected since there was no relationship between proximity and participation in events on campus.

Based on these three analyses, a null relationship exists between proximity and integration into the campus community. Analysis found that none of the measures of integration were correlated with proximity. However, an examination of the responses shows some patterns. The data indicates that respondents consider their commute to influence the amount of time they spend interacting with others and participating in events on campus. 24 of the respondents answered that proximity influences how often they interact with other students. Furthermore, the data shows that many of the respondents have low levels of integration into their campus community, with 22 respondents answering that they did not participate in any activities on campus. 7 respondents indicated that they participated in office hours. Finally, 17 respondents answered that they never spent time with their classmates during their free time.

Several limitations impacted the representativeness of this study. Due to the sampling method the study employed the research findings may have limited generalizability to California State University students. Since the study used non-probability sampling to recruit the sample, it is less representative of the students than a sample recruited through probability sampling. The sampling frame also focused on general requirement courses,

which first and second-year students tend to take. Kirk and Lewis (2015) found that the number of years students have attended their school influenced their integration. Therefore, it is likely that there are differences in integration among first and second-year students compared to students who have attended the school longer.

Another limitation is that the study only drew its sample from one campus. The demographics of California State University Los Angeles may have influenced the findings, since the university primarily serves students of color, with a large Hispanic population, which is not representative of all commuter campuses. Students of different ethno-racial backgrounds may face different circumstances that influence their integration in school, resulting in the collection of different responses. A more diverse sample of students could help determine if differences in integration exist between various ethno-racial groups. The small sample size also greatly limits the validity and representativeness of the sample and the resulting data. However, bootstrapping the data could strengthen the statistical analysis, which I failed to account for while analyzing the data. Bootstrapping samples from the existing data to estimate the properties of a larger sample to provide a more accurate statistic for small samples. Due to these issues, there is limited representation for the study's target population, commuter students.

DISCUSSION

The study examined the correlation between proximity and commuter student integration into the campus community. To answer the research question, there is no correlation between proximity and integration into the campus community among commuter students. The data analysis showed no correlation between the study's measures of integration and proximity. However, the data did show an overall lack of integration among respondents. Most respondents answered that they did not participate in any of the activities that were listed in the questionnaire. Furthermore, many also said that they did not interact with other students in their free time at all. Overall, there was support for low levels of participation and interaction among the respondents, which researchers should examine in the future.

It is possible that other variables may influence the correlation between integration and commuting. As Kirk and Lewis (2015) find, time may be an influence that lowers the integration of commuter students. The combination of time spent on class work, commute time, and other responsibilities reduces the amount of time that commuter students spend on campus. Spending less time on campus makes it less likely for them to engage in behaviors that promote integration and a sense of community. Another explanation is a lack of interest in integration among commuter students. Kirk and Lewis (2015) also note that some commuter students may not be interested in fostering an attachment to their educational institution, choosing to spend little time participating in events or interacting with others on campus.

This study contributes to the limited existing literature on integration among commuter students. The research explores the relationship between integration and commuter status by examining if there were differences in integration due to commute distance. This focus on proximity also adds to the research on the influence of space on the formation of social ties. Based on this research, the study applied the distance decay function to a student's proximity to campus, but the results did not support the hypothesized relationship. Although proximity was not correlated, future research can contribute to the understanding of the relationship between commuting and student integration on campus. Based on the data, many respondents answered that their commute time influenced the amount of time they spent interacting with others. Although this study could not add to the understanding of this relationship, future research should explore the impact of commuting on students.

Furthermore, despite the research findings, it would be worth revisiting this question with a better sampling method. Future studies on this topic should use more representative sampling methods, such as random sampling. Acquiring a larger sample should also be a priority for future research. The low number of responses that were collected limited the findings of this study. In the cross-tabulations, many of the cells were empty due to the low sample size. Researchers may find a different relationship among these variables with a larger and more representative sample. Overall, it was difficult to examine patterns

of behavior with the low number of responses, lowering the validity of the study's findings. Using a different sampling method may have resulted in a larger response rate. The sampling frame used was narrow, involving only students enrolled in lower-division classes. A broader sampling frame that includes the whole student body may have improved the response rate. Furthermore, including other college campuses in the sampling frame could have also improved the sample size and representativeness of the sample by including a larger and more diverse student body from which to collect responses.

In conclusion, the relationship between commuter status and integration on campus still needs further examination. The focus on commuter students is significant because much research on college students tends to focus on non-commuter students, despite commuters being a large portion of the student population. A better understanding of integration can lead to a better understanding of student retention and success among commuter students. The more that is known about integration, the better that educational institutions can meet the needs of commuter students. As the commuter population increases, it is important that these students do not fall behind based on their place of residence or any responsibilities that reduce the time they spend on campus.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: Cross-tabulation for Peer Interaction and Proximity

How far do you live from campus? - Distance in miles * In your free time, how often do you spend time with classmates? Crosstabulation

Count

		In your free time, how often do you spend time with classmates?						
		Daily	Multiple times a week	Once a week	Once a month	Occasionally	Never	Total
How far do you live from campus? - Distance in miles	3.00	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	4.00	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
	5.00	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	6.00	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
	7.00	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	8.00	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
	10.00	1	1	0	0	0	3	5
	11.00	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
	12.00	0	0	0	0	3	1	4
	13.00	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	15.00	0	0	1	0	1	2	4
	20.00	0	1	0	0	1	2	4
Total		2	3	3	1	7	14	30

Table 2: Chi-Square Tests for Peer Interaction and Proximity

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	64.750[a]	55	.173
Likelihood Ratio	44.206	55	.851
Linear-by-Linear Association	.096	1	.757
N of Valid Cases	30		

a. 72 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

Table 2: Cross-tabulation for Interaction with Staff and Proximity

How far do you live from campus? - Distance in miles * How likely are you to seek support from staff about academic concerns? Crosstabulation

Count

		How likely are you to seek support from staff about academic concerns?					
		Extremely likely	Somewhat likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Extremely unlikely	Total
How far do you live from campus? - Distance in miles	3.00	0	0	0	1	0	1
	4.00	0	1	0	1	0	2
	5.00	0	1	0	0	0	1
	6.00	0	0	1	1	0	2
	7.00	0	1	0	0	0	1
	8.00	0	0	2	0	0	2
	10.00	1	2	0	2	0	5
	11.00	2	0	0	0	1	3
	12.00	1	1	1	0	1	4
	13.00	0	1	0	0	0	1
	15.00	1	2	1	0	0	4
	20.00	1	1	2	0	0	4
Total		6	10	7	5	2	30

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests for Interaction with Staff and Proximity

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	41.510[a]	44	.579
Likelihood Ratio	42.770	44	.524
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.066	1	.151
N of Valid Cases	30		

a. 60 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .07.

Table 4: Cross-tabulation for Participation in Activities and Proximity

How far do you live from campus? - Distance in miles * Select each of the following activities that you participate in. None Crosstabulation

Count

		Select each of the following activities that you participate in. None		
		None not selected	None selected	Total
How far do you live from campus? - Distance in miles	3.00	0	1	1
	4.00	1	1	2
	5.00	1	0	1
	6.00	1	1	2
	7.00	0	1	1
	8.00	0	2	2
	10.00	2	3	5
	11.00	2	1	3
	12.00	1	3	4
	13.00	0	1	1
	15.00	2	2	4
	20.00	0	4	4
Total		10	20	30

Table 5: Chi-Square Test for Participation in Activities and Proximity

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.225[a]	11	.601
Likelihood Ratio	12.053	11	.360
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.023	1	.312
N of Valid Cases	30		

a. 24 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .33.

Carla Ocampo (She/Her) is a second-year graduate student in the Department of Sociology at California State University, Los Angeles. Her primary research interests include race and ethnicity, immigration, and political attitudes. She is currently working on her thesis, researching policy preferences related to climate-related migration. In 2024, she received the Golden Eagle Paper Award from the Sociology Department for "Proximity and Student Integration." The paper examines the relationship between commute distance and student integration in the campus community at Cal State LA.

Featured Award-Winning Paper: We are proud to recognize "Proximity and Social Integration" by Carla Ocampo as the Award-Winning Paper of the Golden Eagle Sociology Student Paper Competition in Spring 2024. This paper was selected by the Student Affairs Committee of the Department of Sociology as it stood out as the strongest among a pool of excellent submissions. Congratulations to Carla for this well-deserved recognition!