Long-Term Effects of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Civil Rights Pilgrimage

Kelly Anthony, David Edwardson, Jacie Jones, Cecelia Lewis (Lead), Madeleine Vruwink (Lead), Nicholas Walkowiak, and Faculty Advisor Jodi Thesing-Ritter

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

IRB Number: WALKOWNJ7536117162018

Background

The Civil Rights Pilgrimage (CRP) is an immersion experience that has been offered 20 times with 1206 total participants available for study. Participants go on a ten-day pilgrimage, visiting key historical locations of the civil rights movement, touring museums, and speaking with influential foot soldiers. Anecdotally, many participants report a life-changing experience, bringing what they learned back to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and into their own lives. In order to understand the CRP's impact, we will investigate how or if the CRP has changed participants' lives one to ten years after the experience by acquiring descriptive research. This research supports the claim that cultural immersion experiences have a positive and lasting impact (https://www.aacu.org). Immersion experiences help participants gain abstract understanding skills like thinking outside the box, called higher order thinking (Prawat, 1991).

Political Engagement Scale
Activist programs with a focus on social justice educate participants on how to apply learning through civic engagement (Astin, 1993). The political engagement scale measures participants' attitudes and willingness to support social justice oriented causes, and how campus experiences affect activism (Dolittle & Faul, 2013). We predicted that the CRP's long-term effects would also emulate themes of social action and civic engagement.

Modern Racism Scale
The Modern Racism Scale (MRS) is perhaps the most widely-used measure of modern racism (McConahay, 1986). The MRS was developed to measure subtle forms of racism that are prevalent in the United States today, and includes questions that indirectly relate to racial attitudes (Kim, 2006). We predicted that the CRP would encourage anti-racist behavior and attitudes.

Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale
The Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (M-GUDS) measures social attitudes regarding cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of Universality-Diversity Orientation (UDO) (Fuertes et al., 2000). The scale examines empathy and connectedness through shared experiences with others (Ponterotto, 2010). Research regarding diversity using the M-GUDS shows higher scores among those in inclusive settings (May, 2012). Our research utilizes the M-GUDS scale to evaluate respondents' perceptions on racial identity, prejudice, and diversity.

Method

This research project assessed CRP participants 3 months to 10 years after they went on the trip. Participants completed the Political Engagement Scale, the Modern Racism Scale, the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale, and qualitative questions on how they believe the trip impacted their lives. Researchers distributed the survey through an email list, and past Civil Rights Pilgrimage Facebook groups. We did descriptive statistics and frequencies on all data, independent sample t-tests on all data, one way ANOVA's for the activism orientation scale and M-GUDS data, and reliability analysis on all data to determine validity.
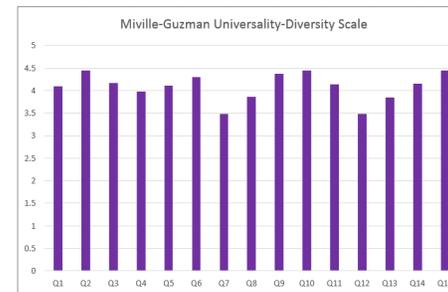
Results

Activism Orientation Scale Key

14. Engage in physical confrontation at political rally
16. Engage in a political activity in which you feared that some of your possessions would be damaged
17. Engage in an illegal act as part of a political protest
28. Block access to a building or public area with your body
34. Campaign by phone for a political candidate
35. Engage in any political activity in which you fear for your personal safety
6. Attend an informational meeting of a political group
11. Present facts to contest another person's social or political statement
22. Send a letter or email about a political issue to a public official
27. Try to change a friend's or acquaintance's mind about a social or political issue
30. Try to change a relative's mind about a social or political issue
32. Keep track of the views of members of Congress regarding an issue important to you
9. Go out of your way to collect information on a social or political issue
13. Vote in a non-presidential federal, state, or local election
18. Confront jokes, statements, or innuendoes that opposed a particular group's cause
19. Boycott a product for political reasons
23. Attend a talk on a particular group's social or political concerns
25. Sign a petition for a political cause
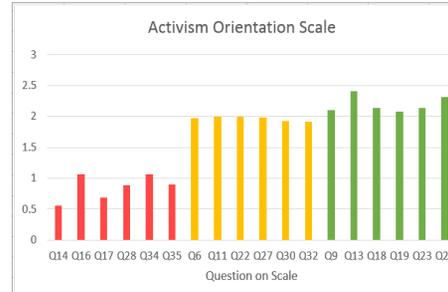
The above graph illustrates participants likelihood of being politically engaged after the immersion experience of the Civil Rights Pilgrimage. The green bars show the highest mean scores, the yellow bars show the second highest mean scores, and the red bars show the lowest mean scores on the Activism Orientation Scale.

Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale

Q1: I would like to join an organization that emphasizes getting to know people from different countries
Q2: Persons with disabilities can teach me things I could not learn elsewhere
Q3 (R): Getting to know someone of another race is generally an uncomfortable experience for me
Q4: I would like to go to dances that feature music from other countries
Q5: I can best understand someone after I get to know how he/she is both similar to and different from me
Q6 (R): I am only at ease with people of my race
Q7: I often listen music of other cultures
Q8: Knowing how a person differs from me greatly enhances our friendships
Q9 (R): It's really hard for me to feel close to a person from another race
Q10: I am interested in learning about the many cultures that have existed in this world
Q11: In getting to know someone, I like knowing both how he/she differs from me and is similar to me
Q12 (R): It is very important that a friend agrees with me on most issues
Q13: I attend events where I might get to know people from different racial backgrounds
Q14: Knowing about the different experiences of other people helps me understand my own problems better
Q15 (R): I often feel irritated by persons of a different race
(R) = Reverse Scored

The above graph shows the results from the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (M-GUDS). The scale measures social attitudes by using a 5 point Likert scale.
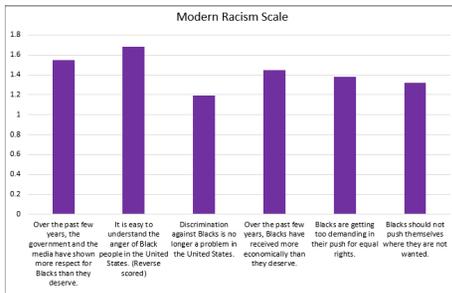
The above graph shows the mean scores of participant's endorsement of items on the modern racism scale. A lower score indicates lower endorsement of racist ideologies.
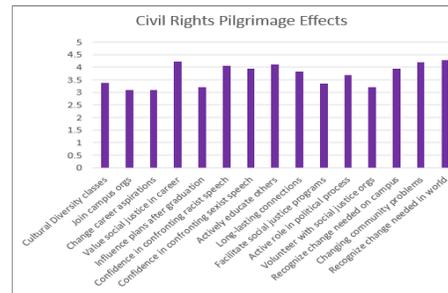
The above graph shows the results from researcher generated questions to see the effects of taking the Civil Rights Pilgrimage. It is scored from 0 to 5, 0 being extremely unlikely and 5 being extremely likely.

Discussion

Of the participants who responded to our survey, 77.5% were women, 21.9% were men, and 0.6% other; 74.4% were white and 25.6% were students of color.

We divided the Activism Orientation Scale into two subscales to match Corning and Myers' research. The subscales were divided by the content of the total question, high risk (7) and conventional (28). Five of the six lowest scored responses were a part of the high risk subscale, which is expected because the high risk subscale involves a form of violence and the CRP had a focus on non-violence. The six highest scored responses were all a part of the conventional subscale. This shows that the participants on the CRP are more likely to engage in conventional methods of political activism than engage in high risk methods. Race comparisons had a statistically significant difference between white individuals and people of color for five of the conventional activism subscale items. White individuals were more likely to keep track of Congress member views on a social issue of importance (p^2 =.004), use facts to contest social or political statement (p^2 =.002), confront speech that opposed a group's cause (p^2=.001), attend a political group's meeting (p^2=.000), and attend a regularly planned political organization's meeting (p^2.003). We predicted these outcomes because the Civil Rights Pilgrimage was originally created for white individuals to confront their privilege.

Five out of the fifteen questions in the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale were reverse scored (3, 6, 9, 12, and 15). Our top five scores were as follows: Question 15, when reverse scored, had an average score of 4.45. Question 10 also had a 4.45. Question 2, which was also reverse scored, had an average score of 4.44. Question 9, also reverse scored, averaged to 4.27. Question 3, also reverse scored, averaged to 4.16. These results are possibly due to social desirability bias, since four out of the five questions were reverse scored. This is a possible limitation of the scale.

Results show that participants of the CRP demonstrate an overall low score on the Modern Racism Scale, with means ranging from 1.19 to 1.68. These scores show that the CRP has a lasting positive effect on racist attitudes of participants in that the low means translate to low levels of racism. Question two, "It is easy to understand the anger of Black people in the United States", is reverse scored.

All fifteen questions in regards to the Civil Rights Pilgrimage were rated a three or above on a five-point scale. The highest ratings resulted from three questions regarding value of social justice in career, recognition that change is needed in the world, and changing community problems. Our results were as hypothesized, and the means were found are all over 3.

For further analysis, we intend to compare past student coordinator outcomes to participant outcomes. We also would like to compare Spring vs. inter trip outcomes, as well as outcomes of participants who went on the trip in the first couple of years and those who went on the trip in the later years. We also will be comparing the original post trip surveys taken by the participants with this longitudinal survey to better match participants to see how their outcomes have changed over the years.

References

Astin, A. (1993). Diversity and Multiculturalism on the Campus. Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 25(2), 44-49. doi: 10.1080/00091383.1993.9940617

Bowen, L. (2005). Engaging Diversity on the Homogeneous Campus: The Power of Immersion Experiences. Diversity Digest, 8(5).

Corning, A. F., Myers, D. J., Individual Orientation toward Engagement in Social Action. Political Psychology, 23(4), 703-729. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3792564

Dooolittle A. & Faul A. (2013). Civic Engagement Scale; A Validation Study. Sage Journals, 1-7. doi: 10.1177/2158244013495542

Fuertes, J. N., Miville, M. L., Mohr, J. J., Sedlacek, W. E., & Gretchen, D. (2000). Factor Structure and Short Form of the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale. Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 33(3), 157-69.

Kim, K. (2006). Measures of racial prejudice: modern racism scale. In Y. Jackson (Ed.), Encyclopedia of multicultural psychology (pp. 295-295). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi: 10.4135/9781412952668.n146

Kottke, J. (2011). Additional Evidence for the Short Form of the Universality-Diversity Scale. Personality and Individual Differences, 50(4), 464-469. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2010.11.008

May, Cynthia. (2012). An Investigation of Attitude Change in Inclusive College Classes Involving Young Adults with an Intellectual Disability. Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities, 9(4), 240-246. Retrieved from https://cpls-m-w2.wpmundn.com/blogs.coile.edu/dist/6/239/files/2007/07/JIPPD_pdf1.pdf

McConahay, J. B. (1986). Modern racism, ambivalence, and the Modern Racism Scale. In J. F. Dovidio & S. L. Gaertner (Eds.), Prejudice, discrimination, and racism (pp. 91-125). San Diego, CA, US: Academic Press.

Miville, Marie L., Gelso, Charles J., Pannu, Raji, Liu, Will, Touradji, Pegah, Holloway, Paulina, & Fuertes, James. (1999). Appreciating similarities and valuing differences: The Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 46(3), 291-307. Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.proxy.uwec.edu/docview/577082010?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo

Ponterotto, J. (2010). Multicultural Personality: An Evolving Theory of Optimal Functioning in Culturally Heterogeneous Societies. The Counseling Psychologist, 38(5), 714-758. doi: 10.1177/0011000009359203

Prawat, R.S. (1991). The Value of Ideas: The Immersion Approach to the Development of Thinking. Educational Researcher, 20(2), 3-10+30. doi: 10.2307/1176828

Acknowledgements