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Introduction

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Introduction

Welcome to Volume 15 of *Major Themes in Economics*. All papers in *Major Themes* are written by senior economics majors at the University of Northern Iowa. Complete funding for this issue was provided by a generous contribution from Ron Rolighed, '89, a past author whose article appeared in 1989 in a previous incarnation of *Major Themes*.

Does the major a woman chooses in college have any relationship to the number of children she eventually has? Economic theory suggests that it might. **Emily Scholtes** investigates the question. Her Poisson regression finds evidence that in many cases, differences in field of study may help explain differences in fertility.

To what extent do childcare costs deter women from working? As more women work, the demand and hence the price of childcare rises. That, in turn, may discourage women from working. **Kirsten Knoblach** looks at this issue with an ordinary least squares regression. She finds that the relationship between women's labor force participation and childcare costs is nonlinear.

Many university budgets are under strain and some suggest that expenditures on athletics should be cut. Defenders of athletics have a variety of arguments, one of which is that success in athletics increases the number of applications to the school. **Andrew Dykstra** uses regression analysis to investigate the claim for Football Bowl Subdivision schools. He finds that, at best, success in athletics has a small effect on applications.

The National Hockey League is known for violence. But does that mean that teams will pay players specifically because they are especially good at committing violent acts? **Mitch Zimmerman** uses cluster analysis and ordinary least squares regression to find out. He finds that the NHL's "enforcers" are paid above what their puck-handling skills would justify.

As the United States national debt balloons out of control, people have suggested various schemes to rein it in. One suggestion is to implement the 1995 Balanced Budget Amendment, which Congress almost passed. **James Harbaugh** dissects the amendment, paying special attention to the views of two prominent economists, James Buchanan and Charles Schultze. Harbaugh's discussion makes it clear that there are no easy answers to this pressing question.

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