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# VOLUNTARY SERFDOM: AN IDEOLOGICAL JOURNEY INTO DUAL-CLASS LABOR CONFLICTS, AND POSSIBLE WORKERS' SOLUTIONS

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**ABSTRACT**

This article identifies my paradigm shift toward greater acceptance of conflict and alienation sociologies from Marx and from Seeman. Having never been a follower of their sets of ideas, ample evidence has been found in recreational and sociological literatures, and at work, to support the contention that they are more important that I had previously thought. This conclusion is derived from reviewing a variety of novels, poems, a travelogue, sociological findings on dual- and antagonistic-class structures, data about alienation, and putting a theoretical twist to Merton's goals-means model of adaptation.

Nothing like division of labor.
(Harriett Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* 1984)

## INTRODUCTION

I have hardly been a great fan of certain elements of conflict and alienation sociologies because I never really felt deprived. When I was young my family owned a cartage company in Chicago and we lived in a historic suburban village. Drafted into the army, I had cozy duty in Texas when other troops went to Viet Nam. In college my expenses were covered by veterans' assistance programs, graduate and research assistantships, and separate teaching contracts. Without ever having a tenurable job, I was published, sat on M.A. thesis committees, was active in sociology associations, and was an Associate Editor for a journal which encourages creative sociology.

In spite of these modest successes I left higher education due the uncertainty of contracts from one term to another, where paychecks were unevenly distributed, in pursuit of other opportunities. My current employment in a privately-owned and non-union factory, and reflection on my twenty-five-something years as a scholastic outsider, have enticed me to rethink my favorite sociologies, forging a finer understanding of, and appreciation for, the conflict and alienation perspectives in sociology as they are related to the real presence of a dual-class and tension-based bourgeoisie-proletariat structure with its separate outlook of "rank has its privileges." The dramatic changes in employment core values and treatment of workers serve as the basis for this ideological journey.

Besides the normal library research for a project like this, there were two related methods of gathering information. The first of these was ethnography, "the native's point of view" (Harris 1968 572), which consisted of field observations and conversations with my fellow workers. This method is in agreement with the emic tradition in socio-cultural anthropology wherein testimony is acquired from a speaker who uses the voice of the "I" or the first-person singular. However, since the orator is often untrained in contextual analysis the researcher puts the idiographic accounts into nomethetic frames of reference as the etic heritage of anthropology allows (Geyer 2001; Harris 1968).

The second method of investigation for this article was the use of autoethnography or "reflective observation" (Forsyth & Palmer 1999), an "interior vantage point" (Hummel 1994), and "opportunistic research" (Reimer 1977; Ronai-Rambo & Ellis 1989). This "complete-member-researcher" method (Adler & Adler 1987; Ronai-Rambo & Ellis 1989), the joining of the actor-orientation and the observer-orientation as the combined voices of the first- and the third-person singular, allows us to view the world of the "I" and the "the ..." in a variety of ways. We can walk with my good friend Dick Hummel when he engages in, and writes about, blood sports as "I, the hunter-scholar." We can sit in a nightclub and watch dancers hustle customers as "I, the table dancer-sociologist" (Ronai-Rambo & Ellis 1989). We can sit in a room and listen as a sports writer attends weekly meetings with his dying former sociology professor as "I, the reawakened-student" (Albom 1997). We can eavesdrop on the customers of a restaurant in Chicago's Hyde Park district as they tell each tall tales, friendly lies, and solve the world's problems over coffee and food (Duneier 1992). Finally, we can ride with an outlaw motorcycle gang by reading about the experiences of "I, the biker-journalist" (Thompson 1967). This *analytic-experiential* and *inclusion* method of data-

gathering is in accord with a famous invitation for the sociologist to take an unfamiliar look at a familiar world (Berger 1963) - one wherein the investigator is first a participant in society, who then becomes an invigorated spectator whose own observations become the objects of study.

There are four facets to this study which lead to its successful completion. There is a need to identify how dual-class structures have been presented in the mass and popular media, for two reasons: First, it is through such entertainment outlets that many of the public's perceptions of social stratification are derived; and second, those mediated realities lend support to the arguments made at the end of this article. Then, specific sociological interpretations of class data are offered through the writings of scholars like Weber (1978) and Edwards (1979), with targeted emphases placed on the contributions of Marx (1959) and Seeman (1959, 2001) which identify various dimensions of workers' economic alienation. These debilitating experiences are discussed in detail because factory workers are subjected to varieties of devaluation and social indifference by an owner-managerial social class. The data about alienation are followed by identifying the means by which workers can adjust to a harsh environment, using the assorted methods of adaptation offered by Merton (1968). The body of the article is concluded with summary and cautious remarks about the presence and outcomes of the tensions between the "haves" and the "have-nots." The assembly of arguments begins by providing evidence from classical and contemporary literatures, as well as visual media, which underline the contention that there are many and varied forms of criteria for dual-class stratified systems.

## RECREATIONAL SOURCE EVIDENCE

All literature reviews are undertaken with the purpose of supporting the author's point of view. With that in mind, let me remind the reader that social classes are not just categorical differences in lifestyles led by associations of people. If that were the case then the divisions would exist on a horizontal plane as simple nominal classifications. However, when some sort of *moral worth* or *social importance* is assigned to the groupings they are turned ninety degrees, a vertical angle to the original plane, now existing as ordinal categories - hence socially stratified.

The pieces of work used here do not represent all possible identifications of social-class systems; instead, they were chosen because they offer examples of bipolar arrangements. The search for evidence was entertaining because I had to locate appropriate passages in books I had already read, and then find additional confirmation in new publications. The illustrations come from a variety of sources including general and thematic novels, poetry, a travelogue, a book about sports, and several movies and television shows as they collectively identify the universality and the diversity of two-dimensional class structures. So, just who are these storytellers who have the audacity to be sociologists *sine qua non*, and what are the shows which have the gumption to teach sociology outside the classroom?

Some of the writers who were selected for quotation include such noted Euro-Russian authors as Victor Hugo of *Les Miserables*; Fyodor Dostoyevsky who wrote *Crime and Punishment*; Leo Tolstoy who composed the short story "Master and Man;" and the controversial social conscience of Victorian England, Rudyard Kipling, who masterminded the poem "The Ballad of East and West." Reliance is also placed on Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Theodore Roosevelt's exploits from *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*, as well as Nordhoff and Hall's trilogy of books about the mutiny aboard the H.M.S. *Bounty*. Unfortunately, only snippets from these volumes can be used because of space limitations, but additional sociology can be found in them.

Four thematic novels are also reviewed, and they include Stowe's book, again, Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*, as well as Alexander Waugh's *Island in the Sun*, all of which are woven around racial politics. Then, Leon Uris' *Trinity* is concerned with the politics of religion in strife-torn Ireland. Several stanzas from Dr. Seuss' "The Sneetches" are also important, as are the contents of several movies and old television series, but first I begin with analyses from Hugo's novel.

*Les Miserables* is a story with which I became familiar as a seventh-grade student. One of my teachers had an extra class period with us, and during it he would tell us about the adventures and the flights of the hounded Jean Valjean as he fled from the dogged detective Javert. Later in life I decided

to read the book, and in my copy of it there is a wonderful line which depicts the dickensian lifestyle of the underprivileged poor who were under the heavy-handed control of those people who had social influence and who held legal power.

> As there is always more misery at the bottom than there is humanity at the top... (Hugo 1987 8)

According to French law at the time of the story, ex-convicts could still be relentlessly pursued by the police, under the assumption that they were always criminals. Valjean's continuing, though well-meant, activities automatically made him a permanent member of a criminal underclass of people - the prosecuted and persecuted poor.

The Russian crime story *Crime and Punishment* (Dostoyevsky 1950) also identifies the presence of two social classes, using a related variable to separate them - purely legal power, compared to the legal-poverty factor used by Hugo. Dostoyevsky's Dounia talks about her Raskolnikov's vision of social reality in the following passage.

> I am not blaming him, please don't think that; besides, it's not my business. A special little theory came in, too - a theory of a sort - dividing mankind, you see, into material and superior persons, that is persons to whom the law does not apply owing to their superiority, and who make laws for the rest of mankind, the material, that is. (Dostoyevsky 1950 476)

The unequal distribution of legal power endorsed by both Hugo and Dostoyevsky is directly reflected in modern sociology through some writings of Becker (1963) who identifies the *rule creators* of society as legislators, and the *rule enforcers* as police. Likewise, O'Sullivan (1994) identifies the *rule interpreters* as jurors who determine if laws are correctly or wrongfully applied to allegations of illegal behavior, often in an adversarial contest consisting of the accusers and the accused - a dualistic legal proceeding.

A melding of these contemporary approaches with thoughts that are worthy of Hugo or Dostoyevsky, or an English legend, is derived from the history of hunting.

> Hunting and fishing as sports were owned by the European aristocracy and preserved for them by law... Poachers continually challenged this domination by taking game whenever and wherever it offered itself. Laws provided draconian penalties for violators who had the misfortune to be apprehended. (Hummel 1994 134)

Privileges and rights go to those who own them.

Tolstoy, the other enlightening and informed Russian author, wrote the poignant short story "Master and Man" (1977), and the title could stand by itself as evidence of dichotomous statuses. The tale involves a relationship between an astute and miserly businessman, Vasilii Andreich Bekhunov, and his employee-servant/serf Nikita.

> Vasilli Andreich did not pay Nikita the eighty rubles a workman such as he was worth, but only about forty, which he paid without any proper reckoning, a bit at a time, and then for the most part not in money but in goods charged from his store at a high price. (Tolstoy 1977 70)

Although Nikita owed his heart and his soul to the company store, he dedicated himself to his master with obedient and fatal loyalty. That which Tolstoy has successfully done for us, beyond describing a feudal economy, is to show the callous disregard for, and the vulgar exploitation of, one social class toward another - the "bread and butter," the *idee fixe* of conflict and alienation sociologies.

The first U.S. novelist in this work is Stowe via her book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1984). Stowe's character St.Clare, a member of New Orleans' gentry, is talking to his northern cousin Ophelia about local customs when the following distinctions are made.

> Look at the high and the low, all the world over, and it's the same story – the lower classes used up, body, and soul, for the good of the upper. So it is in England; and so it is everywhere; and yet all Christiandom stand aghast, with virtuous indignation. (Stowe 1984 211-212)

Total exploitation of the oppressed by the oppressors was insitutionalized. Even though the practice was abhorred by many it was still allowed to exist, thus legitimizing it. This

opinion is further advanced by one of the books more notorious characters, Simon Legree.

> Legree took silent note of Tom's availability. He rated him as first-class, and yet felt a secret dislike to him - the native antipathy of the good for the bad. (Stowe 1984 349)

Legree, of course, considered himself to be the "good" guy because he was a white slave-owner, whereas he viewed Tom as a "bad" guy because he was a black slave, even though the story proves otherwise.

Thus far, the cited findings underpin the premise that there are two major social classes in society which have caste-like or feudal qualities to them. However they are locally determined, they are commonly called the "haves" and the "have-nots," with their attendant features and obligations to each other. Still, several questions may be lingering in mid-air, and they would include: "Is there to be any blending of them or diffusion between them?" and "Is it possible for there to be more than one duality existing at any place or in any point in time?" There are answers to these questions.

With regard to the possible amalgamation between categories we can review parts of the poem by Kipling, visit one of the *Bounty* books, and then return to Stowe for the possible answer. First, Kipling's "The Ballad of East and West" clearly identifies the vision of English colonialism and imperialism on this subject.

> Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
> Till Earth and Sky stand present at God's great Judgment Seat,
> But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed nor Birth,
> When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth! (Kipling 1900)

This expansionist sentiment is also covered in Nordhoff and Hall's *Men Against the Sea* (1946), the second book about the events surrounding the H.M.S. *Bounty.*

This story recounts the heroic voyage of Captain Bligh and eighteen of his loyal seaman who were cast adrift by Fletcher Christian. In their forty-day journey, traveling about 3,400 miles across the Pacific Ocean in a launch the size of a large family van, the men visited some inhabited islands. The following lines depict how desperate men, but still Englishmen, looked upon the mannerisms of some of the people whom they encountered.

> These Indians were unlike any we had seen in the South Sea; they were coal black, tall, and remarkably thin, with long skinny legs. Two of the men stood leaning on their spears, with one knee bent, and the sole of the foot pressed against the inside of the other thigh - an attitude common as it was uncouth. (Nordhoff & Hall 1946 116-117)

As gaunt, starved, exhausted, and as hopeless and as helpless as they were, they were still able to look askance upon people whose mannerism were unfamiliar to them - that is, not Britons, but seen by others as "foreigners" in their own land.

A similar sentiment about cultural separation is contained, once again, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

> Now an aristocrat, you know the world over, has no human sympathies, beyond a certain line in society. In England the line is in one place, in Burmah another, and in America another, but the aristocrat in all of these countries never goes over the line. (Stowe 1984 224)

Together, Kipling, Nordhoff and Hall, and Stowe are telling us that cooperation is impossible: Such a thought is never even considered in the tradition of the "haves" for the "have-nots." It is evident, then, that that which creates any dualism and maintains it is simply ethnocentrism, and the ability of one category to exercise complete control over another.

In answer to the second question, it is possible for several dualisms to co-exist. There are hints of this issue in Hugo's volume, but Stowe's book is used again because of the logical substitutions derived from it, along with additional bolstering from Roosevelt. Stowe writes

> [t]here stood two children, representatives of the two extremes of society. The fair, high-bred child, with her golden hair, her deep eyes, her spirited, noble brow, and prince-like movement; and her black, keen,

> subtle, cringing, yet acute, neighbor. There stood the representatives of their races. The Saxon, born of cultivation, command, education, physical and moral eminence; the Afric, born of ages of oppression, submission, ignorance, toil, and vice! (Stowe 1984 244)

While Stowe's images are fragrant with the ethnocentric cultural conceit necessary for her story, we can take the categories "Saxon" and "Afric" and replace them with multiple substitutes: Republicans and Democrats, privately-schooled and publicly-schooled, upper-class and lower-class, full-time faculty and part-time faculty, the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives, white-collar and blue-collar, military officers and enlisted personnel, as well as management and labor[1]. The sets of labels are real and simultaneous, the identifiers being as important as the modifiers, and such arrangements are universal, as is affirmed elsewhere.

Theodore Roosevelt is known for his Presidency, his burly anatomy, his robust lifestyle, and for his prolific writing. His book *Through the Brazilian Wilderness* (1920) is the tale of his travels and exploits in South America. It was there that he saw at least two dualisms existing together: One was based on religion, and the other was founded upon ethnicity. Roman Catholics were accorded higher social statuses than were members of any other religious or spiritual background because of the strong historic and missionary movements in the area. Then, Europeans, especially Spaniards, were accorded opportunities not available to others, for the same reason.

Two-tiered classes can be based on variables other than ethnicity, economics, the law, and religion. *Mutiny on the Bounty*, the first of the series, for example, reveals that sex-gender identity can also serve as a basis for social differentiation, depending on local mores, as in Tahiti during the time of the story.

> [T]he Indians believed that Man was sky-descended, and that woman was earth-born: Men *raa*, or holy; Women roa, or common. Women were not permitted to set forth in the temples of the greater gods, and among all classes of society it was forbidden - unthinkable in fact - for the two sexes to sit down together. (Nordhoff & Hall 1960 84)

Not only did the Tahitians make earthly distinctions between men and women, but the division was given great credence because the separation had a supernatural source. This division was enacted in daily life as was shown in *Pitcairn's Island*, the final book about the mutineers. Having landed on that fateful island, Fletcher Christian and his followers sat down to eat.

> The women, according to Polynesian custom, waited until the men finished before partaking of the food. Their hunger satisfied, the men drew apart and lay in the shade, some sleeping, some talking in desultory fashion. (Nordhoff & Hall 1936 41)

The reader may wish to explore beyond the meager offerings cited in these pieces of literature which contain confirmation of bilateral classes in other general novels, poetry, and travel accounts. Several thematic novels, beyond Stowe's presentation of slavery in the ante-bellum South, contain similar distinctions based on racial politics. Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* (1948), for example, is concerned with the existence and the effects of *apartheid* in South Africa which was the law of the land for many years until its recent legal demise. Another novel about racial politics is Waugh's *Island in the Sun* (1955) which weaves a complex story on a British-governed island in the West Indies. This novel, unlike Paton's and like Stowe's, addresses the subtle discrimination toward people of blended heritage, in the manner that Stowe looked at the fates of the quadroons, the mulattos, and the Creoles in her story.

Changing direction, Uris' *Trinity* (1976) details social-class warfare in Ireland at the turn of the 1800s into the 1900s, but the conflict is between Irish Roman Catholics and British Anglican Protestants. Unlike Roosevelt's findings, the story's Roman Catholics are the underdogs, the "have-nots," in a land where the political and economic institutions are controlled by people other than themselves - that is, the numerically smaller but politically greater Anglo-"prots," a conflict which exists today. Without divulging too much of the stories' plots, it is sufficient to say that no matter how enlightened, noble-

minded, and "modern" the privileged classes are, traditions and practices are often resistant to change.

All of the authors presented have done their homework well, for they have described societal scenes which are valid and are easy to envision. The writers can, then, be justifiably called *sociologists without portfolios* because they describe societies using readable and entertaining formulae, in much the same way that many of us can name a particular professor who made sociology, anthropology, or the humanities come alive for us.

The print media portion of this review is finalized with a humorous, though pointed, poem which is often considered to be children's literature, but really contains a high level of social, moral, and adult sophistication. Dr. Seuss wrote "The Sneetches."

> Now, the Star-Belly Sneetches
> Had bellies with stars.
> The Plain-Belly Sneetches
> Had none upon thars.
> Those stars weren't so big. They were really quite small.
> You might think such a thing wouldn't matter at all.
> But, because they had stars, all the Star-Belly Sneetches
> Would brag, ' We're the best of the Sneetches on the Beaches.'
> With their snoots in the air, they'd huff and they'd snort
> 'We'll have nothing to do with the Plain-Belly sort!'
> And whenever they met some, when they were out walking,
> They'd hike right past them, without even talking. (Seuss 1961 3-4)

No interpretation of meaning is needed, here.

If the works cited had to be called a "population" that was studied they would be labeled a combination of purposive and convenience samples. They were chose because they uphold my stance and my change of thought, and because they were available to me. They are not meant to exhaust the range of evidence in popular outlets; in fact, more findings can be seen in such movies as *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Dirty Dancing*, Ralph Cacchio's *Crossroads,* and *The Cutting Edge*, as well as old television series like *Upstairs, Downstairs* and *Beacon Hill.* While such inquiries can be made privately, it is now time to turn to sociological literatures on two-sided class conflict and worker alienation.

## SOCIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Almost any introductory sociology textbook informs the student that there are several sets of class structures in our society. One of these systems contains three categories being the upper-class, the middle-class, and the working- or the lower-class. Another configuration shows either five or six layers - the upper-upper, the lower-upper, the upper-middle, the lower-middle, and the upper-lower and the lower-lower or the poverty level. Then the third form, used in this article, contains just two categories comprised of the enfranchised or the "haves," and the disenfranchised or the "have-nots." So, just how many systems are there, and of what are the composed?

All three stratified orders are consistent with public opinions formed by way of the mass media, making an absolute definition difficult; just as it is hard to identify perfect criteria for membership in any of the groupings. Further difficulties are posed because, depending on the criteria used, and the purposes to which they are put, we see multiple and contiguous categories. Emphasis here, however, is placed on the latter arrangement and the conflicts and the tensions which they entail between the associations of people.

Any economic differences between clusters are based on a division of labor: People are skilled at different tasks, and organizations have complementary needs. The existence of a bourgeoisie-managerial class is just as important for business as a proletariat-worker class. In a perfect world they work in cooperation for mutual benefit, but all too often the former exploits the latter, from which tensions emerge, providing antagonisms and preventing concert, and it is in such strain that this article is grounded.

Social conflict theory is rich in history, subject matters, interpretations, applications, and in possibilities for social reform. We see its presence in pre-Solonic Greece prior to the advent of democracy; it is evident in the writing of American, French, and Russian revolutionaries; it is contained in the writings of such sociologists as Weber, as Edwards, as Marx, and as Seeman, as well as Becker or O'Sullivan as earlier shown; and inequal-

ity is the calling card of class warfare between Democrats and Republicans.

The following sections of the article offers quick reviews of sociological presentations from Weber, from Edwards, and from Marx. Attention is then focused on illustrating worker alienation from a Marxian viewpoint, and the same is done with alienation from the vision of Seeman, and these discussions begin.

**Weber, Edwards, and Marx: Briefly**

Weber was kind enough to inform us that social-class membership is usually a function of the differential distribution of power, prestige, esteem, and wealth. That is, the more a person has of all of these rewards then the higher the person's status is apt to be. In similar fashion, social-class affiliation is also dependent upon a person's income, occupation, and education - the more a person has of one, the greater the likelihood the person owns more of the others, resulting in variations in status assignment.

In keeping with these thoughts, Edwards has notified us that there are two categories of work in which people are likely to be engaged. *Primary labor markets*, on the one hand, are those occupations which have high prestige accorded to them; require advanced and continued schooling/training; earn high economic returns; have high individuality and autonomy of effort; and entail great personal satisfaction for work completed. *Secondary labor markets*, on the other hand, have lower levels of social prestige; do not require extensive education or skill development; have routinized, repetitive, and overseen work; incur fairly low wages; and create great boredom for the worker. A comparison of Weber's and Edward's contributions reify the thesis that there are two competitive and often dueling social classes in our society.

Some of the most noted discussions about the sociology of economic life come from Marx and his friend Engels who covered such diverse topics as modes of economic exchange, guidelines for economic reform, and analyses of different social classes. While the latter subject contains descriptions of such groupings as the salariat, the landowners, a petite bourgeoisie, and the *lumpenproletariat*, most modern sociological and activist emphases are placed primarily on the *bourgeoise* as an owner-managerial category, and on the *proletariat* as a wage-earner division. A *very generous* rendition of the bourgeoisie means that its members are the monetary and the political high-rollers of an area who are able to influence or determine how the economic variables of land, labor, and capital are to be used; whereas a similarly liberal interpretation of the proletariat means that its members represent everyone else whose lives are controlled by the whims of those who are powerful - that is, the *proles* are the manor lords' vassals. If so, then the "haves" and the "have-nots" are genuine, regardless of which specific criteria are used for membership, as has been shown with ample evidence.

Another aspect of Marxian sociology is that it looks at the relationship between the two classes from the perspective of the less-powerful groups, because it is through them that social change will occur. This viewpoint stands in opposition to the recreational pieces offered earlier, because it was there shown that the powerful assemblies determine the courses of history and local mores. It is widely held in conflict theory that the discontent felt by the lower classes for the upper classes contains the seed for social reform - the ability to create history and new futures through revolution for significant modification of social institutions - with which I stand in some disagreement.

I would like to reveal through the corresponding writings of Marx and of Seeman, and my fieldwork, the types of alienation which have been felt by factory workers because they, as members of the proletariat, are disenfranchised and devalued due to the designs of a company's owners and their managers. The illustrations are derived from my employment and curiosity at "Industrial Development, Inc." (IDI), which is located in "Lichenville, IL," where we render out-sourced sub-assemblies of engine parts for "Woolly Bear, Inc.," a Fortune 500 company, whose corporate offices are in nearby "Will It Play Here? City." Woolly Bear has an international reputation and market for its earth-moving, mining, and farming products, as well as for its sturdy diesel engines. That company has earned the nickname "Big Saffron" because of the mellow yellow color of paint used on its goods, and the company's sole labor union is the "Unified Horseless-Carriage Workers of America." Let us now see how Marxian sociology can be applied to IDI as it goes about the business of supplying parts for

Woolly Bear.

**Elements of Alienation: Marx**

One of Woolly Bear's main money makers is its diesel engine division which provides the power units for its own products as well as for such other commercial uses as the trucking and maritime industries. An engine block is put on an assembly line carousel for its three-hour journey, along which all needed parts are attached. IDI people do the sub-assemblies for almost all of the engine's external parts so that Woolly Bear's union workers only need to take the assigned parts from racks, kits, or tubs and bolt them to the engine. IDI sub-assemblies are accomplished in the interests of profitability for Woolly Bear, meaning that costs are reduced when IDI does the work rather than having union members do the same tasks. IDI people attach hoses and supports to radiators, connectors to fuel-related parts, drains on oil pans, housings on clutches, and so on, for Woolly Bear's products. IDI's workers are thus deprived from the feeling of accomplishment with the final *product* because they usually only work on one type of part in a single bench area, and are almost never allowed entry into Woolly Bear's plants due to security reasons. Work, then, is boring and repetitive, and there is little a person can do except "grin and bear it," or maybe seek cloned work at one of Woolly Bear's other suppliers where only lateral or horizontal social mobility is attained, at best.

IDI employees are also alienated from the *profit* which the company earns. Assemblers are paid a wage which starts at $7.25 per hour, a working poor earning, and have a modal rate of about $8.00 or $8.50 per hour; and a few workers earn as much as $9.00 to $10.00 per hour. The company does have profit-sharing as its "retirement" plan wherein an employee is fully vested after five years of employment. However, only about twenty of the IDI's 250 employees are so situated because people quit often, relinquishing any shares which may have been earned. When an employee nears full enrollment in the plan it is common for personnel director to lower the person's wages, then reassign the employee to a job which is either dirtier, harder, or on another shift, hoping that the worker will quit; and people have been fired just prior to maturation - because all forfeited monies from voluntary or involuntary terminations revert to the general fund.

One payday we received our annual earnings statements, and there was a negative entry for my year's total. I immediately asked the personnel director what that meant, and I was told that the company did not earn a profit for the past year When I asked her if that was in the report filed to the Internal Revenue Service or in the report for the company's stockholders I was given a blank stare. Profits seem to be elusive things, which the workers are unable to comprehend or need not take interest.

IDI workers are also alienated from *themselves* since there are virtually no opportunities for upward social mobility within the tightly-run, almost managerially-incestuous, organization; and there are no chances for the worker to show individual initiative or creativity. Assembly designs come from Woolly Bear, and any variations from them will result in product errors, subject to fine by the contracting company. Each engine has a specific configuration and there is no tolerance for variations and mistakes. Even if a worker knows from experience that an engineering flaw is present, the product must be sent as defined; interestingly, then, the worker will be held responsible for the mistake by his or her employers. Repeated mishaps can result in a "no questions asked" firing, and a replacement worker will be hired at a lower wage whenever possible.

The fourth form of alienation, according to Marx, is *separation of the workers from themselves* to keep them from becoming a collective, conscious, and conscientious body politic, and such detachment is actively promoted in several ways. Since IDI is not a union shop, fault is quickly found with any worker who openly discusses unionization or violations of OSHA safety regulations. We are constantly told that we should spend our days working ceaselessly, and that we should chit-chat among ourselves only during breaks or lunch periods. Managers are famous for finding hiding places where they can spy on us; and workers who jobs require movement through the facilities have been followed by supervisors, foremen, or leads who make notations of the person's movements and conversations. I surmise that IDI's owners and managers feel that we are a disruptive cabal, actively plotting the demise of the company; but, there is no evidence to prove that several bomb threats were made by anyone associ-

ated with the company, past or present.

As was mentioned at the beginning of this article, I had never been in an employment setting wherein I formed a deep appreciation for the "workers" or the "have-nots." Reflecting on my downward occupational and economic mobilities, as well as daily interactions with my working colleagues, I have changed my mind about the value of conflict and alientation sociologies stemming from the ideas of Marx, but since his ideas do not stand alone, I turn to the thoughts of Seeman as I continue to share this paradigm shift.

**Elements of Alienation: Seeman**

Like Marx before him, Seeman took a humanistic stand in his investigations by looking at workers' viewpoints about themselves and the places where they work because the employee is the focal point, the subject and the object, of private experiences. Accordingly, Seeman also identifies matters of economic alienation which are valid from the discernment of the worker, and I would like to review them and illustrate them, still using IDI as the specific setting.

Seeman's *powerlessness* is the inability to control one's work environment, and Hobson and Sullivan (1990 98) state that this condition is virtually identical to Marx's alienation from the product, because the worker can do nothing to affect the processes of production. I would like to go one step further and note that powerlessness also refers to the general managerial disregard for constructive input which the worker might have. In a weekly safety meeting and "pep talk" our foreman always reminds us that no one, not even himself, knows our individual work areas as well as we do. Would it stand to reason, then, that if, through such knowledge, we might have reasonable ideas for the improvement of production and safety? "Not!" It is their reasoning that the plant has been designed for maximum efficiency and safety, so no changes need to be made.

Our foreman seems to enjoy playing a psychological game with his pattern of praise in one breath and foul berating in the next. His efforts to make us feel as if we are important people is overridden by open disregard and contempt for us as peers. An example of his true feeling for us occurred when he met an employee at a convenience store on the way to work and she tried to say "hello" to him. He told her that he did not have to talk to her because they were not at work, yet. It would seem that he does not like her, and he does not like us.

My own interactions with the foreman support the same contempt and distrust. I had a severe accident at work which required long disability leaves for healing, therapies, surgery, and more therapies. I stopped at IDI with some papers from my doctor and medical bills when the foreman walked past me, and instead of inquiring about my health he asked me, "When are YOU coming back?" He does not like me, but once again he made it obvious that he does not like us.

Company officials justifiably treat alibi ailments with suspicion. Yet, when people are truly sick or have been injured on the job they are still treated with unwarranted disdain and wariness - as if infirmities are malingering or show lack of fealty to IDI.

Seeman's *self-estrangement* is likened to alienation from work processes (Hobson & Sullivan 1990 98) because there are few additional material payoffs as incentives beyond actual wages. IDI's retirement plan is built for long-term employees, and there are no bonuses for hourly workers for work well done. The company does have a quarterly bonus of $100.00 for perfect attendance, but when it is earned it is attached to the next paycheck so it becomes taxable income. However, if a person is five minutes late for work, or if a person has to leave work for a doctor's visit or a court appointment, then the reward is nullified. Pay raises are small, rare, and denied to individuals as punishment. I received my last wage increase more than three years ago, and since insurance costs have risen in that time my net pay is lower than it was then.

An extension of this theme addresses the duration and conditions of employment at IDI: It is not guaranteed, and exists only as long as the company's officials want an employee on site to do the assigned and rote work. So, if someone walks to the time clock at the beginning of a shift and finds the card missing then the employee has been fired, and the company does not need to give advance notice. There are no job assurances, and people are fired with stalinistic efficiency and eldritch glee.

Seeman's notion of *social isolation* seems to correspond with Marx's alienation from others (Hobson & Sullivan 1990 98). IDI workers perform thousands of assem-

blies for the union workers at Woolly Bear, but equal statuses are not assigned to both sets of workers. Woolly Bear's workers receive much higher wages than we do, and that company's reputation for quality is founded upon the union's claims of superior workmanship through collective bargaining and training. A brief story indicates the differences of comparative opinion which at least one IDI worker has about himself and others.

I played golf with some of my buddies one day after work, and as we drifted into the pro shop I hailed one of them by asking, "Hey, don't we work together at IDI?" He did not want, under any set of circumstances, not even jokingly, and certainly not in public, to be linked to, or embarrassed by, IDI and its local reputation. We still play together.

Seeman also talks about *normlessness* wherein codes of conduct are either non-existent or *anomic* (Durkheim 1951; Merton 1968), or they are so fluid in their interpretations and applications that they may as well be fictitious. It would seem that Seeman was almost prescient about IDI and its managerial orientations towards behavior standards. Safety glasses and steel-toed shoes are to be worn by everyone on the factory floor - except, it seems, by even such managers as our safety officer. No one is supposed to smoke or have open beverage containers on the work floor - except, apparently, by supervisory personnel who openly smoke and drink coffee as they wander around keeping their vigil on us. No one is supposed to be eating as they assemble - except, apparently, managers who eat at their corrals on the floor. Late attendance or absence without just reason results in dismissal without pay, for one day or for three, depending on frequency - except, apparently, for "brown-nosers" when rules are suspended or bent. Foul language is discouraged, except when an employee is being reprimanded. References to canine ancestry or personal habits are not tolerated, except for when a worker gets chastised by a manager. Laws forbid sexual harassment, yet, one day a former lead of mine told me that he loved me, and neither my supervisor nor my foreman took any corrective action for his misdeed. In other words, it is difficult to predict what will happen from one day to the next, except that we work our shift and depart - tired, dirty, smelly, and sweaty - leaving deference to ill-tempered managers behind us.

Finally, Seeman acknowledges the condition of *cultural disengagement* wherein workers are not in touch with dominant ideologies or sets of creative ideas in society, and it is here, I believe, that both caution and additional research are needed before significant conclusions can be drawn. Indeed, many of IDI's employees are not highly trained, educated, or apparently interested in outside pursuits, but there are exceptions to this rule: "Sam," for example, is president of a local astronomy club and he is the manager of the city's celestial observatory and telescope. While profane lunchroom banter is an index of disinterested people who have no desire to expand their horizons, it must be remembered that schooled interests require free time, disposable incomes, and rudimentary skills, so many of my colleagues do not have the opportunities, wherewithal, or the talents to follow artistic, philosophical, ideological, educational, or linguistic endeavors.

This element of disengagement, along with the absence of a collective identity, is especially consequential for the maintenance of a system of inequality. The inability of a labor mass to experiment with alternative ideologies and economic practices due to the apparent absence of opportunity inhibits social change. An individuated class of people "in itself" does not mean that it can be translated into a unified body of people "for itself" when it lacks skills, leadership, and resources to do so. The system, then, perpetuates itself.

When I interviewed my subjects I did so with discretion to maintain their dignity, trust in me, confidentiality, and to avoid arousing suspicion by company officials. One of the questions on my agenda was, "If you could change just one thing about IDI, what would it be?" The pervasive and plaintive response was along the lines of "Change their [management's] attitudes toward us," which seems to summarize and encapsulate the sociological descriptors we have about alienation, but certainly not expressed so eloquently and as scholarly as academicians have done. That descriptive task was left to such people as Marx or Seeman who objectified the subjectivity of personal experience and dissatisfaction of workers in place. So, it seems that both Geyer and Harris are correct when they state that it is the analyst who ascribes the labels and the language of alienation rather than the repressed, thus

representing the best of ethnography's interpretive traditions.

My understanding of worker conflict and alienation theories is dependent upon the materials I have read, and upon my ability to relate to them and apply them. It is also underscored from over four years of employment at IDI, which allows me the opportunity to add several other notations about the surroundings of discontented members of a proletariat.

## OTHER DISHEARTENING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

In addition to the known elements of alienation and exclusion, there are two less tangible, and important, factors which are associated with being economically "kept," and they can either serve as conduits through which all other ideas flow, or they can be seen as umbrella covers under which the others are included. Wage-earning factory workers, including myself, my fellows, and the employees of Woolly Bear, feel as if we are human chattel, to be used and discarded with as much sentiment as a replaced spark plug for a car; and there is a strong feeling of negativity which permeates the worker's psyche. Both sensations are actually promoted by management, itself, as the following sets of orientations indicate.

### Human Chattel

The word "chattel" has several meanings. Originally, the term meant cattle which are owned, controlled, and herded by ranch owners and ranch hands; they are live property. Another definition for the word means that it is the owned physical capital of a person or a business enterprise; it is non-animate property. Cattle have no free will over their ownership or their plight to become t-bone steaks or hamburgers, and a machine is just as incapable of emotions or affecting its destiny. Neither definition for the expression can be credited to IDI's management as they look upon their workers as just so many pieces of property which, not who, can be manipulated and replaced for any number of real or imagined reasons; but I want to provide a specific example of such a mind-set from a conversation I had with a manager as evidence of IDI's microcosmic specimen of bourgeois mentality.

While on a lunch break I had a chance to talk to a general supervisor about the managerial obligations of our foreman. I acknowledged the fact that the man has a formidable task to maintain production schedules and standards, and the general interests of the company; but many employees feel that his communication skills need improvement. The general supervisor appreciated my input, and indicated that employees' ideas are always valuable and welcome because we are important assets to the company, at which point he departed. The guys with whom I was eating and I concluded that we are more like resources than pieces of property which offset liabilities on accounting balance sheets. Words convey meanings, and the choice of words offers insight into the speaker's vision; and the difference between an asset and a resource is a clear index of disparate points of view.

Such variations in thought are abundant in recreational reading as shown by the thoughts of, or conversations between, story characters; but the authors of such tales have more literary license than academicians are allowed, so oftentimes we can only hint at disparagement with antiseptic language. Like the unwanted, expressed, and undeserved feelings of inferiority and being totally controlled, negativity is as thick on the floor of IDI as are its industrial dirt, grime, forklift truck tire dust, oil slicks, loose parts and discarded dunnage.

### Negativity

This term also has several meanings which include an absence of positive attributes, and responding in a direction away from that which is positive. In the assembly arena of IDI it means a condition of entrapment or slavery wherein nothing the worker does is seen as being worthwhile, and wherein the employee receives little, if any, constructive input from managers. It also means that the worker almost always receives a negative response for any inquiry, as a list of actual questions and answers shows: "Can I have a raise?" No. "Can I work another shift?" No. "Can I transfer to another building?" No. "Can I work under another lead?" No. "Would you please install an electrical outlet so I can have a fan?" No. "Can I go to Woolly Bear on the 'hot truck' to see how the line works?" No. "Can I change my vacation schedule?" No. "Can we open the big doors for better air circulation? - it's hot in here." No. "How does this part work on the

engine?" I dunno. "Will we be laid off when Woolly Bear goes on vacation?" I dunno. "Why can't we open the big doors?" I dunno. "Is Woolly Bear gonna keep this product line?" I dunno. "Are we gonna get any new lines from our competitors?" I dunno. "Why can't I have an electrical outlet for a fan?" I dunno.

Someone, somewhere, once said that knowledge is power. If that adage is true, then the owners and managers of IDI work hard to keep us ignorant and powerless; and, speaking as a wage earner, it gets old, quickly. Our foreman's version of positive feedback is to tell us that we had no fines levied against us by Woolly Bear. There are other ways to express satisfaction, like a simple "attaboy," but that would seem humane for the company's handlers who appear well-versed in the history of feudal lord-vassal relationships. Maybe they selectively agree with some of Zeitlan's (1968) synopses of relationships between elites and non-elites according to either Pareto, Mosca, or Michels; or perhaps they identify with Tolstoy's Vasilii Andreich, with Stowe's Simon Legree, or with William Bligh as they go about micro-managing the daily affairs of the small fiefdom called Industrial Development, Inc.

Much time has been spent discussing the subjugation of workers at IDI, but little attention has been paid here or elsewhere to identify how workers might adapt to a non-halcyonic environment. That task is now accomplished using Merton's well-known modes of adaptation with a theoretical twist.

## A MERTONIAN APPLICATION

It is rare in sociology to see the writings of conflict and alienation exemplars joined with the offerings of someone who is often considered to be an archetypical functionalist, and it is daring to use that person's paradigm in a conflict vein; yet, both are accomplished in this article. Once used by O'Sullivan (1995) to show how people go about the process of religious congregation switching resulting from spiritual dissatisfaction, Merton's goals-means model shows how IDI's wage earners can cope with their loneliness.

The five adaptations can be sorted into two major groupings. Three of the modes are labeled as belonging to a quit-dismissed range of possibilities, and the remaining two are arranged into a stay-retained cluster. Each set of outcomes has specific and different benefits to the worker and to the company.

Since many of IDI's workers are openly unhappy with their employment milieu, there are several means by which they can adjust. The IDI worker-*rebel* may quit spontaneously with great fanfare and name-calling, to which IDI's leaders pay no heed, except to escort the now-former employee to the exit; much personal satisfaction is felt, though, because, following the title of Johnny Paycheck's popular song, IDI is told to "Take This Job and Shove It!" - many a worker's dream. The IDI worker-*retreatist* also quits figuring that working there is just not worth the effort to stay, and may even feel that unemployment pays more than IDI does. The IDI worker-*innovator* becomes a workers' paladin, or a reformer, hoping to make IDI a better place to work. Managers neither like *provocateurs* nor do they tolerate their commentary: they do not want troublemakers, making it convenient for them to look for errors in the worker's habits as justification for dismissal. Even if fired, employees find some solace in the expression "I was looking for a job when I found this one," but there are still two alternative choices.

The IDI worker-*ritualist* realizes entrapment, but may have even fewer options so the employee goes about assigned duties mechanically and well, while avoiding company politics which could result in trouble. Finally, the IDI worker-*conformist* is fairly content with his or her lot, and engages in constructive output for the company - assuming new duties voluntarily and casually which later take on the aura of assignments; making no errors in assembly; talking positively about the company and its owner-managers, and so on. The workers *ritualist* and *conformist* stay because work is proximate to their homes; because a spouse works there, too; because a court requires it; because the worker has no real marketable skills so he or she can get by, there; because the employee likes the company; or, because other life circumstances affect employment. As we say, "It's the job I have today," but IDI is only where we work; it does not define who we are.

There is now an interesting theoretical twist centering on these choices. Yes, the workers who leave and the ones who stay are apt to feel rewarded in some way - they "win," either morally or financially. Yet, the company is designed for its own "win-win" benefit. Disruptive employees have left by

one way or another, while the ones who remain get paid the lowest wage possible, with full knowledge of their voluntary serfdom plight, earning profits for people who do not seem give a whit about their workers. The conflict-based division of outcomes identified here, the rules of engagement between the bourgeoisie owner-managers and the proletarian workers, are always maintained by those who are in positions of privilege. This aspect of Mertonian sociology, then, fits well with other conflict and alienation sociologies according to the connected sayings "Take it or or leave it" and "There's the door" - both suggestions being oft-spoken by our bosses.

My appreciation for the differential distribution of power and privilege has changed over the past several years. However, I am not a complete convert, and there is need to identify some of my reservations.

## A SHORT DISCUSSION ABOUT CHANGES OF VIEW

Scholars have long paid attention to conflict and alienation studies, discussing the origins of their practices and terminologies, as well as addressing their religious, philosophical, and religious dimensions (Geyer 2001; Lichtheim 1968; Seeman 1959, 2001). Because the type of work which a person does, and where that person works, are often co-indices of a master status, significant attention has been paid to the psycho-sociologic-economic aspects of alienation by looking at workers who are separated from the dominant means of production and the determination of economic policies. Emphases have shown the disparities of rewards and privileges between the bourgeoisie controlling class and the proletarian subdued class.

While my views on this subject have changed, I do not completely agree with the monotonous chorus of universal tension, anxiety, and class warfare. I do not believe that there can be all-encompassing macro-level, national, or international conspiracies on the parts of the "haves" to control the "have-nots" because ample evidence has been provided showing diversity of dichotomies to dispel the contention of collusion. I also do not believe that there can be unified efforts on the parts of the "have-nots" to overthrow the "haves" for the same reason. Membership in either a "have" or a "have-not" category does not hold true over time and in different locales, as the comparison between Roosevelt's observations and the groups in Uris' book clearly showed; and further difficulty is evident when someone ranks high on one status scale, yet low on another.

However, once focus is shifted to micro-level economies and businesses like IDI where absentee owners' managers yield unheralded palatine power over third-estate workers, or to universities which out-source teaching loads to adjunct faculty members[2], then the tensions and disparities of power, prestige, and privilege become apparent to even the casual observer. It is here, then, that I believe conflict and alienation scholars are more correct in their understandings of class struggles than I had been willing to acknowledge - the divisions are real and consequential, although tensions and antagonisms vary locally.

## CONCLUSION

Personal narrative is a useful research device for the social scientist because it permits the vision of insight via the voice of the first-person singular research subject. The speaker, though, may not be qualified to interpret personal thoughts or activities, or be able to put information into a larger intellectual context. Enter, then, the ethnographer to accomplish those tasks with visual imagery for appropriate audiences.

Given that the scientist is also a participant in society, and thus has experiences which no one else has had, then the analyst can and should use autoethnography to become the subject of study, narrating from the actor-observer self, putting that which has been recounted into appropriate frames of reference for scholarly use. By so doing, the investigator can add credence to the discipline, and continuity can be given to that which has already been learned, not through replication because that would be impossible, but through closely-related studies.

For example, the data used by Marx and by Seeman are valid by themselves. While acquiring confirmation through continued study, those findings can assume additional meaning for the scholar-teacher when the constancy is affirmed directly and personally. The teacher-scholar can then say "Marx was right after all, and I can attest to his conclusions because..." In similar fashion the teacher-scholar can debate Goffman's (1961) ideas on regimentation of life in total

institutions by saying "Not all of our soldiers' daily lives are as strictly ordered as he says they are, and I know that because..." A sense of trust and credibility is almost automatically accorded to someone who can honestly say, "Been there, done that."

Sociologists easily become too comfortable with old notes, and may develop myopia because they treat ideal types as real types; because they see the world through small openings in their ivy-covered windows; and because they only view social actuality by way of questionnaires whose responses are coded for computer-generated statistics. Many college students are first-generation attendees, and their families know about the "real world" because they are police officers, military cadre, factory workers, secretaries, truck drivers, prison guards, dental hygienists, carpenters, are on workman's compensation disability, and so on. If an instructor talks "sociologese" to students about topics wherein the student is a practical expert and the teacher is not, then a built-in "b.s. alarm" will warn that the forthcoming lecture is based less on experience and more on laziness, theory, narrow and limited observations, and on crunched numbers.

Most of us entered the social sciences or the humanities because we felt they were fun, controversial, and vital to us and to others. It is time to make them so again by allowing us to look knowingly at our surroundings in several ways. Either before the degrees plan is finished, or during vacations and sabbaticals, we should *become* cops, truck drivers, stevedores, laborers, roughnecks and roustabouts, or teachers in public-/inner-city schools, thus permitting us the opportunities to use our voices of the first- and the third-person singular, the actor-observer, to challenge our world views, academic truths, and ideal types, in order to help our peers and students evoke theirs.

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**ENDNOTES**

[1] An argument could also be made that Hummel's (1994 44-46) *elitist-exclusive* and *democratic-inclusive* attitudes toward sportsmanship fit into an opposing class system, but that would require work beyond the current project.

[2] Another interesting study would be the investigation of colleges' and universities' out-sourced instruction via temporary faculty members, but I fear that acquiring sufficient information would be difficult.

# PROTECTING THE WOMB: THE MYTH OF PRIVACY IN REPRODUCTION

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the policing of the sexuality of juvenile females, pregnant women and abortion within a framework of the public/private dichotomy using Gerald Turkels typology of Marxian postulates. It explores five primary roles of women under the capitalist system in the United States and relates them to policies directed at women's reproductive rights based on the public/private distinction.

## INTRODUCTION

The public-private dichotomy has been utilized to categorize numerous areas of social behavior, thought, and policy. It is central to the analysis and debate of various moral, political and social issues (Weintraub 1997). While many issues are deliberated based on the dichotomy and many policies rest on its foundation, a complete, distinct definition still eludes theorists. Researchers have argued that the dichotomy is "distinction without a difference" (see Klare 1982; Kennedy 1982; Freeman & Mensch 1988) and others argue that the dichotomy is necessary and cannot be abandoned (see Starr 1989; Weintraub 1997). The one issue researchers can agree on, however, is that public and private are very diverse concepts with multiple meanings and components and an ephemeral line divides the two (Weintraub 1997; Starr 1989; Turkel 1988).

According to Weintraub (1997), there are two fundamental approaches to contrasting what is public to what is private. These approaches compare "what is hidden or withdrawn versus what is open, revealed or accessible" and "what is individual, or pertains only to an individual, versus what is collective, or affects the interests of a collectivity of individuals" (Weintraub 1997 5). These questions are the primary source of confusion over public versus private issues for women. Feminist researchers have argued that the public-private dichotomy has been equated to a public-domestic distinction (Roth 1999). Weintraub (1997) asserts that theorists have advanced three indistinct arguments regarding the public-private dichotomy as it relates to gender. The first concerns treating the domestic sphere as trivial, the second labels the dichotomy as 'deeply gendered' and assigns differing social roles based on biology resulting in the placement of women in inferior positions. Finally, feminists scholars often argue that the classification of the family and all things domestic as private institutions, shields and facilitates domination and abuse in domestic relationships (Weintraub 1997).

These arguments have been at the heart of the feminist debate over the public-private distinction for decades (Higgins 2000), if not centuries (Pateman 1983). Feminist theorists have utilized the public-private distinction to argue that it offers a dimension of personal privacy that is sheltered from state regulation. This protected zone is further described as personal autonomy in decisional privacy (Dworkin 1996) or spatial privacy, which includes the home and family (Fineman 1995). Issues of reproduction fall into the category of decisional privacy and include a three stage process. According to Ursel (1992), reproduction of human life involves procreation, socialization and daily maintenance. Viewing reproduction as a process is important because it provides an understanding of the state's interest at different points with different issues. The state's interest in potential life does not stop at birth, it continues throughout the woman's childbearing years. The state needs reproducers of laborers and protects its interest with various laws and policies directed at women who fill this role.

Feminists have long argued that reproduction is an issue of inherent privacy that requires legal privacy, and that the state's only interest in reproduction should be to protect women's privacy (Pateman 1983). The primary problem with this argument is its underlying assumption, that reproduction is a private matter that does not involve the state. In the 1970s, feminists called for the politicization of private domestic matters, in an effort to protect women from violence and to expand reproductive privacy. The end effect of this shift was state and legal regula-

tion of domestic and reproductive matters (Boyd 1997). Due to the unequal power structure of American society, men defined, implemented and enforced those regulations. Since that time, the distinction between what is public and what is private continues to be renegotiated, and men still possess the power to define these boundaries (Landes 1998). The ephemeral line between what is public and private in reproductive issues is not a naturally occurring one, but a political one.

The line between what is public and what is private is inconsistent and intertwined (Starr 1989). It is commonly assumed that what is open, done in public, or has an impact on a greater population is a public issue. At the other end of the spectrum, it is commonly assumed that what is done where access and visibility are restricted are private matters (Starr 1989). Turkel (1988) argues that the public-private dichotomy is more often the foundation for legitimating and reinforcing patterns of power and inequality. Turkel (1988) organizes Marx's three primary approaches to the public-private dichotomy. He argues first, that the distinction offers a framework for legal discourse which "obscures the social relationships among people and their conditions of life" (Turkel 1988 805). Second, he asserts that the laws may recognize private issues, but they ignore the human activity that produces them. Third, he argues that public versus private categorizations define class and social relations as well as "terrains of conflict" (Turkel 1988 807).

Domestic issues, especially reproduction, are as a result, public issues. They are tied to the economy and serve a necessary purpose to the capitalist state. The decisions to have sexual relations, to conceive and to carry a fetus to full-term appear to be private issues, but they have a very public dimension. *Roe v. Wade* (1973) was the culmination of a series of important cases in which the Court recognized a constitutionally protected right to privacy in reproductive matters (see *Griswold v. Connecticut* 1965; *Eisenstadt v. Baird* 1972). One of the primary issues in Roe, however, relates to viability of the fetus and measures privacy in terms of trimesters. The Court established a woman's right to reproductive privacy, but only to a certain point. Adding this qualifier obfuscated the line between public and private and defined potential life as being in the state's realm of interest.

The three postulates utilized by Marx in his writings as described by Turkel (1988) involve reproducing the class based structure of a capitalist society, the inherent exploitation and alienation of workers, and most importantly, structural social inequalities. These postulates have been chosen because of their relevance to the capitalist economic system and their inherent acceptance of political influence. These perspectives will serve as the foundation for exploring three reproductive policies that affect women in the United States: the policing of juvenile females' sexuality, the policing of pregnancy behaviors, and abortion. Each of these issues involve gender-based policies directed at individual choices. They all contain a private dimension, yet political processes and decision-making have propelled them into the public domain. Each of these issues defy the capitalist patriarchal model of what a woman should be and disregard the primary role of women in a capitalist state, reproducers and maintainers of laborers.

## FIVE-ROLES OF WOMEN IN A CAPITALIST STATE

In order to understand the public nature of reproductive 'privacy' issues, it is necessary to explore the roles of women in a capitalist society. These roles perpetuate gender discrimination, maintain the male power structure, and facilitate gendered socialization practices. The public-private distinction of reproductive issues, facilitates the roles of women in United States society by allowing privacy to a certain degree and then writing and enforcing policy that treats it as public. From a Marxian perspective, women fill five primary roles: reproducer/maintainer, surplus labor, alienated workers, commodity, and human capital. A diagram of these roles would indicate a cyclical pattern of facilitation. While some roles directly cause another, they are all facilitated by the others. The reproductive/maintenance role directly causes and facilitates the continuation of women as a surplus labor supply. The surplus labor role leads directly to alienation, which leads directly to the commodification of women. Commodification leads directly to women as human capital which completes the circle and leads back to women as reproducers and maintainers of laborers.

In *Bradwell v. State of Illinois* (1873), Jus-

tice Miller summarized U.S. society's view of the primary role of women, that of domestic laborer, when he stated: "the paramount destiny and mission of woman are to fulfill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the Creator." The most important role for women in the United States continues to be that of domestic laborer, or reproducers and maintainers of laborers (see Gatson 1997 for a discussion of fetal protection labor policies). Biology delegated to women the primary reproductive role, but men imposed the maintenance role (Engels 1970). As capitalism developed in the United States, a gendered division of labor simultaneously evolved. Production moved out of the home and men were designated the role of laborer. It became a woman's job to maintain the household and to assure that the man was ready and able to perform his tasks (Chafetz 1997; Sapiro 1999). The most important part of this domestic function is reproduction which assures that a supply of new labor will always exist.

An important consequence of women as domestic laborers is found in the second role of women, that of surplus labor. A surplus labor population, or a "mass of human material always ready for exploitation" is fundamental to a capitalist economy (Marx 2000a 517). In the United States, women overwhelmingly constitute the surplus labor supply, the underemployed and unemployed. Maintaining this surplus is advantageous to the capitalist state because it can be utilized as a threat to keep male wages low, and because it keeps women relatively powerless. The third role of women in a capitalist system, and caused by the surplus labor role is women as alienated workers. Women entered the workforce in the 1960s and 1970s in unprecedented numbers, and over the decades those numbers have grown. While they predominate pink-collar positions (*Statistical Abstract of the US* 2001), they are nonetheless laborers and as such, they are alienated (Marx 2000b). As wage laborers, in addition to their unpaid domestic labor, women are victims of a capitalist economic system. The more they produce, the less they can consume; the more value created through her labor, the less value she has (Marx 2000b). As Marx (2000b) describes, laborers become alienated from their craft, the act of working, their product and their fellow workers. For women however, their alienation takes an additional form. Female laborers are biologically delegated the primary reproductive role and are still expected to assume the maintainer role. Her alienation, therefore, is compounded by the fact that she is an unpaid laborer in the time away from her paying job.

The fourth role delegated to women by the capitalist state which is facilitated by the alienation of women is that of commodity (Parenti 1994). The previously discussed roles of women in a capitalist society are also facilitated by the commodification of women, the presentation of women as objects to be desired, possessed, exploited and purchased. This is achieved through advertising campaigns directed at men and through societal norms (Stephen 1992; England & Gardner 1983). While the intersection of commodification and domestic laborer greatly impact the role of women as human capital. The commodification of women leads to women as property. Historically, women have been viewed and treated as human capital, the property of their fathers and then husbands (Brownmiller 1975). The patriarch had final authority on all issues involving the family and women were treated as and considered to be chattel property (Schwendinger & Schwendinger 1982). The early role of women under capitalism was that of indentured servant (Engels 1970), which was solidified through various laws. For example, women could not own property until the mid-1800s depending on the state of residence (Chused 1985). In contemporary American society, women are still viewed and treated as the property of husbands, and laws continue to solidify this notion. Husbands who rape their wives are still exempt from prosecution under a variety of circumstances in 33 states (National Clearinghouse on Marital and Date Rape 1998; Ryan 1995). Domestic violence is still viewed by many as a private matter not worthy of the level of attention given to stranger assaults (Miller 2000; Smith 1987). The idea of women as human capital or property leads back to the role of women as reproducers and maintainers of laborers. The notion of women as property is further complicated when reproductive issues enter the equation. While a woman is owned by her husband, her womb is owned by the state and that ownership takes precedence.

These roles of women enable the capital-

ist state to interfere in a woman's life and especially her reproductive freedom. It is vital to the capitalist state that women continue to reproduce future laborers. The reproductive role of women is the core reason that intimacy and pregnancy are public issues. The state's policies and initiatives relating to abortion, drug use during pregnancy, and the policing of female juveniles' sexual behavior speak to this. These policies and reactions are indicative of the view of women as a dangerous class in need of control. They are indicative of the state's vested interest in women as a tool of reproduction, as incubators for future laborers. The roles of women in a capitalist society are necessary to both the capitalist structure and to the public-private divide. Defining the roles of women assists in obscuring social relations, intensifies alienation, and maintains structural inequalities. The roles of women compounded by the public-private debate surrounding reproduction prevents women from penetrating all areas of employment, political and social endeavors. This obscures social relationships by focusing on certain political or moral issues rather than inequality and exacerbates alienation by forcing women to be both wage and domestic laborers. It camouflages both the boundary between public and private and the ways in which this public-private divide differentially affects women. The combination of these factors work to maintain structural inequalities which is vital to the capitalist system. It is necessary that the system maintain a surplus labor supply, protect private property through inheritance, assure no redistribution of wealth, and keep women as the maintainers of laborers. These things are facilitated by the public-private debate over reproduction and the roles of women in a capitalist society.

## POLICING THE SEXUALITY OF JUVENILE FEMALES

The United States has a long history of suppressing and policing the sexual behavior of juvenile females. This is usually done under the guise of protecting the girl's morality and character (Shelden 2001). The state's real interest, however, is the protection of the womb and state resources. Most young mothers are viewed as a burden on the state. They are more likely than older, married women to lack health insurance and need financial assistance (Caldas 1994; Drowns & Hess 2000). It is, therefore, in the state's interest to prevent teen pregnancy. Reproductive education and access to birth control are the logical means to this end, but both are hindered by the current political climate in the United States. Instead, the state most often protects its interests through the juvenile justice system.

The first juvenile court system in the United States was established in 1899 through the Illinois Juvenile Court Act (Siegel & Senna 2000). By 1920 all but three states had developed juvenile courts. Since that time, the system has been utilized to identify and punish sexually active teen girls. An early study of this practice examined several hundred cases in the Wayward Minor Court in New York City in the late 1930s and early 1940s (Tappan 1947). Tappan (1947 33) concluded that many of these young women were being charged with sexual activity or were brought in because they were in "danger of becoming morally depraved". He questioned the legitimacy of this practice and argued that it allowed "unlimited" judicial discretion. He contended that judges in these cases were provided the opportunity to punish these girls based on their own beliefs about appropriate behavior, not on the basis of statute (Tappan 1947).

A study comparing the practices of the Los Angeles Juvenile Court for the years 1920 and 1950 revealed similar patterns (Odem & Schlossman 1991). In 1920, 65 percent of female status offenders in this court were arrested for "immoral sexual activity." It is important to note that a large majority of these girls were not arrested for prostitution, but for having sexual relations in a monogamous relationship. Furthermore, in 1920, girls who had contracted a venereal disease were more likely to be subjected to pre- and post-hearing detention. In 1950, only the labels had changed in the Los Angeles Juvenile Court. Odem and Schlossman (1991) found that roughly 50 percent of female status offenders had been referred for "sexual misconduct," again for activity in monogamous relationships. While overall rates of venereal diseases had declined, the presence of a disease still negatively impacted the decision to incarcerate.

In the 1960s, roughly nine out of ten offenses resulting in commitment for juvenile females were related to behavior defined as or threatening to be sexual misconduct (Davis

& Stasz 1990). The rate for boys was two out of ten even though self-report surveys indicated that boys reported higher rates of sexual offenses than girls (Gold 1970). The women's movement initially had little impact on these policies as evidenced by Meda Chesney-Lind's (1973) classic study in Honolulu, Hawaii. She found that police were likely to arrest and incarcerate female juveniles for sexual activity, but ignored the same behavior among males. The Honolulu police and courts charged 74 percent of the females, but only 27 percent of the males with sexual activity or incorrigibility, and the sentences for girls averaged three times that of boys (Chesney-Lind 1973).

This double standard in juvenile referrals and detentions is still present in juvenile courts. A recent review of practices in Honolulu, Hawaii indicates that little has changed. MacDonald and Chesney-Lind (2001) reviewed all family court case records from 1980 to 1991 and concluded that girls were still more likely to receive harsh dispositions for relatively minor offenses. A review of Illinois juvenile court practices involving probation violators found similar results. Beger and Hoffman (1998) found that females receive harsher treatment within the system for less serious offenses than their male counterparts. Female juveniles are still more likely than males to be formally processed (Bishop & Frazier 1992), and incarcerated for status offenses (Rhodes & Fischer 1993). Females continue to be referred more often than males for less serious offenses and sometimes even for their own victimization (Kempf-Leonard 1998). Juvenile justice system functionaries are more likely to include physical descriptions in case files of females than males, and male decision makers are still in positions to utilize their discretion in determining proper behavior of female juveniles (Rosenbaum & Chesney-Lind 1994).

The fact that these practices exist across the country is not surprising. It is in the state's interest to control the behavior of young women. These practices have a long history and continue with little interruption for one primary reason, the ability of the capitalist state to reproduce its own hegemony. The women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s allowed women more opportunity to participate in the labor market, especially in areas previously closed to them. It did not, however, eliminate bias and discrimination. It did not decrease the state's dependency on women to perform certain roles as previously discussed. It is vital that the capitalist state sustain women's primary role as maintainers of laborers. The policies directed at juvenile females are indicative of this interest. The state must prevent teen pregnancy to assure a future population of effective maintainers and surplus labor. This interest became abundantly clear in 1996 when officials in Gem County, Idaho arrested a 17 year old pregnant woman and charged her under a 1921 "anti-fornication" statute (American Civil Liberties Union 1996). While the statute was designed to include fornication outside marriage, Idaho officials have only charged teens. The juvenile charged in this particular instance gave birth the day following her arrest. She received a $100 fine and three years probation. Her boyfriend was not charged.

The juvenile justice system is the formal mechanism that regulates the sexuality of juvenile females. The informal mechanisms, however, are just as important. Socialization is the

> process of guiding people into socially acceptable behavior patterns through the distribution of information, approval, rewards, and punishments. (Siegel & Senna 2000 165)

It is also the process of learning gender appropriate behavior. In the United States, girls are socialized differently. Males are taught to value independence, while females are taught to equate their selfworth with their ability to sustain relationships (Siegel & Senna 2000). Boys are socialized to be more aggressive than girls, yet girls are supervised more closely (Loeber & Hay 1997). It is also more common for adults to take formal action when girls behave in an inappropriate manner while simultaneously ignoring similar behavior of boys (Siegel & Senna 2000). Adults, parents in particular, have very different expectations of their children based on gender. Society accepts this and reinforces it, often through the media. Gender based differences in socialization patterns and expectations of behavior are indicative of the ability of the capitalist state to reproduce its ideological hegemony.

One example of this phenomenon is found in movies directed at teenagers. Holly-

wood's recent focus on teen "gross-out" movies often have teen sexuality as their foundation. The characters are presented in very different ways depending on gender. For example, the movie *American Pie* is about a group of male high school seniors who vow to lose their virginity before graduation. The movie focuses on their exploits which predominately include attempts to convince female characters to have sex. While the female characters are scantily clad and sexually provocative, only two are presented throughout the movie as having embraced their sexuality. One is presented as very sexual and the other is a minor character who is never dressed provocatively or presented in a sexual situation. The other female characters must be convinced or persuaded to have sexual relations. Numerous other films exists with similar plots and story lines. All are directed and marketed at teens, and all appear to contain the same messages. They teach boys that they should want sex regardless of emotion and teach girls that they must suppress their sexuality until they are in a loving monogamous relationship, preferably marriage.

Suppressing the sexuality of juvenile females, while presenting them in a sexual manner relates to three roles of women in America: reproducers of laborers, commodities and surplus labor. Juvenile females are the future incubators of laborers and the state has a vested interest in protecting the womb. This is accomplished by arresting and incarcerating females for embracing and acting on their sexual feelings, while ignoring the same behavior in boys. The informal methods of social control are just as important in this regard, and teen females are presented with a paradox. They are taught to suppress their sexuality until love and marriage through formal and informal social control mechanisms, yet they are presented as sexual commodities. They are guided toward the patriarchal model of what a woman should be, yet they are presented in the media, especially advertisements, as sexually desirable (Shields 1997; Stephen 1992; England & Gardner 1983). The primary reason for these conflicting representations relates to the fact that sexuality, as a commodity, is more valuable if it is restricted. If all juvenile females were acting on their sexual impulses, presenting them in a sexual way would not enhance the value of the product to which they are attached. These young women will also both become and reproduce surplus labor in adulthood. The practice of policing the sexuality of juvenile females benefits the state in two ways: it suppresses the behavior of young girls which aids the state in reproducing female roles that are necessary for the capitalist state, and they serve a profit-producing mechanism. The combination of these efforts results in maintaining the relative powerlessness of women and perpetuates the roles of women in the United States.

## POLICING PREGNANCY BEHAVIORS

Pregnancy appears to be a private issue. It, however, has a very public dimension. Pregnancy is a matter of state interest and various policies have reflected this interest. In the eyes of the state, the woman is producing a future laborer and that takes precedence over her right to privacy. The state has forced women to undergo unwanted Caesarean sections (Gallagher 1984; Chrisler 2000), and blood transfusions that violated their religious views (*Raleigh Fitkin-Paul Morgan Memorial Hospital v. Anderson* 1964; *Jefferson v. Griffin Spalding Country Hospital Authority* 1981). It has also prevented abortions and generally policed the behavior of pregnant women (Gallagher 1984; Siegel 1997; Chrisler 2000). One of the most telling examples of the state's interest in reproduction is its response to drug use during pregnancy.

In the 1980s, the media focused its attention on babies born to women who had used drugs, especially crack, during pregnancy (Gomez 1997; Roberts 1997). Images were broadcast of babies suffering from delirium tremens and in general poor health. This focus led to concern among citizens and alteration of legislation by policy makers. Pregnant women became the target of punitive drug enforcement policies as a result of misleading stories. The reports were sensationalized and often inaccurate, they were not supported by medical research, and greatly exaggerated the consequences of cocaine on the developing fetus (Lyman & Potter 1998). This barrage of media stories prompted eighteen states to amend child welfare laws to include drug use during pregnancy (Coffin 1996; Sagatun-Edwards 1998). These modifications, as well as policies implemented at the local level resulted in the prosecutions of more than 200 women in 30

states (Coffin 1996). The majority of cases involved overzealous prosecutors misusing law (Sheldon 2001). Prosecutors have charged drug using women with assault with a deadly weapon, drug trafficking (for delivery through the umbilical cord), homicide, and various forms of child abuse (Azimov 1991; Daniels 1993; Siegel 1997; Levinson 1998; Sheldon 2001). The convictions of these offenses have led to long prison sentences, probation, and loss of parental rights and custody (Siegel 1997; Sheldon 2001).

While most appellate and state supreme courts reversed these convictions and found many laws to be unconstitutional, one state supreme court did not. The South Carolina Supreme Court consistently upheld the convictions of women under a policy that allowed hospital staff to test the urine of women in labor for illicit drugs (Levinson 1998). Thirty women were arrested under this policy, but most had charges dropped upon agreeing to enter drug treatment (*Register-Guard* 2001). The policy under which these women were arrested was the result of a collaboration between the General Counsel of Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), the Charleston County Solicitor and the Charleston Police Department. The General Counsel of MUSC contacted the County Solicitor offering hospital services to facilitate the arrest and prosecution of women who tested positive for drugs at the time of birth (Paltrow 1998). At the time the policy was implemented and arrests were made, the city of Charleston had no treatment programs available for pregnant women and no efforts were initially made to this end (Paltrow 1998; Levinson 1998). Eventually, the women affected by this policy were given the choice between immediate arrest and drug treatment. This policy was clearly designed and implemented for the purposes of prosecution and punishment, not treatment or rehabilitation. Eventually, ten women arrested under this policy filed a lawsuit against the city of Charleston (*Ferguson et al v. City of Charleston et al* 2001).

In March, 2001, their lawsuit made it to the United States Supreme Court. The Court ruled that the policy under which these women were arrested violated their Fourth Amendment protection against unreasonable search and seizure, because without a warrant or consent, the drug tests were unconstitutional searches (Lane 2001). While South Carolina was responsible for the test case before the United States Supreme Court, it was not the only state to implement such policies. Twenty-two state appellate and supreme courts struck down or reversed various statutes and/or convictions (Center for Reproductive Law and Policy 1998). While these cases were winding their ways through the court system, women across the nation were suffering because of these policies. Women were incarcerated, lost custody of their children, and were publicly ridiculed because of mandatory drug testing policies. The South Carolina Supreme Court has not abandoned its goal of controlling women's bodies and privacy during pregnancy; in 1997 it declared a viable fetus a "child" in *Whitner v. State* (1997). Cornelia Whitner admitted that she smoked crack during her third trimester of pregnancy, and drug testing of her newborn son revealed cocaine metabolites in his system. Whitner was convicted of child abuse and sentenced to eight years in prison (Risk Management Foundation 1996).

Other states have varying degrees of fetal-child protection policies. For example, the Ohio Supreme Court allowed a newborn who tested positive for drug exposure to be declared an abused child under the state's civil child abuse law and allowed the termination of parental rights based on this 'abuse' (Dailard & Nash 2000). In New Jersey, a mother cannot be charged with child abuse, but the presence of illegal drugs in an infant's blood can be considered in the decision to terminate parental rights. Iowa, Minnesota and Virginia require health care professionals to test some or all pregnant women or newborns for prenatal drug exposure while Kentucky law requires the notification of a woman prior to drug screening. In Kentucky, however, these results may not be used for prosecutorial purposes (Dailard & Nash 2000).

These various policies have been designed and implemented to seek illegal drug-using mothers. These policies do not, however, test for alcohol or tobacco use. A plethora of evidence exists to indicate that cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption during pregnancy are very dangerous to the developing fetus (Messer, Clark & Martin 1996; Lyman & Potter 1998). Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a very serious condition that results from consuming alcohol during pregnancy. While research indicates that higher rates of consumption affect the possibility of

FAS, small amounts can still be dangerous to the developing fetus (Centers for Disease Control 1995; Messer et al 1996). The problems of FAS children are numerous, ranging from learning disabilities to facial abnormalities, but the media and policy makers have not provided equitable attention to this issue. Instead, the problem of FAS has led to an educational campaign, not punitive measures.

A large majority of women affected by policies directed at drug using pregnant women are poor, minority women (Roberts 1997), yet research indicates that a majority of women who use alcohol during pregnancy are white (Centers for Disease Control 1995; Mathias 1995). The policing of pregnancy behaviors is directed at low income, minority women for one primary reason, to maintain the status quo. The media campaign that spurred these policies presented drug using women as bad mothers. They were presented as prostitutes (Gomez 1997) or "promiscuous, uncaring, and self-indulgent" (Roberts 1997 156). They were the opposite of the patriarchal model of a good wife and mother, and therefore were threatening to the state. For these policies to have the desired effect, the state had to convince its citizens that these new policies were in their best interest. By focusing on a segment of the population already viewed as a dangerous class, the state assured that these policies would be embraced by a majority of citizens. In this regard, these policies contributed to the legitimation of domination and the maintenance of women as a relatively powerless class.

The state successfully argued that these policies were in the best interest of the child. In doing so, it assured its continued ability to infringe upon the privacy rights of women and to define the terms of discourse. The state has essentially argued that birth defects in these situations are the fault of the mother. It has demonized these women by presenting them as a drug users with little concern for the welfare of developing fetuses, which has redirected focus from the issues of prenatal care and poverty. Adequate prenatal care and drug treatment are rarely available to poor pregnant women and it is becoming exceptionally clear that "crack babies" is a misnomer (Siegel 1997). Crack exposed infants are actually "poverty babies;" they are often born to homeless, poor women who had little or no prenatal care, poor nutrition, no access to drug treatment, and were often in abusive relationships (Parker 1988; Azimov 1991; Potter, Klein, Valiante, Stack, Papageorgiou, Stott, Lewis, Koren, & Zelazo 1994; Siegel 1997; Frank, Augustyn, Knight, Pell, & Zuckerman 2001; Annas 2001).

With the assistance of the media, the state set the tone for the discourse surrounding the issue of drug use during pregnancy. It successfully convinced researchers, policy makers and citizens that the problems confronting these babies were the result of cocaine consumption during pregnancy. In doing so, it effectively assured that a majority of citizens would overlook the social inequalities and injustices faced by these women. While the concern over crack babies has subsided, the policies directed at their mothers have evolved. For example, a 26 year old woman in Kentucky was recently charged with criminal abuse for allegedly illegally injecting OxyContin while pregnant (Estep 2002). In continuing these policies, the state is avoiding the issues of health and prenatal care. This serves the states interest by maintaining the status quo, reinforcing prejudice and discrimination, and categorizing people and their rights by perceived differences. The culmination of these factors aids the state in maintaining the relative powerlessness of women by maintaining a surplus labor population and focusing on the role of women as reproducers of laborers.

**POLICING CHOICE: ABORTION**

The third reproductive issue with both a public and private dimension is abortion. It is by far the most contentious issue and directly defies the reproductive role of women in a capitalist society. It has been debated in academic and social settings, fought in the courts, and has even led to violence. Abortion is undoubtedly an issue of great controversy. Prior to *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, approximately two-thirds of states banned abortion except to save a woman's life. These bans did not completely prevent abortion, but forced many women to seek illegal termination of their pregnancies (Cates 1982; Dellinger & Sperling 1989). Prior to *Roe v. Wade* (1973), the Court made a series of rulings that recognized a constitutionally protected right to privacy. The rulings in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) and *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (1972) recognized that individuals have a right to

privacy in deciding whether or not to conceive a child. These cases involved accessibility to birth control, but the ruling in Roe used them as its foundation.

While Roe was clearly an advance for women's privacy rights, it also set limitations and restrictions on privacy. The Court quite clearly defined the state's interest in potential life by defining privacy of choice until fetal viability. Advocates of women's rights recognized this restriction, but were still generally pleased with the ruling. What has often been overlooked, however, is the reason for the state's interest in the fetus. The success of capitalism rests on its ability to expand, which is largely dependent on the presence of laborers to exploit (Marx 2000a). Effective contraceptives and abortion are widely available in the United States today. They are most available to women of means while women in the lower socioeconomic strata have far less accessability. The issue of accessability has been heavily impacted by the Supreme Court's ruling in *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* (1992).

In Casey (1992), the court reaffirmed the Roe (1973) decision but narrowed its protections. The Court allowed states to impose restrictions on access to abortion as long as they do not unduly burden women seeking abortions. The Court failed to define the issue of an undue burden, and in doing so effectively provided states a broad, underinterpreted set of guidelines to justify and permit restricting access to abortion. The ruling has not only allowed, but possibly encouraged states to produce legislation relating to waiting periods, educational counseling, and parental notification (Muraskin 2000). These 'informed consent' laws place an undue burden on certain segments of the population, primarily poor, minority women and juveniles. The notion of informed consent varies by state, but there are numerous commonalities in the statutes. The Pennsylvania law central to the Casey (1992) decision included a lecture regarding: the procedure, the gestational age of the fetus, medical risks, and alternatives to abortion followed by a 24 hour waiting period. The law also called for juveniles to inform parents or guardians or judicial authorities who would subsequently determine if the young woman was capable of making the decision to abort her fetus. The Pennsylvania law also required signed consent from the woman's spouse, fortunately the Supreme Court struck down this portion of the law (Muraskin 2000).

The Kentucky law, passed in 1998, also requires parental notification and informed consent followed by a 24 hour waiting period. This unduly burdens women in rural parts of the state. Kentucky has only three abortion clinics, and all are in Lexington (Fayette county) or Louisville (Jefferson county). In 1996, these clinics performed 6,990 abortions, the other ten were at hospitals across the state (Muhs 1997). Women who reside in counties across the state accounted for 60 percent of the abortions performed. This is clearly indicative of the 'undue burden' placed on these women by a 24 hour waiting period. It is likely that many of these women traveled from rural counties in eastern Kentucky. The drive for many would have been several hours. In addition to the decision to abort a fetus, these women faced the added burden of a second trip to the clinic and were likely forced to pay for overnight lodging. Female juveniles confront the additional burden of parental consent or notification. Clearly, these laws are just as burdensome for women facing a difficult decision as they are designed to be. Essentially, by preventing abortion for poor and minority women, the state is assuring a surplus labor supply.

The Court's ruling in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) has evolved over three decades and continues to be debated and eroded. Legislatures continue to propose and pass legislation designed to make it difficult for women to seek abortion. The 2002 session of the Kentucky legislature involved at least three bills that would restrict a woman's access to abortion (Gerth 2002). One involves providing more counseling to women seeking abortion, one seeks to ban RU-486, the morning after pill, and one seeks to have a fetus declared a person. While laws continue to be written, women are still precluded from consideration. As Roslyn Muraskin (2000 375) discusses in her review of abortion law, in the cases heard by courts across the country "in no instance is reference made to women's rights." The laws are passed, they are argued in the courts, and are reviewed on the basis of a constitutional theory of the right to privacy (Muraskin 2000). This theory is highly subjective and open to interpretation. While the Supreme Court has recognized zones of individual privacy, these rights are not outlined specifically in the Constitution (Roth

1999).

As with the policing of pregnancy behaviors, the state and anti-abortion groups have set both the tone and the jargon. They have successfully made abortion about babies, not women's privacy. The state set this tone with its ruling in Roe (1973) and abortion opponents have utilized it successfully. This has allowed the debate to continue. Using the idea of human life versus potential life offers policy makers a safe position. If women continue to allow men to set the agenda for this issue, *Roe v. Wade* will one day be invalidated. Medical technology is advancing to the point that fetal viability is greatly expanding. In-utero exams, diagnosis and surgeries, as well as post-natal advances are making fetuses viable at much earlier stages in the gestational process. Therefore, if fetal viability remains central to legal abortion, the issue will be devoid of privacy. Policy changes may include limited access, bans in many states except in dire circumstances, and abortion could be illegal during most of the gestational period. Essentially the United States could revert to pre-Roe laws and policies.

Abortion relates to the primary role of women in American society, reproducers of laborers. The state needs women to produce future laborers. The expansion of capitalism depends on the exploitation of labor. Women are the providers of these laborers. In controlling this "privacy" issue, the state facilitates the other roles of women. Men predominate power positions and as a result, men write laws. These laws are designed to maintain the relative powerlessness of women. This lack of power facilitates the maintenance of women as: a surplus labor supply, human capital, commodities and alienated workers. The fact that men are overwhelmingly in positions of political power greatly affects this issue through the laws that are written and the court rulings that declare them constitutional. The fact that a woman's right to privacy is dependent upon state permission is clearly indicative of the fact that abortion is not a private matter, but a public one. The state's jargon and its interest in potential life of future laborers has successfully diverted attention away from the real issues, including access to proper health care, prenatal care, contraception, child care, and comprehensive sexuality education. These issues are also at the heart of abortion and deserve attention. It is, however, in the state's interest to avoid providing these services, particularly for poor and economically marginal women. Maintaining social classes is the foundation of capitalism.

## CONCLUSION

The line between what is public and private is perpetually evolving and open to considerable debate. Turkel's (1988) three part typology of Marx's ideas on the distinctions between public and private issues is useful for understanding women's reproduction in the United States. The policies directed at policing and regulating female reproduction appear to involve exploitation, alienation, and inequality. According to Turkel (1988) the first Marxian postulate relates to the public-private distinction as a force that complicates social relations between people and their conditions of life. This is true of the reproductive issues examined herein. Pregnancy is presented as private to a certain point, but it then becomes a public matter. This allows interference into women's lives and acts as a dividing force among women. It enables women to overlook the oppression and disadvantages faced by other women. It allows society to demonize disadvantaged women who harm their fetuses instead of demanding better social conditions for all women.

Marx's second postulate regarding the public-private distinction relates to exploitation and alienation (Turkel 1988). While Marx had many ideas relating to alienation of workers, the one most important to this discussion is the idea that laborers become alienated from their fellow human beings (Marx 2000a). The debates over abortion, teen sexuality, and pregnancy behaviors have forced a divide between those who support reproductive privacy and those who do not. These debates, abortion in particular, have led to a stalemate. Potential lawmakers, judges, and nominees are still faced with questions relating to their positions on reproductive issues as moral issues, not issues of public health. The public-private debate has also allowed the continued exploitation of women in American society. Women who work for small businesses can still be fired for being pregnant. Economic opportunities are still closed to women because they can become pregnant. Women still earn fewer wages than men because they continue to serve as a surplus labor supply (see Nelson &

Bridges 1999 for a discussion of pay inequality).

The final postulate, according to Turkel (1988) describes the public-private dichotomy as useful for defining class relations and principles for conflict. With regard to the issues examined herein, this is abundantly true. The state has a vested interest in potential life and this interest relates to the viability of capitalism. The sexuality of teenage women is policed to protect state resources and to assure healthy future resources. It also assures that some number of women will evolve into the patriarchal model of the family, which is vital to capitalism. The policing of pregnant women's behavior is a matter of state interest because healthy laborers are necessary for the continued expansion of capitalism, and the state must divert attention from social inequalities. The abortion debate is utilized to control the behavior of women. It is vital to the state that women who do not have easy access to these procedures do not gain access. The babies born of these women are the next group of exploited laborers and are vital to the expansion of capitalism.

Abortion, policing the behaviors of pregnant women, and controlling the sexuality of juveniles are most importantly means of defining class relations. The legal institution, which is central to these policies, is an institution that is controlled by men and is utilized to control women (Lerner 1986). While the subordination of women has existed throughout history under all economic models, capitalism has perfected it. Capitalism depends heavily on the accumulation of wealth through the exploitation of labor, and gender biases facilitate this (Parenti 1994). It rewards

> impulses of exploitation, accumulation, competitiveness, ruthless self-interest, ...and indifference to the sufferings of the disadvantaged. (Parenti 1994 149)

The capitalist system in the United States has utilized reproductive issues to divert attention from issues of inequality. This has enabled the state to continue to define reproduction in terms useful to its cause. The idea that a woman has a right to privacy is a fallacy. The fact that women's rights are defined by lawmakers, judges, and courts are indicative of the fact that these private issues are actually public matters and that public-private is a false dichotomy.

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# THE ACTIVE INTERVIEW: APPLICATIONS FOR CRIME AND DEVIANCE RESEARCH

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**ABSTRACT**

For decades, there has existed a disjuncture between the intentions and practices of most qualitative researchers. Many enlist the buzz words of symbolic interactionism or other interpretivist traditions, but a select few remain true to these maxims as they move forward with their data collection and analysis efforts. Holstien and Gubrium (1995) recently presented a provocative new perspective on face-to-face interviewing that specifically seeks to narrow the gap between qualitative theory and methodology. The approach is called the *active interview*. Building on the tenets of symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, and post-modernism, the active interview directs attention towards the nature and dynamics of face-to-face interview-based social science research. The active approach to interviewing conceptualizes the discursive exchange process as a dynamic occasion of meaning negotiation, not a passive question and answer session. The reflexive interviewing strategy that follows is keenly sensitive to issues such as the narrative resources of both the interviewer and respondent, the ways in which a sense of collaborative meaning is negotiated within the interview interaction, and the potential for a single respondent to engage in occasions of *multivocality*. This paper explores various issues and implications that this new orientation, especially as they relate to crime and deviance research. We provide a small-scale research application to illustrate how issues such as respondent selection, interview format, non-conversational aspects of interviewing, and the types of research questions that are posed and pursued by crime and deviance researchers are potentially effected.

> Certain ideas burst upon the intellectual landscape with a tremendous force ....After we have become familiar with the new idea, however, after it has become part of our general stock of theoretical concepts, our expectations are brought more into balance with its actual uses, and its excessive popularity is ended. (Geertz 1973 3-4)

## INTRODUCTION

The above quote comes from Clifford Geertz's seminal 1973 treatise entitled "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In it, Geertz challenged ethnographers to approach their subject matter (culture) and the scholarly representation of this subject matter (ethnographic reports) with a greater degree of care and precision. He went to great lengths to identify the common pitfalls that ethnographers encounter and proposed a resourceful set of potential conceptual and methodological remedies. Geertz recognized that the project of documenting and reporting the patterned aspects of lived experience is the life's blood of qualitative research.

Since the days of Quetelet and Durkheim, scholars have sought to identify a systematic means of studying and reporting the various aspects of social life. However, we have come to the painful realization that this is a daunting task. For example, numerous commentators have accused "positivistic" social researchers of dispensing with the epistemological and ontological bedrock of social inquiry (Cicourel 1964; Denzin 1997; Garfinkel 1967; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Goffman 1959; Gubrium & Holstein 1997; Lyotard 1984; Silverman 1993). The most convenient and frequent targets of these allegations are survey researchers such as Lazarsfeld (1965) or other quantitatively-oriented scholars who rely upon secondary data sources and generally assume that a heavy dose of reliability and validity will allow them to capture the objective realities of their subjects' and subject matters'.

Qualitatively-inclined sociologists have gone a different route but experience their own set of problems. Most of these scholars have been made aware of and/or read extensively about the critical difficulties that go along with the research enterprise. Too often, however, scholars find it difficult to put the preachings of symbolic interactionism, post-modernism, feminism, grounded theory, or naturalism into practice. A recent review symposium that appeared in the Fall 1998 issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* finds Dingwall, Denzin, Gubrium and Holstein calling into question the veracity of a whole host of qualitative approaches, everything from naturalism to post-modernism. Gubrium and Holstein (1997) provide a more

comprehensive critique in which they identify four camps of qualitative inquiry (naturalist ethnography, ethnomethodology, emotionalism, and post-modernism) and then go about identifying instances in which each is guilty of compromising, ignoring, or glossing over critical ontological or epistemological issues. In short, the literature is not wanton of critics who allege that qualitatively-inclined scholars, like their quantitative counterparts, are prone to shortcomings in their research. As one example, Gubrium and Holstein (1997) observe that scholars often enter the field to conduct interview or observation-based inquiries with a sound plan of action but, unfortunately, spend little time considering whether or not their plan will allow them to remain "faithful" to their interpretive intentions.

Not everyone in the discipline of sociology is willing to embark on this type of blind leap of faith that we outlined above. Suffice it to say that the core issues of what Dingwall (1998) calls "methods talk" (reconciling interpretivist theory with methodology) are alive and vibrant among a cadre of qualitative scholars. These are the thinkers who insist that the discipline and its practitioners not proceed with empirical exercises until we have: 1) engaged in a full inventory of what we know about the nature and dynamics of lived experience, and 2) used this insight to devise and implement methodological approaches that are sensitive to these ideological assumptions.

The ramifications of the "methods talk" manifest themselves differently across the various subsections of the sociological enterprise. It is readily apparent that some subsections of the discipline (aging and gender-based research) have a more pronounced tradition of questioning the core assumptions that guide their research. Conversely, other subject areas (crime and deviance) have not engaged in as much or as heated discussion when it comes to the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of their scholarly agenda. This is particularly disturbing given the fact that the nature and dynamics of the subject matter (crime and deviance) leaves room for some of the most innovative methodological developments.

This being the case, the present paper seeks to accomplish three objectives. First, we review a fresh new methodological approach to interviewing, known as the active interview (Holstein & Gubrium 1995). In doing so, we demonstrate how the notion of an active interview differs from traditional approaches to face-to-face interviewing. We argue that this approach provides specific remedies to many of the practical pitfalls that have plagued qualitative sociologists for decades and thus represents a key advance in the longstanding efforts to bridge the gap between interpretive theory and practice. Next, we present a cursory application of the active interviewing as a way of providing first-hand evidence of how deviance scholars can use the active interviewing approach and how doing so impacts the structure and process of one's methodological efforts. Lastly, we reflect upon this empirical exercise to identify the ways in which the interview-based study of crime and deviance research topics are particularly susceptible to these methodological and theoretical quandaries.

## THE ACTIVE INTERVIEWING APPROACH

In *The Active Interview* (1995), Holstein and Gubrium challenge the traditional methodological and theoretical underpinnings of face-to-face interviewing strategies. They argue that most social science researchers conceive of the face-to-face interview occasion as being an objective question-and-answer session between the researcher and the respondent. From this commonly held perspective, the goal of the interview process is to tap into objective meanings and explanations that exist within the respondent's reservoir of lived experiences. Once the details of these lived experiences have been "excavated," conventional wisdom dictates that the researcher proceed by coding, organizing, and conveying the particulars of the topic under investigation.

Building on tenets of ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and social constructionism, the active interview challenges the assertion that the meanings associated with human experiences are reflected in the form of concrete, objective realities. From this critical position, one must question whether social science researchers actually can use a formal, standardized face-to-face interview to somehow locate, discern, maintain, and then capture what we will term objective realities. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) encourage social scientists to move beyond the conceptual issues associated with the production of meaning and

actually apply it to the research endeavor. More importantly, the authors provide us a series of sensitizing concepts and a practical agenda that can be used by social science researchers to focus their conceptual and methodological energies on both the production and products of the meaning construction that takes place in all face-to-face interviews. This argument follows nicely from the recent efforts to dissolve the boundary between theory and methodology. Gubrium & Holstein as well as others (Denzin 1998; Dingwall 1998) observe that increasing numbers of scholars are trying to bridge the epistemological gaps between ethnomethodology and postmodernism via reflexive, story-based manifestations of ethnography and/or narrative analysis. In this regard, the active interview process provides us with a practical, step-by-step mechanism by which researchers can move beyond the traditional orientation to interviewing and thus effectively hold true to the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the modern interpretivist movement.

Critiques and concerns about the epistemological aspects of interview occasion are not new to the social sciences. For decades, scholars have struggled to refine the face-to-face interviewing process in a way that will best assure scientific rigor and quell questions about validity and reliability. Many classic scholars pursued avenues of interpretive thought (See for example Mead 1934; Goffman 1959; Garfinkel 1967; Blumer 1969). Some have even argued in favor of more reflexive and situational conceptions of meaning negotiation. During the recent past, feminist methodologists have placed an emphasis on more reflexive and situational understandings in the social sciences (See Reinharz 1992). And the post-modernist and post-stucturalists have pursued narrative analysis techniques with earnest as of late (Riessman 1993). However, few have been willing and/or able to provide a functional alternative. This is precisely what Holstein and Gubrium aim to accomplish.

Holstein and Gubrium (1995) begin their discussion by summarizing several popular approaches to face-to-face interviewing. They start by outlining what they call the "survey interviewing" approach. This approach, which they associate with the work of Converse and Schuman (1974), applies positivistic survey research ideas to face-to-face interviewing. Holstein and Gubrium assert that students of the survey interviewing tradition treat the interview respondent as a "vessel-of-answers" (Holstein & Gubrium 1995 8). That is, the researcher assumes that the respondent is:

> epistemologically passive, not engaged in the production of knowledge. If the interview process goes 'by the book' and is non-directional and unbiased, respondents will validly emit what subjects are presumed to merely hold within them—the unadulterated facts and details of experiences under consideration. (Holstein & Gubrium 1995 8)

It is important at this point to note that the survey interviewing approach's emphasis on a passive interview subject leaves no room for him/her to engage in the construction or negotiation of meaning. He/she is simply left to provide their unbiased reflections on the issue at hand. As such, the "rationally neutral" researcher is charged with the task of manipulating the questions in a way that explores the respondent's "repository of facts" until the required information is located and extracted (Holstein & Gubrium 1995 10). In other words, this process assumes that information held by each subject is sufficiently well understood and anticipated by the researcher, a priori, to allow this researcher to ask all the "right" questions. Conversely, it assumes that the subject will adequately understand the purpose and the nature of all of the researcher's questions to "accurately" answer them (provide his/her understanding of the truth). The active interview, however, does not make these a priori assumptions. Instead, the terms and understandings that emerge during the course of the interview are discussed and developed together as a negotiation between the interviewer and the subject.

Next, Holstein and Gubrium identify what they refer to as the "creative interviewing" tradition. This tradition, which is often credited to and exemplified by the work of Jack Douglas (1985), emphasizes the need for researchers to build rapport with their respondents and to deeply probe their experiences during the interview process. Here, the goal for the interviewer is to uncover the desired substantive material via conversational cunning and stealth. Holstein and Gubrium maintain that the creative interviewing approach

treats the interview respondent as a "well-guarded vessel of feelings" whose "emotional wellsprings" can only be tapped via the hard work, quick thinking, and interpretation of feelings and cues on the part of a more engaging researcher (Holstein & Gubrium 1995 12). Notice, again, that the creative interviewing tradition infers that there are objective meanings (personal reflections of the "truth") that lay within the outer shell of the respondent. The interviewer is thus charged with the task of uncovering such meanings from amidst the often confusing emotional fabric.

The central focus of both the survey and creative interviewing traditions is fixed on the excavation of substantive information pertaining to the research issue under investigation. As such, all issues related to the content and process of the interview occasion are focused on maximizing the validity and reliability of the information to be obtained (patching together respondents' personal reflections of reality). This methodological focus, by emphasizing content over process, largely ignores the possibility of ongoing meaning production within the interview occasion. Thus, the primary role of the interviewer becomes one of assisting in the excavation process, not fostering interpretive processes. In making this leap of faith, the researcher has all but abandoned the critical underpinnings of the interpretivist tradition.

The post-modernist and post-structuralist movements have gone to great lengths to question the legitimacy of traditional interview-based research efforts. The work of thinkers like Foucault (1979) and Lyotard (1984) or their contemporaries such as Denzin (1997) has called into question our ability to reference the written or spoken word as a means of documenting "reality." Discussions regarding the elusive or "reflexive" nature of scholarly interpretation has given birth to narrative analysis techniques. Here, the researcher steps into the background and allows the respondent to freely express their thoughts and sentiments in a loosely constrained stream of consciousness. Once completed, the researcher does little more than organize excerpts of the interview and provide passing commentary in an effort to minimize his/her bias on the "native's story."

The active interviewing technique seeks to strike a balance between the rigidity of the naturalistic traditions and the passivity of the narrative orientation. In short, it seeks to simultaneously respect and nurture the content and process of the interview occasion. To accomplish this, the active interview approach invites social scientists to consider "what" and "how" questions associated with the interview-based research endeavor (Holstein & Gubrium 1995). *"What" questions* refer to the commonly pursued issues associated with the substantive topic at hand. For example, a researcher who is using interviewing to collect data for a study of sexual abuse in prison would want to know "what" the details of the behavior are. These *"what" questions* are the bread and butter of the naturalistic tradition (survey and creative interviewing) as they direct attention towards offender motives, profiles, rationalizations, etc. and traditionally would be addressed via the structured and/or unstructured interview protocol. *"How" questions*, on the other hand, are more in line with the teachings of the post-modernist and post-structuralist movement (Denzin 1997; Foucault 1979; Lyotard1984) as they focus the researchers energies and attention on the "meaning-making" processes that are an unavoidable facet of all communicative interactions (Holstein & Gubrium 1995 16). Here, the emphasis is placed on the ways in which the interviewer and the respondent negotiate the narrative representation of the research topic within the context of the interview event. This interactional dynamic will be bound to the situation and substantive focus at hand. Referring to the sexual assault example presented above, questions about victim selection would have to be sensitive to the fact that the interviewer and the respondent would likely negotiate and gradually construct shared understandings, narrative linkages, and the narrative products about what constitutes a potential victim for the perpetrator in question. It is likely that he would alter his description of potential victims as he thought about the situation from different perspectives (present day, last month, after breaking up with a particular girlfriend, after being fired by a female boss, etc.).

This conceptually and methodologically progressive idea encourages researchers to broaden their empirical focus and thus move to a contextual level of understanding that far surpasses the conventional approaches to interviewing. For one, the inter-

view occasion is thought to be an observable instance in which two individuals are engaging in a collective meaning making exchange. For example, when interviewing a child molester, one would expect the researcher to query "what" sorts of behaviors and motivations were central to the offender's experiences. However, by using an active interviewing approach, the researcher may be able to illustrate "how" the narrative of these behaviors and perceptions are constructed and conveyed by the subject within the context of and interactional exchange (through language and gestures). This latter distinction is critically different from the former in that it is particularly sensitive to the conversational dynamic and how the individual thinks and talks about the behavior at hand. In effect, the interaction becomes the unit of analysis, not the substantive topic at hand.

An active and thus reflexive view of the interview occasion also has substantial implications for respondent selection. This approach assumes that both the respondent and interviewer can and will take on different positional and substantive roles and pursue different discursive avenues throughout the course of one interview. Thus, the researcher "must consider the question of people representation while maintaining the more traditional concern for sample representativeness" (Holstein & Gubrium 1995 25). The authors suggest that respondent selection should take on a *democratic flavor* that emphasizes the diversity of voices and storytelling potentials in addition to substantive understanding of the topic at hand. In short, researchers are encouraged to take into account the totality of the potential subject's experiences, not just those that are germane to the topic at hand.

The active interviewing approach also has serious implications for how researchers design their interview schedules and implement those schedules via their subsequent interactions with subjects. From the standpoint of the active interview, the interview event is considered as an occasion of where the interviewer and respondent are engaged in *meaning-making work*. It should, therefore, be expected that both the interviewer and respondent will take on and shift into different roles throughout the course of the conversation. This assertion parallels Burke's (1966), Messenger & associates' (1962), and more recently Berg's (2001) idea of dramaturgical research, and is similar to Adler and Adler's (1987) description of the fluidity of roles held by field researchers. However, Holstein and Gubrium move beyond dramaturgy and role shifting. They maintain that both the respondent and interviewer bring a variety of narrative resources into the interview occasion. These include, but are not limited to, one's stock of knowledge on the topic at hand as well as a vast variety of other tangential issues, various verbal and non-verbal discursive strategies, and the potential for what they call "multivocality." Multivocality refers to the ability of both the researcher and subject to self-reflexively move from one social role to another in the course of answering various questions. With every role change, each party will draw from the reservoir of behaviors, knowledge, experiences, understandings, and expectations associated with that role. For instance, in the course of a single interview occasion, a child molester might answer questions from the perspective of a convicted criminal, as somebody's son, as a brother, as an unreliable employee, and so forth. The variety of narrative resources is difficult to predetermine and hence will inevitably be played out during the course of the interview.

This is not to say that the interviewer is defenseless against this situation. Positional shifts can be attributed to the individual's past and present social world. For example, an adult male police officer speaking about the topic of juvenile vandalism might orient to the topic from vastly different perspectives. Namely, he might answer one way when he thinks about the topic from the perspective of a police officer. Then again, he might respond differently if he happens to choose to respond by drawing upon memories from his youth. Similarly, his positional standpoint as a parent of a juvenile son might produce a different response. There are, in fact, a wide range of positional possibilities that can and are adopted by any given individual. As such, the researcher can use respondent background information to anticipate the pending interaction and/or be on the lookout for such shifts during the course of the interaction.

The multivocality proposition raises a series of additional issues when it is applied to the course of the interview event. Namely, if a respondent is capable of drawing on different positional reference points, it is likely that he/she will adopt different voices or positions

during the course of the same interview. In the context of the preceding example, this means that the male police officer will at times be speaking from his perspective as a police officer. At other times, he will likely answer questions from the reference point of a parent. At still other times during the interview, it is possible that he will be speaking with his experiences as a youth in mind. Interview researchers must face the realization that these different perspectives produce different narrative accounts and inevitably disrupt the potential for a simplistic and linear representation of events, attitudes, experiences, etc. Once this realization is achieved, instances of positional shifts must be documented and considered carefully at the analysis stage of the project. Ignoring this situation can significantly compromise the rigor of one's analysis plan and subsequently lead to misguided coclusions.

The active interview approach acknowledges that interview respondents often offer concrete language cues to indicate when they are changing hats (perspectives). For example, they cite generic

> telltale phrases such as 'speaking as a mother', 'thinking like a woman', 'if I were in her shoes', 'after I heard what he said', 'wearing my professional hat', 'on second thought' as being direct evidence of such positional shifts by a respondent. (Holstein & Gubrium 1995 33)

Interviewers, then, must be sensitive to a respondent's positional shifts within an interview. These shifts suggest that the respondent is offering different perspectives on the same topic, hence the researcher is obligated to identify them as such in the subsequent data coding phase of the research. Again, the consequences must be addressed at the data analysis phase.

As a proactive strategy, the active interview can be undertaken with the inclusion of cues built into the interview question schedule. These scheduled cues can actively solicit, and thus better monitor, issues of respondent multivocality. In essence, the researcher can orient each respondent to a given situational perspective through the use of verbal cues such as "how do you see this problem as a: parent, policeman, youth, etc." This strategy would reduce the guess work and, in fact, help bolster traditional notions of validity if the researcher were able to document the transitions. Moreover, this approach to multivocality would present the potential for a coding and analysis plan that could be equally attuned to substantive *"what" questions* as process oriented *"how" questions* in the same research project.

## AN EXERCISE IN APPLICATION

At first glance, it could appear that the active interview represents a radical departure from traditional and conventional interviewing styles. If too narrowly framed, Holstein and Gubrium's suggested approach could be construed as a direct challenge to the fabric of interviewing research as it has been practiced by sociologists for decades. For example, one might predict that Lazarsfeld (1965) or other staunch "positivists" might adopt a defensive posture toward the proposed methodology, thus dismissing it on the basis that it is ideologically charged and thus threatening to the status quo. Similarly, proponents of the qualitative camp, from naturalistic ethnographers who follow in the tradition of Whyte (1943) to advocates of more reflexive or interpretive ethnography such as Denzin (1997), might be tempted to say that the active interview adds little to our understanding of interview-based research. They will claim that scholars have long been aware of the sensitive, complex, and challenging nature of face-to-face interviewing. They too may be inclined to dismiss the utility of the active interviewing approach. While this latter group may concede to the epistemological issues posed by the active interview, they will likely choose to close a blind eye on the discussion as the resulting conceptual and methodological ramifications simply seem too daunting and entrenched to overcome.

We concur with Geertz's observation and offer the following cursory application of the active interviewing approach. Our principle goal is to provide an illustration and as food for thought for both groups of skeptics. For the defensive traditionalist, we hope to show that different ideological positions can coexist and educate one another without threatening each other's existence. For the fellow interpretivist who seeks to banter about the pragmatics of qualitative inquiry, we provide this discussion to illustrate yet another way to enhance empirical rigor.

Obviously, our preceding discussion on how the active interview might apply to crime

and deviance warrants further explication via an actual data collection effort. Ideally, this explication would come in the form of a large-scale interviewing project that was expressly designed to explore pertinent *"what"* and *"how"* questions as they apply to a given form of behavior. Unfortunately, we do not have such a project at our disposal. Instead, we have chosen to conduct a small number of interviews (N=6) to illustrate how this innovative new methodology can be applied to the study of crime and deviance. Clearly, the active interview's most significant contribution is the idea that the form of the interview interaction is as important as the content. This is the principal distinction between *"how"* and *"what"* questions. As such, while we recognize the significance of traditional *"what"* questions, we focus the following inquiry on illustrating the way that the *"how"* questions come to manifest themselves within the interview event. Namely, we designed and carried out a series of interviews that are particularly sensitive to the story telling potential of prospective respondents as well as the anticipated multivocality that would follow from respondents' stock of knowledge.

We have chosen to focus the substance of this application exercise on three pressing criminal justice policy issues — recreational drug use, the use of capital punishment, and society's response to violent criminals. These are three issues that are currently at the forefront of political debates and scholarly discussion. We seek to illustrate how discussion and views on these issues are in a large part dictated by the individual's socio-economic background (sampling concerns) and the point of view from which they orient to them (multivocality concerns).

**Respondent Selection**

Holstein and Gubrium (1995) endorse the use of respondent selection techniques that are equally sensitive to individual-level concerns as they are population concerns. In short, they suggest that the stocks of knowledge of potential respondents are as important as issues of demographic representativeness. The idea is to strike a balance between respondent representativeness and diversity of views and experiences. This can be achieved by thinking more carefully about the way that past experiences impact an individual's views on the subject matter under study.

We submit that this suggestion is particularly pertinent to crime and deviance research. Significant differences in the nature and dynamics of the subject under study (motives, techniques, rationalizations, etc.) often differ substantially from one individual to the next or from one group to the next. For example, Murphy, Waldorf and Reinarman (1990) demonstrated that cocaine dealers, who on the surface appear to carry out very similar criminal lifestyles, actually speak of very different self concepts, motives, rationalizations, and drug use/sale techniques. Murphy and her associates were able to identify these trends because they focused their sampling techniques on individuals, not population parameters. In somewhat more traditional terminology, the democratic sampling strategy proposed by the active interview approach is similar to purposive sampling (Babbie 1998). Thus, the possession of certain types of specialized information or experiences become the primary selection criteria rather than mere concerns of aggregate numbers, or random chance selections. The result is localized data that are invaluable to social understandings of a given phenomenon. More importantly, these data embrace the stocks of knowledge and life experiences of the prospective respondents instead of constructing these factors as instances of sampling bias that justify exclusion from the study. In this spirit, the aforementioned study sought out individuals with experiential histories that made them particularly well suited for the subject matter at hand. At the same time, the researchers were also sensitive to traditional sample representation issues and were thus able to gather demographically diverse groups of respondents.

To illustrate this issue, we purposely selected six individuals with demographically diverse backgrounds but who had aspects of their social histories that would likely influence their attitudes and experiences germane to the topics of study in the present exercise (the death penalty, violent offenders, and drug-related crime).

First, there is Frank (pseudonym), a 21-year old college student (psychology major). He was raised in a traditional, tight-knit, rural household by his working-class parents. He was very close with his two siblings, a brother (26) and sister (23). He has no children but is engaged to be married.

Mark is the second subject. He is a 47-

Table 1 - Respondents' Positional Views on Capital Punishment

| Position | Interviewee | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frank | Mark | Art | Kelly | Beth | Dana |
| General | moderate opposition | strong opposition | strong support | moderate support | strong support | moderate support |
| Parent | strong support | strong opposition | strong support | strong support | strong support | strong support |
| Sibling | strong support | strong opposition | strong support | strong support | moderate support | strong support |
| Job Role | strong opposition | strong opposition | strong support | strong support | strong support | strong support |
| Gendered | moderate opposition | strong opposition | strong support | moderate support | strong support | moderate opposition |
| Spouse | strong support | strong opposition | strong support | strong support | strong support | strong support |

year old male criminal justice professor with a Ph.D. in psychology. He too was raised in a tight-knit rural household by strict working-class parents. He has a younger brother, a 43-year old pharmacist, with whom he maintains a close relationship. Mark has never been married and has no children.

Art is a 49-year old career police officer (24 years on the force). He was raised in an urban household marked by a homemaker mother and a disciplinarian father. He was the oldest of five siblings (two brothers and two sisters). Despite living in the same neighborhood as his entire immediate family, he claimed to rarely visit or speak with them. He has been married for 24 years and has two children (a son, 21 and daughter, 18).

The first of the three females is Dana, a 27-year old salesperson. She was raised in a suburban middle-class household that included a physicist father, homemaker mother, and one older sister. She was very close with her family, and had a serious boyfriend but no children.

Next is Beth, a 42-year old apartment manager. Her parents divorced when she was very young. This resulted in her being raised by her middle-class, hairdresser father in a suburban neighborhood. She was not close with her two older brothers who were raised by her mother in a far away city. She claimed to be happily married for six years and described herself as the proud mother of three pre-teen children.

Finally, there is Kelly, a 45-year old secretary. She was the product of a fairly traditional nuclear, middle-class rural household that included a homemaker mother, systems analyst father and two sisters (35 and 43 respectively). She had been married for 18 years (no children) and she and her husband remained very close with her entire family.

We anticipated that these diverse socio-economic backgrounds would provide us with ample opportunity to explore the possibility that critical differences exist both within individuals and between individuals when it comes to their sentiments on topics such as the death penalty, violent crime, and drug abuse. Namely, we expect that issues such as gender, parental status, employment status, family closeness, and marital status would have a marked impact on how people react to these social issues.

**Conversation Issues**

Within the context of the active interview, respondent selection issues have a direct and critical implications for the conversational substance of interview. The active interview is oriented towards a venue for meaning-making via narrative negotiations. Interviewers, therefore, must plan for and engage in a much more proactive conversational format. In other words, interviewers should be respectful of the individual's capabilities for engaging in narrative production and even attempt to incite such production. These capabilities and directions will be significantly impacted by the individual's background and resulting stock of knowledge regarding the topic at hand. Once such narrative production begins, the researcher can and should monitor and record how it takes shape and plays itself out. This means that the interviewer should come to view the respondent as a kind of collaborator or storyteller, assisting in the production of scientific understandings. This is somewhat of a radical idea. It suggests that the respondent should be granted agency as a storyteller and thus allowed to expound upon his or her own stock of knowledge while the interviewer attempts to connect this emerging narrative back to the substantive issues of the study. In doing so, the researcher becomes equally concerned with what the respondent is saying and how he or she is saying it.

This suggestion that respondents can and do engage in occasions of multivocality has significant implications for crime and deviance researchers. Positional shifts produce different responses to the same questions or topics. As a result, it becomes necessary to adopt a more comprehensive approach to interviewing. For example, researchers can anticipate the possible voices or positional perspectives that a given research topic is likely to produce.

Several instances of multivocality were observed among the respondents detailed above. Each respondent was asked "In general, how do you feel about the use of capital punishment?" Their responses were coded into one of several general categories. This was followed up by a conversational exercise in which the interviewer specifically asked the respondent to think about the death penalty from a variety of different perspectives (as a parent, as a sibling, from their job role, as a man or woman, and as a spouse). Their responses to each of these positional shifts was then recorded and assigned generic codes. A summary of the results are presented in Table 1.

As expected, the original generic death penalty question prompted a variety of responses from the six subjects. Art and Beth expressed strong support for the death penalty citing its retributive effects. Dana and Kelly supported the death penalty, but wanted it reserved for the most heinous offenders, fearing that overuse would breed mistakes and prejudices. Frank was in favor of the sentence in theory, but opposed its use based on a flawed operational character of the justice system. Mark staunchly opposed capital punishment on moral grounds.

Next, each respondent was asked to think about capital punishment from the perspective of a parent. When speaking to the prospect of seeing a son or daughter fall prey to a capital crime, we observed no change in opinion from the individuals who originally expressed extreme views, namely Art and Beth remained unswayed in their pro-death penalty stance while Mark remained staunchly opposed to its use. However, those individuals with moderate views (Frank, Kelly, and Dana) suddenly became strong advocates when confronted with the loss of a child. Conversely, when asked about their views in light of the possibility that their son or daughter might be named as the perpetrator in a capital offense, only Art thought that he would support the State's decision to seek the death penalty. All of the others suspected that they would seek mercy for their loved ones. In fact, the sole mother in the group, Beth (who originally claimed to be a staunch death penalty supporter), had difficulty even entertaining the possibility that her children would be capable of committing a capital offense. She said:

> I guess that I don't feel as strongly if we are talking about my kids. But I guess I would have to say....um....all people deserve to be punished for that. But if it happened, it would depend on why. Were they defending themselves, the family, or was it because they were crazy? No matter what, I don't see it and I still don't think capital punishment...I just think jail.

We note that a similar trend was observed when we asked the respondents to think

about capital punishment from the perspective of a sibling. That is, those with moderate views on the death penalty tended to call for the supreme sentence in the case of sibling victimizations but oppose it in cases of sibling offending. For example, Frank, who originally professed moderate opposition to the death penalty said:

> Anyone that would harm [my brother or sister] would really have to hide from me...that asshole should die slowly and painfully. And, once again, if it were [my brother or sister as the perpetrator], I would not favor capital punishment for them.

Kelly, who originally verbalized moderate support for the death penalty, had a significantly different take on the issue when forced to think specifically about scenarios that included her siblings. She stated:

> I think that it would have to depend on the crime itself. I think that I would want that person [who killed her sisters] punished. My mother would probably take care of my sisters if they messed up. But no, I would want them to get help because I don't see them as people who deserve to be in the same place as those other criminals. If it's someone in your own family, of course you want them to receive a lesser sentence.

As expected, the data in Table 1 illustrate that one's job seems to have an effect on one's views toward criminal justice policies. It should come as no surprise that the police officer (Art) proved to be an unwavering supporter of capital punishment while the Criminal Justice professor with a Ph.D. in psychology (Mark) proved to be an unwavering opponent on the issue, especially when they were asked to think about the issue from the perspective of their respective jobs. For example, Art stated that:

> they [violent offenders] should be removed from society...as a general rule...You cannot let them out to harm other people no matter who they are...I think that violent criminals who prey upon other people have forfeited their right to coexist with us in society. I have strong feelings toward this.

The same level of dogmatism was observed in Mark's strong anti-death penalty position. He said:

> I don't think that taking a life justifies taking another life. [My position] wouldn't change... The same thing applies. It is never right to take the life of another human being.

Both professions (police officer and criminal justice professor) are intimately familiar with violent crime and violent criminals. This stock of knowledge helps forge dogmatic views on the topic. In the case of the police officer, cynicism tends to lead to conservative, retributive views while exposure to scholarly debate leads most academics to espouse stern liberal or humanistic support for rehabilitation.

Turning to the remaining respondents, we note several additional observations. Frank's moderate opposition for the death penalty quickly turned to staunch opposition when asked to think about the issue as a psychology student, he said: "as a student, after learning what I have about the issue, I would have to say that it is of no value in our society." Kelly, the 45-year old secretary with an MBA was a different story. When forced to think about the death penalty as a secretary, she began to speak like a true corporate bureaucrat. This woman who enlisted principals consistent with the selective incapacitation doctrine as the basis for her moderate support of capital punishment, now began to address cost issues. She spoke of the rising costs of prison expenses and now called for the broader use of the death penalty as a way to deal with:

> those violent people who get off too easy. They get trapped in the system, their cases drag on for years...I do really wish that those people would get what they deserve -- to die, now!

A similar, economically-based cost benefit analysis was espoused by Dana, the 27-year old salesperson. When asked about the death penalty from the perspective of her job, this woman, who originally displayed only moderate support for capital punishment, suddenly turned advocate by stating:

> In sales, we learn that we have to get the most bang for the buck. Sometimes you have to just cut your losses and move on. I know that this is a crass viewpoint but business

Table 2 - Respondent's Positional Views on the Societal Response to Drug Use

| | Interviewee/Use History | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Position | Frank<br>No Use | Mark<br>No Use | Art<br>No Use | Kelly<br>Light Use | Beth<br>Heavy Use | Dana<br>Moderate Use |
| General | Treatment | Treatment | Incapacitate | Treatment | Legal | Treatment |
| Parent | Punish | Treatment | Punish | Educate | Help | Punish |
| Sibling | Help | Treatment | Abandon | Educate | Educate | Treatment |
| Job Role | Treatment | Treatment | Punish/treat | Behavior Modification | Prosecute | Abandon |
| Gendered | Judge | Treatment | Economic | Treatment | Educate | Treatment |
| Spouse | Help | Treatment | Abandon | Treatment | Treatment | Ultimatum |

is business.

As each of the above statements illustrates, an individual's view about the death penalty underwent slight to severe changes depending upon what stock of knowledge they were instructed to reference. We concede that there is a great deal of research (see Fox, Radelet & Bonsteel 1990 for a general overview) that demonstrates how individuals' attitudes toward the death penalty can be influenced by the subject matter contained in pencil and paper survey questions (asking vague questions vs. questions that specify sentencing options). However, as we have shown above, the subject matter of the questions are not the only important factor that researchers need to be taking into account. The prospect of multiple viewpoints or positions within a given respondent is also of significant concern.

An individual's views toward the death penalty are an easy target for the maxims of the active interview — of course people can be made to think and speak in a variety of manners about such an abstract and emotionally charged issue. This is an issue that only a small fraction of the general public has any direct exposure to, thus we are prone to varied and transient opinions. At this point, let us turn our attention to a criminal justice issue that a far greater segment of the population can directly relate to — illicit drug use. First we asked each respondent to detail their drug use history. We categorized the responses in general categories (see Table 2). Next, each respondent was asked: "In general, what do you think should be done with people who abuse drugs?" As with the first example, the initial topical question was followed-up by a conversational exercise in which the interviewer specifically instructed the respondent to think about the appropriate societal response to illicit drug use from a variety of different perspectives (as a parent, as a sibling, from their job role, as a man or woman, and as a spouse). Their responses to each of these positional shifts was then recorded and coded. A summary of these findings is presented in Table 2.

Again we observe support for the assertion that interviewer-imposed positional shifts and the respondent's stock of knowledge can and do impact the conversational content of the interview. Much as was the case with the death penalty questions, we note

that one's long term membership in a given profession can yield dogmatic views on those topics that are part and parcel of the daily work of that professional. As a criminal justice professor, Mark is well versed in the drug treatment literature and thus leaves him an unwavering advocate of drug treatment. Conversely, as a police officer who is continuously reminded of the drug use/crime nexus, Art calls drug use "the scourge of this country" and advocates a variety of punitive measures in what he sees as an "all out war against drugs."

Notice how the three respondents with past drug use histories (Kelly, Beth and Dana) exhibit fluid and changing attitudes when suggesting what society should do with drug abusers. Kelly, who admitted to occasional marihuana use as a teenager takes a treatment/education view of the problem. It appears that her limited experience and successful cessation has left her believing that drug users can change or be changed. Dana, who used drugs on a monthly basis during college is even more fluid in her views. In general, she condones treatment, however, when the drug abuse is viewed from a parental or spousal perspective, she insists that strong will can overcome the problem. When asked about how she would respond to drug abuse in her future spouse, she said:

> I would like to think that I could help him overcome that. I mean, together, we could come together and somehow beat it without turning to the outside world.

Finally, we turn to Beth. She described weekly drug use during the major part of her 20's but claims to be drug free for over 15 years. Using drugs in what she deemed "the hippie generation," she exhibits liberal attitudes toward drug abuse saying that "we probably should legalize pot and some of the other lesser drugs, everyone is going to do it anyways." She clearly recognizes the dangers of drugs (especially when it effects those close to her) but is unwilling to support society's right to punish drug users. In short, the sentiments from her hippie days may not be completely behind her.

## LESSONS FOR THE CRIME AND DEVIANCE RESEARCHER

The summary data presented in Tables 1 and 2 are intended to illustrate the active interview in action. Granted, we have chosen some mundane criminal justice topics and applied them to an even more limited sample. However, the data unmistakably illustrate how positional shifts and respondents' stock of knowledge shape interview content. These are critical issues that must be considered more closely in future crime and deviance research. We offer the following suggestions as to how researchers might better implement the maxims of the active interview on a wider basis.

At a minimum, the researcher should tailor his/her interview guide in such a way that it probes for various positional perspectives. For example, let us say that a researcher plans to ask college students about their drug use behaviors. The researcher can anticipate that the subjects are likely to shift their positional responses from at least those of a largely law abiding and judgmental citizen, to that of a weekend indulgent partier. One might additionally anticipate that the student subjects' situational positions may include those of sons and daughters, siblings, and perhaps parents.

Certainly, there may be some potential for respondents to excuse or avoid their "darker side" or deviant behaviors. Moreover, there will be various shifts from one situational position to another depending upon the contours of the questions and the non-verbal interactions between the researcher and the subject. Researchers, especially those engaged in crime and deviance research, must be prepared to use conversational cues to explicitly orient their respondents to a chosen positional perspective. This proactive positionality can be applied to both deviant and non-deviant perspectives. If the researcher expects that his/her respondents will be tempted to speak as college students, he/she should not simply sit back and wait for it to happen. The researcher should prompt the respondent by saying things like "how do you see that as a college student..." or "what about when you are out with your friends on the weekend..." Also, the interviewer should be prepared to ask for clarification from the respondent. This may mean asking them to specify which perspective is conversationally active after a given response.

This proactive conversational strategy should allow crime and deviance researchers to better ascertain how and why their respondents orient towards their deviant be-

haviors. Moreover, this approach should allow the researcher who is doing research on active or known offenders (instead of crime-related attitudes as is the case above) to better demonstrate how neutralizations, rationalizations, and accounts of such behaviors are differentially applied and used by subjects in their social worlds.

Admittedly, an approach to interviewing that is sensitive to or anticipates incidents of respondent multivocality makes for a much longer interview conversation and significantly complicates data analysis issues. Nonetheless, if used proactively, or if at least considered as an additional sensitizing tool within the context of the interview conversation, it can and will make for more comprehensive findings and understandings of whatever topic is under consideration.

An active interviewing approach also stresses the importance that non-conversational aspects of the interview occasion can be in influencing the resulting narrative accounts. For example, the general interview setting, the existing props within the setting, the appearance of the interviewer, and presence of other individuals (in addition to the interviewer and the respondent) can have a significant impact on the interview conversation (Holstein & Gubrium 1995). These are issues that are often overlooked in crime and deviance research. Often researchers jump at the opportunity to talk to hard to reach deviant populations, and ignore the impact that constraining non-conversational factors have on the research. For example, given the fact that self report data from active offenders is generally difficult to obtain, researchers often choose to sample incarcerated offenders. This sampling approach requires the interviews to be conducted in a prison or jail setting. Because of various pressures that the prison experience exerts upon an individual, it is entirely possible that an inmate's conversations with a social science researcher will be affected. Thus, the paranoid and hostile climate may affect the way that the individual conceives of structured discussions, their criminal history, and likely every other aspect of their past and present existence.

In the active interview, the researcher could intentionally invoke changes in the subject's situational position. For example, the researcher might first ask, "How do you feel about issues A, B & C?" Next, the researcher might ask, "How did you feel about A, B & C before going to prison?" The researcher might subsequently ask about A, B & C from other intentional situational positions. By altering these situational positions, and giving explicit cues to the subject about which position to take, the researcher can tap into the multivocality of the interview process.

Crime and deviance researchers who conduct interviews in prison settings rarely consider the implications that the prison setting has on the resulting interviews. Similarly, researchers in other settings are not likely to consider the impact that the nuances of their setting may have on the interview process. For example, research conducted in any institutional setting will inevitably shape the tone and content of the conversation. Also, interviews conducted on the streets or in the "native" settings of the respondents will shape various aspects of the conversation. Even interviews conducted in what may be considered the *safety* of a university office will likely affect the conversational flow. Numerous researchers (Cromwell, Olson & Avary 1991; Decker, Wright, Redfern & Smith 1993; Jacobs & Wright 1999; Murphy et al 1990; Weaver & Carroll 1985) have taken to interviewing active street offenders in their natural environment and have found this approach to produce vastly different findings than have been generated from samples of incarcerated individuals. In short, we must be aware that the conversational element of any interview will inevitably be shaped by the setting in which it takes place. Researchers should be more sensitive to this situation and better plan for and discuss the implications that can be produced. Nowhere in social science research is this more apt than in crime and deviance research where sensitive research topics are the order of the day.

It is also important to note that the appearance of the researcher can have a significant impact on the interviewer conversation. This is particularly telling in crime and deviance research where rapport plays such a significant part in respondent disclosure. Beyond conventional notions of rapport, appearance and non-verbal behaviors of the interviewer can have a significant impact on the narrative negotiation of the interview occasion (Holstein & Gubrium 1995). Crime and deviance researchers need to become more aware of their physical appearance, attire,

and body language. All of these can be reflexively used to enhance the conversational environment of the interview. On the other hand, failure to adequately consider these elements could negatively affect the research process and results.

## CONCLUSION

If crime and deviance researchers are to benefit from the notion of an active interview, they must take a hard look at the reasons behind why they choose to conduct face-to-face interview research as well as the specific implementation of certain methodologies. An active interview allows researchers to realize that there is much to be learned from subjects than sterile answers to stark questions.

The prospect of an active interviewing approach represents a conceptual and methodological bridge between positivistic and interpretive social science orientations. This bridge permits interview researchers to emphasize the traditional substantive *"what" questions* commonly associated with traditional research designs. At the same time, however, the active interview additionally considers the ways by which respondents construct their substantive understandings of the topic under study. In effect, the active interview permits one to address *"how" questions*. This epistemological and methodological compromise allows the researcher to more fully understand the topic, while simultaneously respecting the narrative resources of the respondents. Furthermore, this approach permits a more reflexive and self-reflexive conversational interaction between the interviewer and his or her subjects.

Perhaps even more importantly, Holstein and Gubrium (1995) offer us a practical application of their ideas. Even if researchers do not agree with their epistemological underpinnings, there is much that can be gleaned from the methodological suggestions that focus on more progressive orientations to respondent selection, narrative construction within the interview occasion, multivocality, and the importance of non-conversational aspects of interviewing.

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# RACE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN, LATINA, AND WHITE WOMEN

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**ABSTRACT**

This exploratory study used standardized interview surveys to examine the differences in demographic characteristics, social support networks, marital power, and abusive experiences among White, African American, and Latinas/Hispanic women who sought assistance from a local shelter (N=41). The main research objective was to examine racial differences in the experiences of and responses to intimate relationship violence. Findings derived from ANOVA and a discriminant function analysis identified a set of two variables that characterized the group differences: help from friends and the number of times in the shelter. However, there were no statistically significant differences in demographic variables, marital power, and abusive behaviors among the three groups. White women were most likely to seek help from friends and use shelters among these three groups. Research implications and suggestions for further research are discussed.

## INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence research centering on issues of racial differences is both necessary and problematic. The *necessity* arises out of the racially stratified social service and criminal justice response to both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. While seeking social service or criminal justice support, women of color may encounter racism and suspicion from police and service providers, and may not find emergency shelters able to meet their needs (Ginorio, Reno 1986; White 1994; Zambrano 1985). Men of color who are arrested for domestic violence face similar vulnerabilities at the hands of a racially unjust criminal justice system (Black 1980; Mann 1993). The necessity, in other words, arises from the understanding that domestic violence cuts across all racial, ethnic, and class lines, and the lack of sufficient evidence to support this claim.

The *problem* with research that centers on race occurs when race gets conflated with culture, and domestic violence is transformed into a "cultural value" (Rasche 2001; Torres 1991). For example, in their book, *Behind Closed Doors: Violence in the American Family*, Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz argue that

> ...minority males are violent because they are attempting to live up to a culturally prescribed model of the aggressive and dominant male... . (1981 134)

The problem, in other words, is that research of this type may simply reinforce existing racial stereotypes about communities of color (Lockhart 1991). Studies on the etiology of domestic violence that equate minority cultural values with causality should, therefore, be interpreted with caution – especially within the violent (and racist) context of the United States.

Our study enters this research conundrum on the side of necessity. There is much evidence to suggest that domestic violence cuts across all racial, ethnic, and class boundaries (Agtuca 1994; Burns 1986; Carrillo, Tello 1998; Locke, Richman 1999; Lockhart 1987; Finn 1986; Straus et al 1981; White1994; Zambrano 1985), and that the cause of this violence is not reducible to any specific configuration of these variables. Race, ethnicity, and class may, however, play a role in shaping marital relationships and domestic violence within those relationships and the purpose of our research is to explore the connection between these variables. Specifically, we attempt to examine the differences in demographic characteristics, social support variables (ie, help from friends/relatives, shelter use, and report to the police), marital power, and wife abuse among Whites, African Americans, and Latinos/Hispanics. This study is based on interviews with 41 battered women who sought assistance from a local battered women's shelter.

## PAST RESEARCH

An estimated 6 million American women are physically abused one or more times each year and 1.8 million women are severely battered each year (Straus & Gelles 1990). In a recent study conducted jointly by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control, Tjaden and Thoennes (Ei-

genberg 2001) report that over 1.3 million women were victims of physical assaults by their intimates in the 12 months preceding the survey. This violence, moreover, cuts across class, race, ethnic, and cultural boundaries (Agtuca 1994; Burns1986; Carrillo, Tello 1998; White 1994; Zambrano 1985). What is at issue here is the extent to which the crossing of these boundaries changes the frequency, type, severity, motives, and responses to domestic violence. While most of the spouse abuse literature makes the assertion that domestic violence involves everyone (Rasche 2001), the findings regarding the extent of this involvement are inconsistent.

**Domestic Violence as an Equal Opportunity Crime? Or not?**

Since the advent of the battered women's movement in the 1970s, grass-roots and feminist activists have characterized domestic violence as a crime involving all men and all women as potential perpetrators and victims (Schechter 1982). Research findings, however, have not been as consistent regarding the likelihood of involvement in domestic violence by individuals occupying different racial, ethnic, and class locations.

On the one hand, many researchers have found no significant relationship between race and incidence of domestic violence when controlling for socioeconomic status and other demographic variables (Hutchison, Hirschel, Pesackis 1994; Straus, Smith 1990).[1] Finn's (1986) study of 300 college undergraduates shows that there are no racial differences in attitudes toward physical violence between white and African American students for both genders. Furthermore, Sorenson and Telles (1991) maintain that spousal abuse rates are almost equal between Mexican Americans born in Mexico and non-Hispanic whites born in the United States. Similarly, in her study comparing lower, middle, and upper class African-American and European American women, Lockhart

> found no significant difference between the proportions of African-American and European-American women who reported that they were victims of husband-to-wife violence... . (1991 99)

These findings suggest that race, by itself, is not a sufficient explanatory variable in determining causes of domestic violence.

At the same time, other researchers examining the relationship between race/ethnicity and wife abuse have found that minority members are more likely to abuse their spouses than whites (Anderson 1997; Smith 1990; Straus et al 1981; Ellis 1989). Some studies find minority families to be more violent, especially when the violence is severe (Goetting 1989; Neff, Holamon, Schluter 1995). According to Carrillo and Tello (1998 4), both local and national studies have shown higher spousal homicide rates among ethnic minorities. Specifically several studies they reviewed reported substantially higher rates of marital homicide among African-Americans (Mercy, Seltzman 1989; Zahn 1988) when compared to both Whites and Latinos.

> Using homicide data from nine cities, Zahn found that 47% of family homicides among Whites and 56% of homicides among African Americans were perpetrated by spouses while only 18% of Hispanic family homicides involved spouses. (Carrillo & Tello 1998 6)

Clearly, the relationship between race, ethnicity, class and propensity for involvement in domestic violence has not been definitively established. Similar to the variation in rates of violence in minority communities, explanations for why domestic violence occurs within communities of color also vary.

**Explaining Domestic Violence**

To explain these differences, some researchers argue that racially/ethnically and culturally minority people (Mexican Americans and other Latin Americans) are more tolerant of domestic violence, especially when they live in rigid, patriarchal, male-dominated families (see Rasche 2001). Other minority people (African Americans and Asian Americans) are "more likely to be suspicious and disrespectful of outsiders" and are less likely to report incidents of wife abuse to individuals outside the family (Asbury 1993 162; see also Okamura, Heras, Wong-Kerberg 1995; Scully, Kuoch, Miller 1995). According to Abney and Priest,

> [r]eporting of...abuse by African Americans is further complicated by the realization that

> a significant number of African Americans have experienced negative encounters with the police, criminal justice system, and other social service workers. (1995 20)

Seen in this light, it is possible to conclude that "tolerance of abuse" may, in fact, not be about tolerance at all, but instead a reluctance to report abuse to authorities. Moreover, in 1976 Staples argues,

> [African-Americans and/or lower class] individuals may be over represented in official statistics regarding spousal violence because of their socioeconomic and colonized status rather than their race. (cited in Lockhart 1991 86)

Although African Americans have gained in education, political representation, and white-collar employment (Handy 1984), African Americans are still disproportionately poor and not middle-class (Griffin, Williams 1992). Poverty fosters frustration and anger about one's circumstances, and this increases the potential for violence and abuse. This argument may explain the higher spousal homicide rate as it pertains to African American wives (7.1 per 100,000 population) as opposed to that of white wives (1.3 per 100,000 population) from 1976 to 1985 (Mercy, Saltzman 1989). Oliver stated that interpersonal relations between African American males and females

> ...are prone to lead to the assault and murder of black females at a greater frequency than heterosexual relationships among members of all other racial and ethnic groups in the United States. (1989 264)

McGee also reports that domestic violence is prevalent in the Latino/Hispanic community and the estimated rate of domestic violence is between 26 and 60 percent per year. McGee argues that the reasons for high rates of domestic violence are

> [the] existing hierarchical family structure, limited economic opportunities, and a large power differential between men and women.... (1997 137)

In African American families, gender role segregation is not traditionally expected (Lewis in Boye-Beaman, Leonard, Senchak 1993). Asbury stated that

> [c]hildren are likely to be treated without strict differences determined by sex and are likely to be reared to consider competence in interpersonal relationships more important than competence in dealing with the physical environment. (1993 162)

According to McGee (1997), African American women are expected to perform multiple roles including child-rearing and financial management. By contrast, Latino/Hispanic gender roles are traditionally described as rigid. McGee also maintains that Latinos/Hispanics are twice as likely to live in traditional family structures as compared to African Americans and Whites from the same socioeconomic status. In these family structures, males were expected to be protectors and providers, while females are nonaggressive nurturers (McGee 1997). Furthermore, studying attitudes toward domestic violence between ethnicities and genders, Locke and Richman (1999) found that European-American participants, relative to African-Americans, held more positive views of women and exhibited stronger disapproval of wife beating.

Barnett, Robinson, Baily, and Smith (1984), who studied 41 lower-income African American families, found that 15 percent of African American families indicated "husband" as the decision maker, while 27 percent indicated "wife" and 58 percent indicated both "husband and wife" as the decision maker. Barnett et al stated that lower-income African American families often made decisions jointly. Boye-Beaman et al concluded that

> If, indeed, gender identity socialization differs by race, then it may be reasonable to speculate that a different relationship between gender identity and aggression may also exist for blacks and whites. (1993 305)

Since the late 1970s, a wide variety of research on domestic violence has been conducted. However, we still know very little about the dynamics of domestic violence with respect to race/ethnicity, social characteristics, motives, responses to domestic violence, and the frequency and type of wife abuse. As Torres asserts,

**Table 1 - Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Among White, African American, and Latino/Hispanic Males on Demographic Characteristics (N=41)**

| | White Males | | African American Males | | Hispanic/Latino Males | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variables** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **F** | **df** | **p** |
| Age | 34.53 | 19 | 33.08 | 12 | 36.90 | 10 | .68 | 40 | .514 |
| Education | 12.63 | 19 | 12.17 | 12 | 9.29 | 7 | 3.12 | 37 | .056 |
| Income ($) | 17,542.11 | 19 | 24,558.18 | 11 | 4,453.33 | 9 | 3.27 | 38 | .050* |
| Job | .79 | 19 | .67 | 12 | .40 | 10 | 2.30 | 40 | .114 |

*p<.05

> Research on family violence that makes explicit comparisons between different cultures is needed to obtain knowledge regarding family violence and to analyze family violence in its cultural context. (1991 114)

## METHODS

The purpose of the present study is to examine racial differences in the experiences of and responses to intimate relationship violence. The data were collected using a standardized interview survey methodology. This research, conducted in 1994, included interview surveys with 58 self-identified battered women. A non-random purposive sampling strategy was employed. After obtaining consent from shelter officials to conduct our research, we initiated our selection of respondents. Over a six-month period, each potential shelter resident was asked during her intake interview whether she would participate in our study. All the women approached agreed to participate.

The survey instrument used in this study was developed in collaboration with local shelter advocates. Local collaboration was undertaken, in part, to ensure that the wording and ordering of questions reflected both the local context *and* the assumptions of the survey design. Two uniformly trained interviewers conducted all 58 interviews. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Our primary rationale for using an interview survey methodology was to ensure a higher response rate (Babbie 1992 269).

Because the focus of the study is on the differences in intimate relationship violence among White, African American, and Latino/Hispanic couples, other racial categories and interracial couples are excluded from the sample. The final sample consisted of 19 (46.3%) White women, 12 (29.3%) African American women, and 10 Latinas/Hispanic women (24.4%). Fifty percent (or 5) of Latinas/Hispanic women were Mexican American. African American women were over-represented in the sample, while Latinas/Hispanic women were under-represented. The percentage of whites was close to that of the region's population. Due to the lack of a representative sample, the findings will not be generalized to a larger population. Also, because the information obtained about batterers was collected by asking battered women, the research findings are herein presented with due caution.

The present study contains two sets of abusive behaviors exhibited by respondents' husbands or partners: mental abuse (MENT) and physical abuse (PHYSI). Mental abuse includes: threatening a divorce, leaving home, screaming, and cursing, while physical abuse includes throwing things, kicking, slapping, hitting, and using weapons. For the two sets of abuse categories, respondents were asked to indicate on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "never" (scored 1) to "often" (scored 4). Mental abuse has reliability with a coefficient alpha of .66 and physical abuse has a coefficient alpha of .79.

This study also includes demographic variables such as couples' age, education, annual income, job (whether or not they are employed), marital status, children (the number of children), and length of relationships (in years). Couples' age was measured by asking their current age. The level of their education was measured by asking what level of education they had completed. Income was measured by asking respondents two questions. First, respondents were asked: "What is your annual income, not counting your spouse's?" Second, they were asked: "What is your and your spouse's combined annual income?" For both questions the answers indicate an *approximation* of the annual income reported by respondents. Their spouse's income was obtained by subtracting the respondent's income from the figures given for combined incomes. Re-

**Table 2 - Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Among White, African American, and Latina/Hispanic Females on Demographic Characteristics (N=41)**

| | White Females | | African American Females | | Hispanic/Latina Females | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variables** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **F** | **df** | **p** |
| Age | 34.26 | 19 | 31.17 | 12 | 34.80 | 10 | .70 | 40 | .504 |
| Education | 12.37 | 19 | 12.58 | 12 | 9.70 | 10 | 3.83 | 40 | .030* |
| Income ($) | 9,874.74 | 19 | 5,868.33 | 12 | 9,552.00 | 10 | .56 | 40 | .575 |
| Job | .21 | 19 | .17 | 12 | .60 | 10 | 3.32 | 40 | .047* |

*p<.05

spondent's job was measured by asking whether they were currently employed. This dummy variable was coded 1 if they were currently employed full-time or part-time, and coded 0 if they were unemployed. Marital status is also a dummy variable. If respondents were married they received a 1, and if they were unmarried they received a 0.

In addition, social support variables (help from friends/relatives, shelter use, and report to the police) are included. For the variables "help from friends" and "help from relatives," respondents were asked how often they sought help from friends/relatives in the past. The answer categories consisted of (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) occasionally, and (4) often. For the variable "shelter use," respondents were asked how many times they used the shelter in the past. For the final variable "report to the police," respondents were asked whether they had ever called the police in the past. The answer was (0) no and (1) yes.

The final variable was decision-making power. In the present study, the decision-making variable consists of eight areas of decisions, which were derived from Blood and Wolfe's (1960) original work. Thus family decision-making power was measured by asking respondents who made the following eight decisions: 1. What job should the husband take; 2. What kind of car should be purchased; 3. Should life insurance be purchased; 4. Where should the couple go on vacation; 5. What house or apartment should be selected; 6. Should the wife go to work or quit work; 7. What doctor should be selected; and 8. How much money can the family afford to spend per week on food.

Of the 41 respondents, 31 respondents claimed that their partners made decisions alone in at least one of the decision-making categories. In addition, 31 respondents stated that they made decisions alone in at least one of the decision-making categories. Seventeen respondents reported that they made decisions jointly in one of the decision-making categories. By way of contrast, there were 6 respondents (3 White women, 2 African-American, and 1 Latina) who made decisions separately. Of the 6 women, five women made decisions separately in only one category. Two women for the "doctors" category and three women for the category "car." While one woman made decisions separately in two areas: "car" and "insurance." For our study we focused on decision-making categories most commonly used by respondents. Hence, our concentration on three types of decision-making categories including; male decision-making, female decision-making, and joint decision-making, and our exclusion of the separate decision-making category.

In order to create a decision-making variable, the following calculation was made. The decision-making variable = (# of male decision-making) * (-1) + (# of joint decision-making) * (0) + (# of female decision-making) * (+1). For example, if a respondent's partner made all eight decisions alone, she received a score of -8 for the decision-making variable. By contrast, if a respondent made all eight decisions alone, she received a score of +8 for the decision-making variable. For those couples who made 8 decisions jointly, she received 0. The decision-making variable represents the distribution of power in the household.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

First of all, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the three racial/ethnic groups of males (White males, African American males, and Latino/Hispanic males) on each of the demographic variables (see Table 1). Table 1 shows that there were differences in their annual income levels ($F=3.27$, $p=.05$). On the average, African American males earned more income than White males and Latino/Hispanic males

**Table 3 - Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Among White, African American, and Latino/Hispanic Couples (N=41)**

| | White Couples | | African American Couples | | Hispanic/Latino Couples | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variables** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **F** | **df** | **p** |
| Marital Status | 47.00 | 19 | .45 | 11 | .50 | 10 | .02 | 39 | .980 |
| Number of Children | 1.89 | 19 | 2.75 | 12 | 3.10 | 10 | 2.62 | 40 | .086 |
| Length of Relationship | 7.97 | 18 | 8.59 | 9 | 7.20 | 10 | .12 | 36 | .888 |

**Table 4 - Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Among White, African American, and Latinas/Hispanic Females on Social Support Variables (N=41)**

| | White Females | | African American Females | | Hispanic/Latina Females | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variables** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **F** | **df** | **p** |
| Help from Friends | 2.79 | 19 | 1.58 | 12 | 1.43 | 7 | 7.46 | 37 | .002** |
| Help from Relatives | 2.17 | 18 | 2.00 | 12 | 1.44 | 9 | 1.22 | 38 | .306 |
| # of Times in Shelter | 1.26 | 19 | .67 | 12 | .70 | 10 | .50 | 40 | .613 |
| Called the Police | .68 | 19 | .75 | 12 | .60 | 10 | .27 | 40 | .768 |

**p<.01

Note: Help from Friends: How often have you sought help from your friends? 1) Never, 2) rarely, 3) occasionally, and 4) often; Help from Relatives: How often have you sought help from your relatives? 1) Never, 2) Rarely, 3) Occasionally, and 4) Often; # of Times in Shelter: How many times have you entered the shelter in the past? and Called the Police: Have you ever called the police about the violence in your home? 0) No and 1) Yes.

($24,558.18, $17,542.11, and $4,453.33, respectively). The level of Latino/Hispanic males' annual income was below the poverty level.[2]

Although controversy exists over the association between socioeconomic status and wife abuse, the majority of research demonstrates that those with lower socioeconomic status are more likely to be involved in wife abuse than those with higher socioeconomic status (Anderson 1997; Smith 1990). Our findings, however, have shown that batterers' income varied greatly from $0 to $60,000 for White males, from $0 to $80,000 for African American males, and from $0 to $16,000 for Latino/Hispanic males (findings not shown). Thus, our results indicate that batterers in our sample came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

However, other demographic characteristics were not statistically significant, although batterers' educational levels were almost significant (F=3.12, p=.056). Latino/Hispanic males had the lowest educational level (9.29 years), in comparison with African American males (12.17 years) and White males (12.63 years). In addition, 40 percent of Latino/Hispanic males, 67 percent of African American males, and 79 percent of White males held a job (F=2.30, p=.114). On the average, abusers' age ranged from 33.08 to 36.90 years old (F=.68, p=.514).

Table 2 presents the results of ANOVA conducted to compare the three racial/ethnic groups of females (White females, African American females, and Latinas/Hispanic females) on each of the demographic variables. The results show that there were statistically significant differences in their educational levels and job status. Latinas/Hispanic females had the lowest level of education, in comparison with African American females and White females (9.79 years, 12.37 years, 12.58 years, respectively) (F=3.83, p=.030). Despite the low level of education, 60 percent of Latina/Hispanic women held a job, while 21 percent of White women and 17 percent of African American women held a job (F=3.32, p=.047). Although there was no statistically significant difference in their annual income levels, White women and Latinas/Hispanic women earned more income than African American women ($9,874.44, $9,552.00, and $5,868,233, respectively) (F=.56, p=.575). Comparing their income levels with those of their spouses, we find that White women and African American women earned substantially less than their spouses.

**Table 5 - Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Among White, African American, and Latina/Hispanic Females on Marital Power (N=41)**

| | White Females | | African American Females | | Hispanic/Latina Females | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variables** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **F** | **df** | **p** |
| Husband's Job | 1.21 | 19 | 1.56 | 9 | 1.29 | 7 | .70 | 34 | .505 |
| Car | 1.68 | 19 | 1.89 | 9 | 1.89 | 9 | .30 | 36 | .742 |
| Insurance | 1.69 | 16 | 2.00 | 9 | 1.86 | 7 | .35 | 31 | .710 |
| Vacation | 1.62 | 13 | 2.25 | 8 | 1.80 | 5 | 1.19 | 25 | .322 |
| House | 1.65 | 17 | 2.29 | 7 | 2.00 | 7 | 1.31 | 30 | .287 |
| Wife's Job | 2.18 | 17 | 2.73 | 11 | 2.33 | 9 | 1.22 | 36 | .309 |
| Doctor | 2.33 | 18 | 2.64 | 11 | 2.30 | 10 | .63 | 38 | .539 |
| Food | 2.21 | 19 | 2.50 | 12 | 2.30 | 10 | .45 | 40 | .642 |
| DM | 1.05 | 19 | 1.67 | 12 | .10 | 10 | 1.21 | 40 | .308 |

Note: DM: Decision-making (what job should the husband take?, what kind of car should be purchased?, should life insurance be purchased?, where should the couple go on vacation? what house or apartment should be selected?, should the wife go to work or quit work?, what doctor should be selected?, and how much money can the family afford to spend per week on food?).

**Table 6 - Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Among White, African American, and Latina/Hispanic Females on Wife Abuse (N=41)**

| | White Females | | African American Females | | Hispanic/Latina Females | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variables** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **Mean** | **N** | **F** | **df** | **p** |
| Mental Abuse | | | | | | | | | |
| Threaten Divorce | 2.31 | 13 | 1.67 | 9 | 2.29 | 7 | .70 | 28 | .505 |
| Leave Home | 2.58 | 12 | 2.25 | 8 | 2.83 | 6 | .31 | 25 | .738 |
| Scream | 3.69 | 16 | 3.40 | 10 | 4.00 | 8 | 1.04 | 33 | .365 |
| Cursing | 3.58 | 19 | 3.58 | 12 | 4.00 | 8 | .93 | 38 | .402 |
| Physical Abuse | | | | | | | | | |
| Throwing Things | 2.33 | 12 | 2.50 | 10 | 3.57 | 7 | 2.22 | 28 | .129 |
| Kicking | 2.08 | 13 | 2.70 | 10 | 2.86 | 7 | 1.01 | 29 | .377 |
| Slapping | 2.69 | 16 | 3.30 | 10 | 3.13 | 8 | .82 | 33 | .450 |
| Hitting | 2.78 | 18 | 3.33 | 12 | 3.56 | 9 | 1.71 | 38 | .196 |
| Use Weapons | 1.86 | 14 | 2.00 | 12 | 2.14 | 7 | 13.00 | 32 | .875 |
| MENT | 11.83 | 12 | 10.71 | 7 | 12.20 | 5 | .41 | 23 | .670 |
| PHYSI | 10.82 | 11 | 13.38 | 8 | 14.50 | 6 | 1.32 | 24 | .287 |

Note: MENT: threatening a divorce, leaving home, screaming, and cursing; and PHYSI: throwing things, kicking, slapping, hitting, and using weapons.

By contrast, Latinas/Hispanic women earned more income than their spouses. Their age ranged from 31.17 years old to 34.80 years old (F=.70, p=.504).

Table 3 presents their marital status, children, and length of relationships. There were no differences in these three variables among the three groups. Approximately 50 percent of the couples were married. On the average, White couples had 1.89 children, African American couples had 2.75 children, and Latino/Hispanic couples had 3.10 children. The length of relationships ranged from 7.20 to 8.59 years.

According to Table 4, only one variable differentiated significantly among the three groups of women. White women were more likely to receive help from their friends than African American women and Latinas/Hispanic women (F=7.46, p=.002). By contrast, all three groups of women received assistance from their relatives equally, although Latinas/Hispanic women received less than White and African American women. However, the other two variables ("shelter use" and "report to the police") did not differentiate among the three group of women, indicating that they hold similar experiences. For example, most women had not used a battered women's shelter before (.67 times for African Americans, .70 times for Latinas/Hispanics, and 1.26 times for whites in the past).

**Table 7 - Stepwise Discriminant Analysis Among White, African American and Latina/Hispanic Females (N=41)**

| Step Number | Variable Entered | Wilk's Lambda | P |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Help from Friends | .58 | .008** |
| 2 | # of Times in Shelter | .40 | .003** |

**Table 7A - Eigenvalues**

| Function | Eigenvalue | % of variance | Canonical correlation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1.50 | 99.4 | .77 |
| 2 | .01 | .6 | .10 |

Sixty percent of Latinas/Hispanic women, 68 percent of White women, and 75 percent of African American women called the police at least once in the past, because of their experience of abuse.

According to Table 5, there were no statistically significant differences in the decision-making variable among White, African American, Latino/Hispanic couples (F=1.21, p=.308). This finding is similar to that of Hanrahan (1997) who has found that overall, the power-control measure of the family structure (egalitarian verses patriarchal households) did not have a significant effect on spousal violence. Although there were no differences in the decision-making pattern, White couples were slightly more likely to be male-dominant than Latino/Hispanic and African American couples (DM=-1.05, .10, 1.67, respectively). By contrast, African American couples were slightly more likely to be female-dominant than the other two couples. Despite researchers' argument that Latino/Hispanic households are characterized by power differences between males and females and rigid gender role prescriptions for males and females (McGee 1997), our findings point out that Latino/Hispanic couples are more likely to make decisions jointly than White and African American couples.

Table 6 shows that overall, there were no statistically significant differences in the levels of mental abuse (F=.41, p=.670) and physical abuse (F=1.32, p=.287) among the three groups of women. Our results are similar to those of Gondolf, Fisher, and McFerron (1988) who found little differences in physical abuse among Whites, African Americans and Latinas/Hispanic women in various shelters. Although no significant differences were found, our findings show that Latinas/Hispanic women were slightly more likely to be abused mentally (threatening divorce, leaving home, screaming, and cursing) than White and African American women. However, White females were least likely to be abused physically (throwing things, kicking, slapping, hitting, and using weapons) among the three groups.

**Table 7B - Wilk's Lambda**

| Test of functions | Wilk's Lambda | Chi-Square | df | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 through 2 | .40 | 16.19 | 4 | .003 |
| 2 | .99 | .17 | 1 | .684 |

As a next step, stepwise discriminant function analysis was conducted to identify a combination of variables that best characterizes the differences among the three groups. Table 7 shows that of all variables that examined above (demographic characteristics, social support networks, marital power and abusive behaviors), two variables were found to separate the three groups of women: help from friends (Wilk's lambda=.58, p=.008) and the number of times in shelter (Wilk's lambda=.40, p=.003).

According to Table 7A, the first canonical variable (or canonical discriminant function) accounts for 99.4 percent of the total dispersion, while the second variable accounts for only .6 percent. Moreover, Table 7B shows that after removing the first canonical variable (function), Wilk's lambda is .99 and the significance level is .684, indicating that the centroid (mean) of function 2 does not differ significantly across the three groups. Table 7B also presents that 40 percent of the variance in the discriminant scores was not explained by the group differences (Wilk's lambda=.40). Further analysis demonstrates that the difference between Whites and African American women was the largest (F=9.53, p=.006), followed by the difference between Whites and Latinas/Hispanic women (F=7.20, p=.015), indicating that whites and nonwhites are apart or differ with respect to help from friends and the number of times in shelter (findings not shown). In other words, White women sought help from friends and used a shelter most often, while African American women and Latinas/Hispanic women used social support networks and a shelter much less than Whites.

Likewise, the study on help-seeking behavior by Latinas and White women conducted by West, Kantor, and Jasinski (1998) has

documented that Latinas were less likely than White women to seek help from informal (friends and family members) and formal (psychologists) sources. Unlike our study, however, West et al's (1998) finding has shown no statistically significant difference in the use of battered women's shelter between Latinas and White women.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Our findings have shown that taking into account all variables (demographic characteristics, social support networks, marital power, and abusive behaviors), two social support variables (help from friends and shelter use) are found to play a role in separating the three groups of women (White, African American, and Latinas/Hispanic women) in the local shelter. Unlike Gondolf et al's (1988) findings, Latinas/Hispanic women in our sample were very similar to African American women in terms of the utilization of shelters and the help from friends, in comparison with White women. As for abusive behaviors, our research cautiously confirms the statement that domestic violence cuts across racial, ethnic, and class differences.

When dealing with domestic violence, race matters – but not because people of color are disproportionately over-represented in official statistics. Race matters because the United States is a racist and racially stratified society. Race matters because women and men of color receive different treatment from the social institutions and agencies that constitute our current responses to domestic violence.

The perceptions of women of color to such differential treatment, in turn, shapes their responses to violence against them by men of color. Thus, perhaps they may become suspicious of authorities and reluctant to report incidents of abuse to them. As White notes:

> The traditional response of the black community to violence committed against its most vulnerable members –women and children– has been silence. This silence does not stem from acceptance of violence as a black cultural norm (a view that the media perpetuates and many whites believe), but rather from shame, fear, and an understandable, but nonetheless detrimental sense of racial loyalty. (White 1994 12)

For Latinas/Hispanic women, the dilemma they face in response to intimate violence may be further bound by norms such as "family loyalty" (Zimbrano 1985 160-161) and "loyal motherhood" (Gondolf et al 1988 112). Perhaps, they are not *more* tolerant of abuse, but instead are more reluctant to report incidents of abuse to outsiders and share these incidents with service providers in order to protect their families and children.

Although an increasing number of shelters provides assistance for a racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse group of women, the access to such services may be problematic. For example, Latinas/Hispanic women may not be able to go to shelters due to language difficulties, limited mobility due to larger families, less personal income, more binding marital norms, and discrimination (Heckert & Gondolf 2000). Furthermore, some Latinas/Hispanic women may experience immigration problems, which may prohibit them from seeking help from their friends and/or going to shelters. Although undocumented battered women are now protected by the law, this information is not common knowledge. Some women may, therefore, think that if they report incidents of abuse to authorities they will be deported.

Our Latina/Hispanic respondents received counseling in either English or Spanish, whichever they preferred. They were employed and also earned some income. But not all Latinas/Hispanic women are fortunate to find such shelters. Therefore, local communities and service agencies need to implement shelter programs that can accommodate all women's needs.

In order to measure social support variables more accurately, we need to understand social norms associated with cultural backgrounds. As West et al (1998) note, not all Latinas/Hispanic women possess the same social norms associated with their cultural backgrounds, and not all Latinas/Hispanic women come from the same country, or same region within a country. Therefore, although we do not believe that cultural values are causes of domestic violence, it is helpful to understand various cultural norms and values (Is it a shame to receive outside help? Do they mistrust authorities?), which can assist service provides in becoming more sensitive to those with cultural backgrounds differing from their own.

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**ENDNOTES**

[1]Official statistics are limited in their usefulness for examining the relationship between domestic violence and race/ethnicity. This limitation is due, in part, to the inconsistent use of racial/ethnic categories by criminal justice agencies (Walker, Spohn, & DeLone 2000). For example, arrest data in the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation does not include Hispanics as a separate category, but includes them as whites (Walker et al 2000). Thus, instead of using official statistics such as the UCR, some researchers collect their won data to examine race/ethnicity and domestic violence.

[2] In 1993, the poverty of one person under age 65 was $7,518.00 (US Bureau of the Census 1994).

# EGOISM, THE 'CULT OF MAN' AND THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

**Gayle K. Berardi, University of Southern Colorado, and Thomas W. Segady, Stephen F. Austin State University**

> Time, events, or the unaided individual action of the mind will sometimes undermine or destroy an opinion without any outward sign of change...No conspiracy has been formed to make war on it, but its followers one by one noiselessly secede. As its opponents remain mute or only interchange their thoughts by stealth, they are themselves unaware for a long period that a great revolution has actually been effected.

This quote from Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is heralded by Marilyn Ferguson in her book *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (1980) as the expression of the shibboleth and social consequence of a new, loosely organized "spiritual revolution." This "silent conspiracy" of religious values and beliefs would soon be termed the "New Age Movement" by all those except, ironically, its practitioners. Certainly, very few bodies of beliefs, no matter how amorphous, have been as thoroughly mislabeled or misunderstood as being a truly conspiratorial social movement. For example, Burrows writes:

> The New Age Movement's collusion may not be tightly organized, sharply focused, or bent on apocalyptic totalitarianism...Its premises are not readily apparent and thus not easily critiqued." It is the New Age Movement's unobtrusiveness, its ability to conceal and not to offend, that has consolidated its grip and assured its spread. Without formal organization, it is difficult to net. Not bound by any tradition, it freely spins its, mystical web in endless variations. (in Frost 1992 15)

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW AGE

The "New Age Movement" is not, in any sociological sense, a social movement.[1] For example, Smelser (1963) stipulated that a social movement requires both leadership and some form of regular communication. No one has yet claimed leadership status in the New Age, and this is not surprising, given the highly individualized nature of beliefs (Sebald 1984 109).[2] This lack of leadership also clearly distinguishes the New Age from "alternative religions" or cults, which center on charismatic or even paternalistic patterns (Mitchell 1974). In contrast to the private beliefs and practices of those belonging to the New Age, Jacobs (1989 5) has further argued that widespread membership in alternative religions represents "...the desire to experience both the ideal family and the fathering of a protective and loving male authority figure." As opposed to more formally based alternative religions, the New Age is also characterized by an amorphous body of regular, sustainable, and even fully identifiable communication. The lack of leadership, absence of prescribed public ritual, and routinized patterns of communication have led several observers to conclude that efforts to capture the full range of meanings imputed to the New Age Movement is futile. For example, Jones has remarked that

> ...whereas the New Age originally connoted [the] metaphysical and occult, the category has broadened to the point that it has become a 'catchall'. (1989 32)

Even the expression "New Age" is largely misleading. As Carlson and Motsenbocker (1989 39) have noted: "To locate the New Age phenomena within a cultural character is one task; to identify it with particular time referents is another." Several authors, for example, Geisler (1987), Melton (1988) as well as Carlson and Motsenbacker (1989) have asserted that New Age beliefs were prefigured in the writings of eighteenth-century Swedenborgism. This view posited the existence of an invisible spiritual world, in which "[e]verything in the visible material world corresponded to the spiritual world, though as a lesser reality" (Melton, in Basil 1988 37). Even more closely aligned with contemporary New Age beliefs are the nineteenth-century writings of Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society. For example, in her book *The Secret Doctrine* (first published in 1888), Madame Blavatsky outlined the basic principles of the Theosophy movement:

> (1) An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable Principle, on which all specula-

> tion is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception...(2) The Eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane...(3) The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every soul.

Those who are familiar with contemporary beliefs or writings of the New Age would find that these ideas are not unfamiliar. With its movement into America, the Theosophical Society divided into three groups (Ellwood 1973). The most important of these was headed by Alice Bailey, who founded the Arcane School in New York, with its Full Moon meditation groups. In the writings of American Theosophy, it is possible to detect increasing strains of scientism and eschatological beliefs consistent with those of current New Age beliefs. Bailey was the first explicitly to mention the advent of a "new age" in her book *Discipleship in the New Age* (1944), and it was Bailey's channeling of an entity who prophesied the imminent coming of a great spirit (called Maitrya), who in turn was destined to issue in a new world order.

However, the number of adherents to the various branches of the Theosophical Society has not grown appreciably since the end of the Second World War (Ellwood 1973). Since that time, the beliefs espoused by these groups have become more diffuse. Many of those who hold these beliefs are not likely to claim allegiance to or even have knowledge of these early spiritual associations. It was not until the upheaval of the 1960's that religious beliefs, tinged with scientism and popular culture, again found a significant audience (Hess 1993). Many of these now belong to a category often referred to in sociology as New Religious Movement, or more commonly as NRM's (Chalfant, Beckley & Palmer 1994; Roberts 1995; Johnston 2001; McGuire 2002). The 'New Age' is, by contrast, less capable of definition because its boundaries are less like those of traditional religions. "There is," as Barker (1989 189) succinctly remarks of the new age, "no central organization."

This further expansion of beliefs and adherents, however, has not resulted in a unified organization or leadership. From a sociological perspective, the diffuse nature of the New Age has led to difficulties in capturing the entirety of beliefs under a single conceptual category, in the manner of Troeltsch's sect-denomination typology. Additionally, there are problems in classifying New Age beliefs as essentially a 'formal' or 'informal' religion. Contrary to the definition of informal religion, many of the adherents to New Age beliefs see these beliefs (such as alternative medicine or reincarnation) as central to their worldview and that they are not tangential or transitory convictions. The direction of influence, in fact, appears to be reversed. Instead of New Age beliefs becoming formalized as a new religion, several of these beliefs are increasingly being adopted by practitioners of various formal religions, particularly among those holding more liberal theological beliefs (Donahue 1993). More Americans, in fact, are discovering increasing compatibility between more traditional and New Age beliefs. Wuthnow (1998), quoting an August 5, 1990 Gallup poll, found that 15 percent of those polled described themselves as holding New Age beliefs, and another 12 percent expressed interest in learning more about New Age beliefs.

Thus, these same beliefs do not often find expression in formal settings with accompanying hierarchies and patterned rituals. As a result, there have been several attempts to find an adequate means to categorize these beliefs. Groothius (1986), for example, has argued that there are several basic beliefs held by adherents to the New Age Movement: that 'all' is 'one,' and this 'one' is God; all religions are thus essentially one; a change in consciousness is not only possible but necessary to apprehend this oneness; and that the cosmos is steadily evolving toward this consciousness. Associated with these abstract beliefs, there are a number of concrete convictions, including reincarnation, beings existing beyond the known world, practices involving meditation or other consciousness-changing techniques, and holistic health practices. Olds (1989 62-69) has identified central New Age beliefs as: self-authenticating revelation; the immanence of God; emphasis of the metaphysical teachings of Eastern religions; a unification of 'masculine' logic and 'feminine' sensitivity, and a reliance on the evolution of scientific knowledge as a means of revealing the new world order. The New Age body of knowledge may extend from highly technical writings, such as Capra's two works *The Turning Point*

(1982) and *The Tao of Physics* (2000; first published in 1975), and Goswami's *The Self-Aware Universe* (1995) to popularized quasi-scientific technologies such as astrology and crystal healing. Melton (1990) has stressed the importance of individual and social transformation within New Age beliefs, while Hargrove (1989 96) has asserted that the New Age Movement "...is concerned with personal renewal and identity formation, and hence has an appeal to persons suffering from psychic deprivation." Lewis and Melton (1992) have also noted the emphasis on transpersonal psychology. For example, Groothius has remarked that:

> A wholly new school of psychology is struggling to emerge as the dominant path to human understanding. This new school is called 'transpersonal psychology' and is a logical extension of the humanistic school. Anthony Sutich in the first issue of the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (Spring 1969) described transpersonal psychology (or 'fourth force psychology') as an emerging force interested in 'ultimate human expectancies' not incorporated into behaviorism (first force), classical psychoanalysis (second force), or humanistic psychology (third force). Among those capacities listed are unitive consciousness, peak experiences, mystical experience, self-actualization, oneness, cosmic awareness, and transcendental phenomena. (1986 79-80)

## IS THE NEW AGE A RELIGION?

Much has been made of the 'New Age' being a "false religion," or even being more akin to "magic" (Roberts 1995). The 'New Age'—a misnomer to begin with, and clearly incapable of any easy classification—can be easily dismissed in this way. However, another possibility exists, and that is to consider members of the New Age as religious practitioners, and there is very good reason for proceeding in adopting this approach. Two broad categories of definitions or religion have been traditionally recognized—substantive and functional (Roberts 1995; McGuire 2002). Of these two categories, a substantive definition—both broader in scope and allowing for a more diffuse principle of organization—is capable of capturing the variety and nuances of the New Age. Thus, a functional definition modeled on Geertz's (1966) understanding of religion serves to place practitioners of the New Age well within the boundaries of what is defined as religion.[3]

Geertz places the essence of religion at the level of meaning, and quotes Santayana's (1905) essay entitled "Reason in Religion" as capturing the essence of what a religion is:

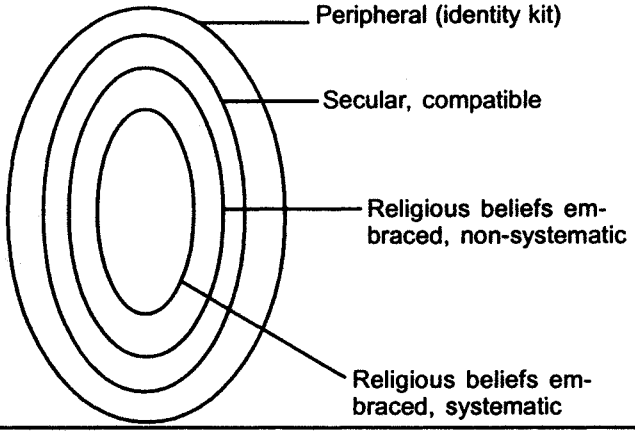
> The vistas it opens and the mysteries it propounds are another world to live in; and another world to live in—whether we expect ever to pass wholly over into it or no—is what we mean by having a religion. (Geertz 1966 3)

Based on this understanding, Geertz develops a carefully constructed definition of religion that has four basic components:

> A religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts (2) to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations...by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz 1966 4)

With every point in this definition, the New Age takes on an increasing reality as a religion. The symbols may be borrowed from other religions or come even from civil religion—Shakti Gawain's comments regarding political life in her book *Living in the Light* (1998) reflect this—but the wealth of symbolism is clearly present. These 'moods or motivations' are indeed long-lasting—certainly more so than in most cults, which are reflexively referred to by sociologists as *religious* cults. The 'general order of existence' can also be along a number of organizing principles that are clothed in an aura of factuality, and this increasingly included science, such as new scientific developments such as quantum physics (Hess 1993; Capra 2000). To those who subscribe to these beliefs, they are no less "real," one can safely assert, than beliefs held by those in more traditional religions—in fact, it appears that increasing numbers of persons still involved in traditional religions are holding beliefs and having spiritual experiences that are highly similar to those of New Age practitioners (Wuthnow 1998 123).

**Figure 1: Levels of Commitment to New Age Beliefs**



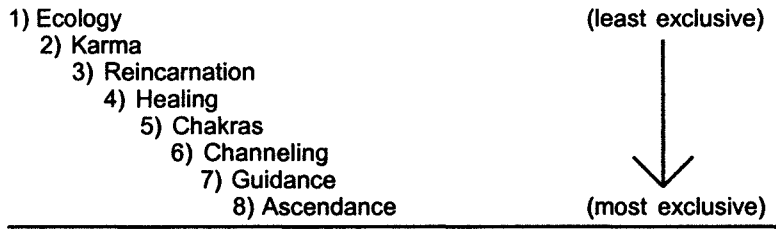

## CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW AGE PRACTITIONERS

Describing the New Age, providing a historical background, and defining the New Age as a religion by utilizing Geertz's (1966) perspective helps to circumscribe the boundaries of the New Age. However, less attention has been given to the characteristics of those who adhere to these beliefs. Many analyzers, as a result, have recognized the diffuse nature of New Age beliefs, while treating the believers as essentially unified in holding these beliefs. This problem stems partly from the sheer number and range of beliefs, and partly from the reluctance of many to identify themselves and members of the New Age. Lewis and Melton have noted that a result of this is that:

> ....[because] individuals, institutions, and periodicals who formerly referred to themselves as 'New Age' no longer identify themselves as such, studies built around a distinction between New Age and non-New Age...become more complex. In particular, one can no longer simply ask respondents in a straightforward manner whether they consider themselves part of the New Age. One must instead rely on more indirect types of questions—such as assent to beliefs in reincarnation, planetary consciousness, holistic healing methods, et cetera—to determine whether respondents belong to the movement. (1992 2)

While asking indirect questions such as these may also be problematic,[4] it nevertheless points to the need for recognizing the differing kinds and levels of commitment of individuals to beliefs commonly included in the New Age. One way of conceptualizing this is to distinguish not only "New Age" members from "non-New Age" members, but to differentiate between those individuals who are peripheral to the New Age from those who have fashioned New Age beliefs into a personal cosmology, and for whom these beliefs constitute a central life interest. Figure 1 depicts this continuum. At the outermost, or peripheral position are those who are 'externally' committed to the New Age, often displaying their commitment in the form of "identity kits" (Goffman 1973). Ironically, although these are often the least committed members of the New Age, they are the most readily identifiable. It is possible that this is a central source of cynicism regarding the sincerity of those identified as "New Agers" by those in the larger society. At the second level are those who hold many of the New Age beliefs, but do not see these beliefs as essentially religious or spiritual. This "secular" level includes those who believe in aspects of the New Age such as environmentalism, planetary consciousness, and possibly karma and reincarnation, while not tying these beliefs in any significant way to a supernatural force, either personal or impersonal. Approaching the core level of commitment of the New Age are those adherents who view these beliefs as a central life interest, although not having formulated them into any systematic hierarchy. Thus, one might include beliefs associated with channeling

**Figure 2: Central Beliefs of the New Age**




or guidance, but not be able to articulate the relationship of these to karma and reincarnation. Finally, those at the core level have embraced the major beliefs of the New Age, and are able to express them in systematic form as a worldview that informs their actions in the world.

Moving from periphery to core, one is less likely to discover those who readily identify themselves as subscribing to the New Age movement, or to New Age beliefs, as Lewis and Melton (1992) have noted. While these beliefs are highly diffuse, it is possible to posit an ideal type that encompasses the central beliefs of the New Age, ordering them in Gutman-scale fashion, from least exclusive to most exclusive, as depicted in Figure 2. Each of these categories, of course, may hold a range of interpretive meanings. Ecology may consist of a straightforward responsibility to be environmentally aware, or it may involve a complex of beliefs about global harmonics and ley lines (Aubyn 1990). The Eastern beliefs of karma and reincarnation are closely connected, but can be linked in sophisticated ways to beliefs and practices related to healing and chakras (psychological techniques such as transpersonal psychology or physical methods such as crystal healing and reiki). The final three categories necessitate a sacred orientation toward an unseen world. Further, the belief in ascendance implies a final connection between one's self and a spiritual realm that might be referred to as God, the Universe, the Higher Self, I Am, or in a number of other ways (Gawain 1986). Those in the core of the New Age are not only likely to believe in ascendance, but it is also probable that they will be able to integrate the other beliefs into a well-articulated cosmology, often accompanied with sophisticated rituals and routines.

The rituals and routines associated with these beliefs, however, may not only be practiced in private (a characteristic of common or unofficial religion), but may be highly *privatized*, in the sense that they are 'stylized' to conform to the individual needs of the practitioner. Thus, the New Age is essentially a private religion, although there are few or no proscriptive rules that prohibit public practice. Moreover, the New Age is privatized in the respect that each adherent to a central body of beliefs may nevertheless utilize highly unique practices. Even the most purely 'spiritual' belief, that of ascendance, may entail a relationship with either a personal or impersonal entity that is uniquely envisioned. There may be public ceremonies and speakers, but the central aspect of the New Age is its emergence as a privatized religion.

## SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF A PRIVATIZED RELIGION

Thus, the "New Age Movement" is doubly misnamed. Adherents to New Age beliefs draw on a number of traditional religious, psychological, scientific and quasi-scientific beliefs and practices, but they do not incorporate these into a formally organized body of beliefs. However, the truly unique quality of the New Age is that each individual's interpretation of these practices serves to *isolate* the individual from others, rather than strengthening relations between individuals. This runs counter to Durkheim's assertion of a central function of religion, which is to increase the sense of belonging among individuals, and forms the basis of their attachment to their society:

> ...religion derives from a double source: firstly, the need to understand; and secondly, from sociability...[However], these factors should be inverted, & sociability should be made the determining cause of religious sentiment. (Durkheim 1965 [1912] 12)

However, the advent and growth of New Age beliefs as essentially a private religion

affirms a second Durkheimian thesis: that religion reflects the values and beliefs of the society which, in turn, forges the identities of individuals

> ...it is society which, fashioning us in its image, fills us with religious, political, and moral beliefs that control our actions. (Durkheim 1951 212)

Durkheim's central thesis, then, is that the religious beliefs of a society reflect the character of the society itself. Conversely, characteristics of a society could be discerned from an examination of its religious beliefs and practices. Traditional societal beliefs, rituals, and practices in Western societies are being replaced by a growing egoism resulting in what Durkheim termed the "cult of man," in which the need of the individual became predominant over the needs of the society. Durkheim's remarks often presage the work of Campbell, who commented in *The Power of Myth* that

> ...ritual has lost its force. The ritual that once conveyed an inner reality is now merely form. [This is] true in the rituals of society and the person rituals of marriage and religion. (1988 7)

The externalization of ritual and its transition to form devoid of significant content may result in a general sense of anomie. Thus, in the *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Durkheim remarked that:

> If we find some difficulty today in imagining what the feasts and ceremonies of the future would consist in, it is because we are going through a stage of transition and moral mediocrity. The great events of the past which filled our fathers with enthusiasm do not excite the same ardour in us, either because they have come into common usage to such an extent that we are unconscious of them, or else because they no longer answer to our present aspirations; but as yet there is nothing to replace them. (Durkheim in Giddens 1972 610)

Durkheim further asserted that, as a social institution, formal, structured religion would decline in influence as the society gained in complexity:

> ...the power which [the force of religion] exercises, becoming more general and abstract, leaves more place to the free play of human forces. The individual...becomes more a source of spontaneous activity. (Durkheim 1965 143-144)

In addition to this situation of "moral mediocrity," then, Durkheim envisioned an increasing distance of the individual from the religious normative constraints that in turn produced what he termed a "collective conscience." With the rise of egoism, or the individual's (perceived) self-reliance, Durkheim posited the further decline of the importance of the religious institution (if not religion itself).

In his masterful analysis of the question of egoism vis-a-vis normative constraints in Book II of *Suicide*, Durkheim further noted a central underlying consequence of egoism to be the isolation of the individual from the society, coupled with a "norm of free inquiry" that is unleashed by the weakening force of formal religion:

> The more weakened the groups to which [the individual] belongs, the less he depends on them, the more he consequently depends only on himself and recognizes no other rules of conduct than what are founded on his private interests...in which the individual asserts itself to excess in the face of the social ego and at its expense... (Durkheim 1951 209)

For Durkheim, then, the decline of religion represented a danger to the solidarity of the society, as well as causing the individual to forfeit a sense of identity and purpose. The "salvation" of identity, as a result, could not be found either in society or within the established religions that were the reflections of the society. Durkheim found this condition to be "pathological" and referred to it as giving rise to misplace religiosity, centering the sacred not in the social, but in the individual, in the "cult of man."

> ...society cannot disintegrate without the individual simultaneously detaching himself from social life, without his own goals becoming predominant over those of the community, in a word without his personality tending to surmount the collective personality. (Durkheim 1951 209)

Somewhat paradoxically, many of those who identify with New Age beliefs have taken these beliefs from the fully-developed cosmology of Eastern religions, in which the "collective personality" is a transcendental monad, universal force that finds expression in the concrete lives of individuals (Won 1989). This is an otherworldly orientation that serves to unite believers through collective, public ritual and through spiritual leaders, whether these are Brahmin priests, yogic gurus, or Buddhist Bodhisattvas. Members of the New Age, however, have largely eschewed both the otherworldly orientation of Eastern cosmology and rejected the importance of following any given religious leader, taking a more eclectic approach to the variety of teachings.

It is consistent with Durkheim's observations regarding the increase in egoism in the West, however, that this trend would find expression in privatized religious practices in which emphasis on individual personality supercedes a collective orientation. Indeed, as Beckford (1994) has noted, the sacred and the social realms have become increasingly divorced from each other, and what social solidarity that remains in postmodern societies now rests on technical-rational foundations. However, the moral component to this solidarity appears to be shifting from public ritual to private meanings in which the "iron cage" of Weber's (1958) brooding has now become something less dramatic: a "postmodern" age which is not so much "new" as indeterminate and without any final mooring.

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**ENDNOTES**

1. Melton (1988) believes the New Age Movement to be a genuine "movement," but defines this movement only in terms of the collective transformative vision of its practitioners, rather than identifying any organizational coherence or permanent leadership.
2. This individuation of beliefs is also a reason, at least in part, for the lack of empirical investigation of the New Age (Melton & Lewis 1992).
3. It may well be, as Roof (1999 88) asserts (quoting Harold Blum) that one significant aspect of the religious experience in America is "the perpetual shock of the individual discovering yet again what he or she always has known." This is also a point made by Tipton (1984) in his *Getting Saved from the 60's* (1984). If this is so, then Geertz's definition retains still greater relevance for defining the New Age, and place practitioners of the New Age even more in the traditional light of more established religions.
4. For example, 25% of all Americans now believe in reincarnation, according to a recent Gallup poll. However, this does not indicate a widespread increase in those holding to related New Age beliefs, such as a belief in karma. Nor does this increasing belief in reincarnation by itself indicate a growing interest in Eastern religions.

# PARENTAL COMMITMENT TO COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

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**ABSTRACT**

This research explores the process of parental commitment to sport participation of children. A survey of 464 USA Swimming households showed commitment increased with the number of child swimmers and the belief that swimming enhances child development. However, higher SES and greater commitment to swimming resulted in greater perceived interference of swimming with family life. Results are interpreted in terms of *family habitus* -interrelated cultural and structural factors associated with the expression of parental commitment.

Parental commitment is a key factor in the sport participation of children, especially when participation occurs in organized, competitive programs. These programs require the expenditure of significant amounts of money for dues, travel, equipment, and coaching, as well as parental involvement in a wide range of activities (Chafetz & Kotarba 1995; Duncan 1997; Hellstedt 1995). These activities include fund raising, officiating, serving on program boards, driving children to practices and competitions, and maintaining gear.

In the past, the majority of youth sport programs were publicly funded and neighborhood-based, so children could manage their participation without extensive parental commitment and involvement. Fees in these programs were minimal. Parental participation usually was limited to volunteer coaching and minor forms of administrative support. However, as youth sport programs have become increasingly privatized, regionally located, expensive, performance-oriented, and highly structured in terms of participation schedules, children have become more and more dependent on their parents to make participation possible. At the same time that youth sports have become increasingly demanding of family resources, many parents have come to see participation in sports, especially performance-oriented, competitive sports, as an important part of the socialization of their children.

In this paper we focus on parental commitment to children's involvement in organized competitive swimming programs that are sanctioned by USA Swimming, the official national governing body for competitive, amateur swimming in the United States. Over 200,000 households are members of USA Swimming. In our analysis, we attempt to answer two primary questions: First, what are the factors associated with parental commitment? Second, what do these factors tell us about the cultural and social context in which a child's competitive swimming occurs?

## RESEARCH ON YOUTH SPORTS AND FAMILY

Past research on youth sports says little about the process of parental commitment to the sport participation of children. Most researchers have dealt with psychological and social psychological questions, and they have focused almost exclusively on the social influence exerted by parents and other socializing agents on young people (see Coakley 1993a, 1993b). The primary concerns of this research are how young people are socialized into sport participation and how parental support is associated with children's enjoyment, enthusiasm, self-esteem, beliefs, goal-orientations, achievement, and continued participation (Averill & Power 1995; Brustad 1996; Hoyle & Leff 1997; Kimiecek, Horn & Shurin 1996; Leff & Hoyle 1995; Power & Woogler 1994). Most researchers have used a *socialization-as-internalization* approach in which external factors shape young people and their sport participation. A few researchers have taken a *socialization-as-interaction* approach. In this perspective, sport participation is closely connected to important social relationships in the lives of young people (Adler & Adler 1998; Coakley & White 1992; Stevenson 1990). Unfortunately, only research by Snyder and Purdy (1982) has focused directly on interactional dynamics between parents and children. It found that socialization related to a child's sport participation is a reciprocal process in which parents are influenced by children, and children are influenced by parents.

Several studies have focused on paren-

tal aspirations to be associated with their children's success in sport (Horn, Kimiecek, Maltbie, Wong, & Rojas 1999; Jambor & Weekes 1995), but none of these studies deals with the actual commitments that parents make to enable their children to initiate and to continue participation. Finally, no studies discuss the complex cultural and social context in which parents make commitments to the sport participation of their children.

The purpose of our study is to identify the statistical correlates of parental commitment and to discuss issues related to the cultural and social context in which these commitments are made.

## METHOD

### Sample

A probability sample of 1200 households was selected from the membership roster of USA Swimming. The Dillman Total Design Method was used for data collection (Dillman 1978). This method calls for researchers to make up to four attempts to contact respondents.

Initially, a packet of materials was sent to each household in the sample. It contained a cover letter explaining the project, a questionnaire, and a business reply envelope. These materials were sent by first class mail to "the parents of: (member's name)." Additionally, a refrigerator magnet imprinted with the logo of United States Swimming was included in the packet as a premium. The packets were mailed in late June, so their arrival would precede the opening ceremonies of the 1996 Summer Olympics.

Three weeks later, a postcard was mailed to all 1200 households. The message on the postcard thanked respondents for their participation in the project—if they had already returned the questionnaire—and it reminded member families who had not responded to please do so as soon as possible. The postcard provided a telephone number to call if the respondent had not received the materials or if the respondent had thrown them away.

Two weeks later, on week five, additional materials were sent to the non-respondents. This packet contained a new cover letter that reemphasized the importance of the project, a replacement questionnaire, and a business reply envelope. The arrival of these materials coincided with the closing ceremonies of the Olympics.

Of 1200 cases in the initial sample, 47 cases contained a bad address, and 53 cases did not qualify for inclusion in the sample because the family had not been affiliated recently with USA Swimming. The effective sample size was 1100 cases. A total of 700 respondents replied by mail. In week fifteen, we attempted to contact someone in the non-responding households by telephone. These attempts produced 67 additional cases, so the sample size was 767 cases. The response rate was 70 percent, but as the reader will see, the working sample size was smaller because of missing data on the instruments. Among the non-respondents are 52 refusals.

### Respondents

Seventy-three percent of our respondents were female, and 27 percent were male. The average age of respondents was 42 years. The average number of people living in the household was 4.4. This number was higher than the national average household size of 2.6 (United States Bureau of the Census 1991). Ninety-five percent of the male heads of household were employed, and 71 percent of the female heads worked for pay outside of the household at least part time.

Respondents were well educated. In the United States, 24 percent of men and 18 percent of women 25 years and older had completed four or more years of college (US Bureau of the Census 1991). Over two-thirds (71%) of the USA Swimming fathers had completed at least four years of college. This percentage was almost three times the national one (US Bureau of the Census 1991). Approximately one-third (33%) of the fathers had earned postgraduate degrees. Among the mothers, over two-thirds (68%) had completed at least four years of college. This percentage was almost four times the national one. Twenty-one percent of the USA Swimming mothers had earned postgraduate degrees. The median income for USA Swimming families was approximately $85,000 per year, and this median income easily placed them above the ninetieth percentile of families in the United States.

The majority of households supported one swimmer (39%) or 2 swimmers (40%). Eighteen percent of the households supported three swimmers, and 3 percent of the households supported four swimmers. No households supported five or more swim-

**Table 1 - Means and Standard Deviations of Measured Variables**

| Variable Name | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| Number of swimmers in family | 1.77 | .83 |
| Number of parental swimming activities per week | 1.86 | 1.03 |
| Number of hours per week spent on swimclub activities | 4.24 | 4.92 |
| Number of times per week parent drives swimmers | 3.51 | 2.32 |
| Percentage of free time parent gives to swimming | 2.97 | 1.18 |
| Swimming interferes with family activities (7-point scale) | 3.68 | 1.67 |
| Swimming promotes quality family time (7-point scale) | 4.51 | 1.60 |
| Swimming enhances home life (7-point scale) | 4.89 | 1.41 |
| Swimming enhances self-confidence (7-point scale) | 6.27 | .96 |
| Swimming enhances scholastics (7-point scale) | 5.08 | 1.38 |
| Swimming enhances social life (7-point scale) | 5.03 | 1.48 |
| Family income (12 ordinal categories treated as interval. The median was "$80,000 to $90,000" per year, category 7) | 7.01 | 3.06 |
| Father's degree (8 ordinal categories, treated as interval. Median was beyond "graduate from college," category 6) | 6.25 | 1.49 |
| Father's occupational level (10 ordinal categories were reflected and treated as interval. Category 3 was "medical," and category 4 was "education.") | 3.64 | 1.63 |
| Mother's degree (8 ordinal categories, treated as interval. Median was just below "graduated college," category 6) | 5.98 | 1.42 |

mers.

**Instrument**

The survey instrument contained forty-six items. Specific items measured involvement in swimming and beliefs about the effects of swimming on swimmers and on the family. The instrument took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Means and standard deviations for the items are presented in Table 1.

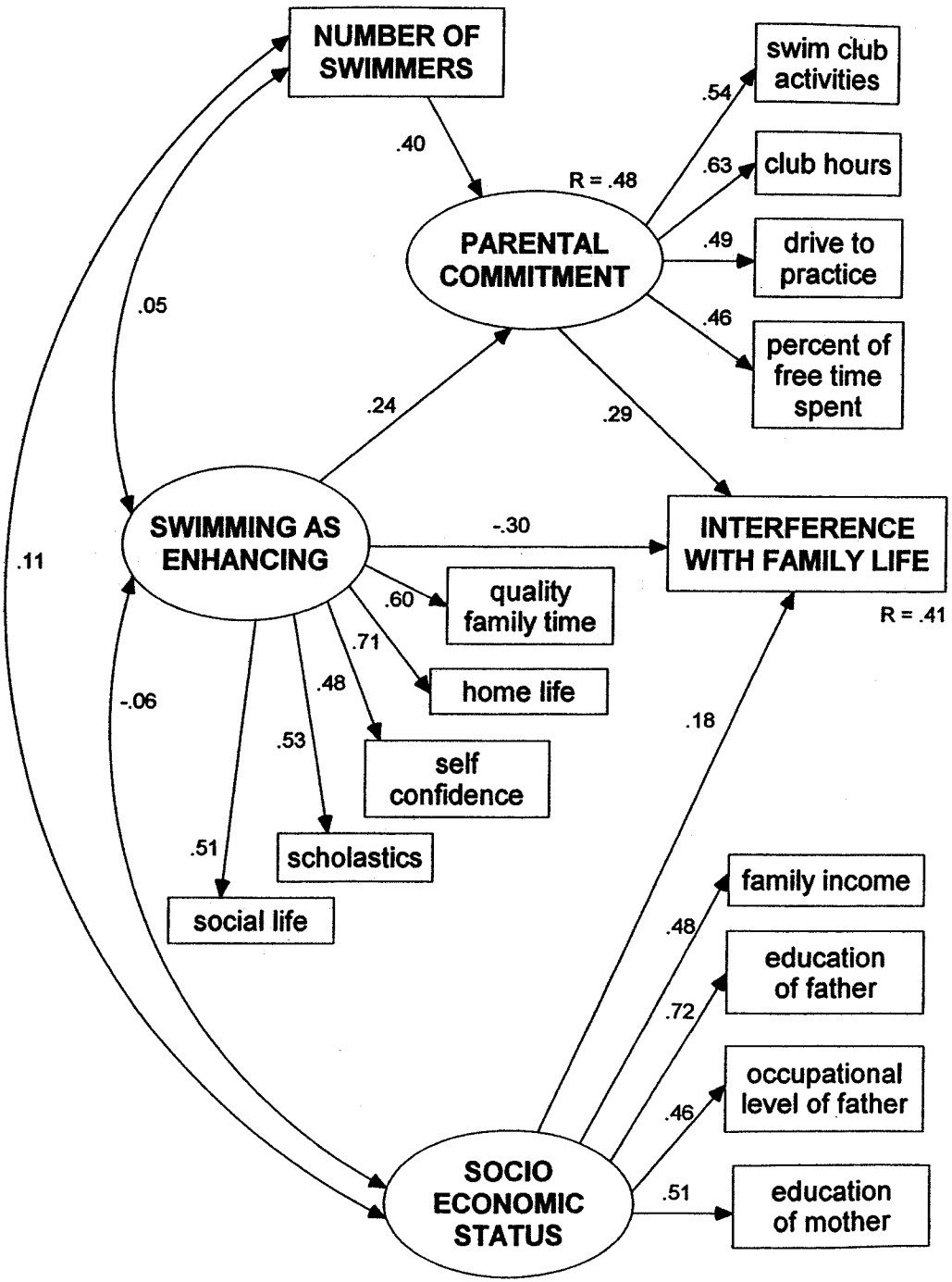
One item on the instrument measured the number of competitive swimmers in the household. Four items measured the socioeconomic status of the family. Eight ordinal categories measured the educational level of the father and the educational level of the mother. These categories ranged from "grade school" to "received post graduate degree." We measured the occupational prestige of father with a ten-point scale that listed "management/professional" positions as the highest category and "clerical" as the lowest category. We used twelve ordinal categories to measure family income. The lowest category was "under $30,000," and the highest category was "over $130,000." We treated these ordinal categories as interval (Bollen & Barb 1981), and then we used factor analysis to create a measure of *socioeconomic status*.

We used four items to measure parental belief in swimming as an enhancement to the personal growth of their children. The common root of these items asked, "In your experience as the parent of a competitive swimmer, to what extent does participation in the sport detract from or enhance the _____ of the swimmer." The items measured social life, scholastics, self-confidence, home life, and quality of family time. Responses were recorded on seven-point response scales that were anchored by "Detracts from," and "Enhances." We used factor analysis to combine these four items into a scale of *swimming as enhancing*.

A single item measured the extent to which the respondent believed that swimming created *interference with family life*. It asked, "How often does your child's involvement in swimming interfere with other family activities?" The seven-point response scale was anchored by "Rarely interferes," and "Often interferes."

We measured parental commitment to swimming using four items. First, we counted the number of parental swimming support activities from a checklist. These activities included chauffeuring, coaching, fundraising, officiating and other support. Second, we counted the number of hours per week that the parent spent in the activities from the checklist. Third, we counted the number of practices per week to which the parent drove. Fourth, we used percentage of free time the parent spent supporting swim-

**Figure 1: Model of Parental Commitment**



ming. Using factor analysis, we converted these items into a measure of *parental commitment*.

**Factor Analysis**

In *exploratory* factor analysis, a collection of variables is analyzed to discover which ones are related to each other and to determine how many factors are needed to account for the interrelations among these variables. In *confirmatory* factor analysis, the researchers are required to predict which variables will "load together" on which factors. We used confirmatory factor analysis and a minimum loading of about .5. For an excellent introduction to factor analysis, see Child (1970). The first prediction was that the four measures of socioeconomic status would load on a single factor, *socioeconomic status*. The second prediction was that the five measures of *swimming as enhancing* would load on their own single factor. The third prediction was that the four measures of *parental commitment* would load on a single factor. We present information on loadings in the section on results.

**Substantive Model**

The substantive model predicted five relations among three factors and two single item measures in Figure 1. In the figure, the three ovals represent the factors of *parental commitment* (four measured variables), *swimming as enhancing* (five measured variables), and *socioeconomic status* (four measured variables). These factors accounted for interrelations among the variables shown in the thirteen small rectangles. Additionally, the model included two single item measures (*number of swimmers and interference with family life*). These measures are shown in large rectangles in Figure 1. The single-headed arrows represent hypotheses about the relations among the five major parts of the model. The double-headed arrows represent non-causal, nuisance correlations between variables.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that the greater the *number of swimmers* in the family, the greater would be the *parental commitment* to swimming. The rationale for this prediction was that when parents supported a greater number of swimming children, demands increased on the time and effort that they devoted to the support of swimming. These demands included coaching, fund raising, officiating, and other activities.

Most likely, the largest increase in commitment should occur when the first child takes up swimming. When a second child in the family takes up swimming, demands on parents are increased further, but because of an economy of scale, the demands do not double. If a third child begins swimming, demands on parents rise again, but the change is smaller than the change from one to two swimmers. Put another way, the slope of the relation between *number of swimmers* and *parental commitment* should decrease as the number of swimmers increases. For instance, if practices were held at the same time and place, parents could drive up to four swimmers (the maximum number in our sample) in the time and distance that it would take to chauffeur only one child. Therefore, support of two swimmers is not twice as much work as supporting just one, but support of additional swimmers creates greater demands on parents, and the model predicts that these demands will be met by greater parental commitment.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the stronger the belief by a parent that *swimming enhanced* the swimmer, the greater would be the *parental commitment* to swimming. Using the model proposed by Fishbein (1979) and Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), beliefs led to attitudes which led to behavioral intentions which in turn led to behavior. Our rationale assumed that beliefs in swimming as enhancing for children preceded commitment. In our study, parents believed that swimming contributed to the personal development of the swimmers across several broad areas such as, social life, scholastic achievement, self-confidence, and home life. This belief led them to become more involved with (and committed to) swimming activities.

A second possible explanation of a relation between belief and commitment is the insufficient justification hypothesis (Festinger & Carlsmith 1959). Parents may have rationalized the *parental commitment* of time and effort by imbuing participation in swimming with more importance. That is, they would be justifying their effort by believing that the children benefited from it (Webben, Straits & Schulman 1974 50-51). Of the two rationales, we considered the former one, attitude-behavior, to be the stronger because prior research has found that attitudes predict behavior quite accurately when the be-

lief and the behavior are very specific and closely related (Ajzen & Fishbein 1977; Ajzen 1982). These conditions match closely the items that were answered by our respondents.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the greater the *parental commitment*, the less the belief that swimming *interfered with family life*. The rationale for this prediction was that family members were required to alter their activities and schedules to support swimming. While they considered this alteration worthwhile, the change meant that the family could not pursue other activities with which swimming interfered. Insufficient justification theory predicts that parents would bring attitudes about *interference with family life* into line with commitment behavior, so parents and children would devalue other family activities, and they would participate less in them (Festinger & Carlsmith 1959). The result of this cognitive "work" would be an inverse relation between *parental commitment and interference with family life*.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the greater the belief that swimming *enhanced the swimmer*, the less that swimming would perceived by parents to *interfere with family life*. The rationale for this prediction was the reasoning that family activities tended to follow a system of priorities in which former activities became subordinate to swimming because swimming was considered highly beneficial. As parents believed that swimming enhanced the personal growth of the children, swimming families willingly (or grudgingly) changed lifestyle. Once this change took place, swimming became a "normal" thing for them to do, so even as commitment rose, they did not perceive greater interference in family activities. Swimming *became* the family activity. Part of this rationale was that parental support of swimmers was a public investment of time, energy and money in the child. It was easy for children, family members, and other parents to see the investment.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that the greater the *socioeconomic status* of the family, the greater would be the perception that swimming *interfered with family life*. The rationale for this prediction was that within these mostly upper middle class families, higher socioeconomic status was a result of more work, up to eighty hours per week for two full-time workers. Higher status also could have been linked to additional social obligations that created greater time pressure and role strain (Domhoff 1998 Chapter 3). While greater economic resources of families with higher socioeconomic standing could have brought freedom from house and yard work, swimming demanded that parents give their time. Therefore, swimming interfered more with family life among families of higher socioeconomic status.

Hypothesis 6 was derived from the first two hypotheses. It stated that the greater the number of swimmers in a family, the greater would be *interference with family life*. The rationale was that different schedules, more driving, and greater cost, would create interference with other family activities.

**Structural Equations Model**

Data were analyzed using a structural equation model (SEM). This technique is unsurpassed in capturing relations among measured and latent variables in a single model (Bentler 1995; Dunn, Everitt & Pickles 1993).

In a preliminary analysis, we tested the model using a listwise deletion of missing data. This procedure defined an entire case as missing if data on at least one variable were missing. The sample size was 464 cases, a substantially lower number of cases than the 767 cases in the original sample. The variable, income, contained the greatest number of missing values (119 cases; 15.5%). An informal rule-of-thumb for imputing data that are missing is that generally, it is safe to impute missing data if fewer than ten percent of the cases have missing data on a particular variable. We violated this rule by using mean substitution to impute missing data. After imputation, we ran the model again (n = 767), and the results were virtually identical to the first run that used listwise deletion of data (n = 464). In the results of the two analyses, no coefficient varied by more than .01, so it was reasonable to assume that the missing data were randomly distributed throughout the cases. Under this condition, either procedure for handling missing data would be acceptable. Analyses below were performed using listwise deletion of missing cases (n = 464). Three reasons encouraged us to make this decision. First, as presented above results with or without imputation were almost identical. Second, listwise deletion of missing values was a

more parsimonious procedure than imputing missing values. Third, we did not want the larger number of cases to overwhelm the $X^2$ test of significance.

Small, representative samples have an advantage in SEM because a $X^2$ tests the difference between a saturated model and a restricted model (see below). With the same degree of association among the variables, a larger sample can result in the rejection of the null hypotheses that the covariance matrices are the same for the saturated and restricted models. This rejection would be evidence for a poorer fitting model. Conversely, the same SEM test with a smaller sample would lead one to fail to reject the null hypotheses of similar covariance matrices; thus, failure to reject it would be evidence for a better fitting model.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) goes a step beyond factor analysis because SEM not only creates latent variables (factors), but also it allows the examination of relations among them. SEM has three main advantages over other statistical techniques. First, as discussed above, in contrast to scales in which the items merely are added, latent variables are better able to represent the subtleties of higher-level, more abstract constructs such as enhancement, commitment, and socioeconomic status.

Second, latent variables are error-free constructs. These constructs represent the shared variance among a set of measured variables (items). By using latent variables (rather than a collection of measured variables), relationships among them can be assessed without the usual "noise" of measurement error.

Finally, SEM provides a *fit index*. This statistic indicates the overall strength of the relationships among all of the variables of the model. In a simple model, the fit index can be the same as a multiple correlation coefficient, but in more complex models like the one shown in Figure 1, the use of several multiple correlation coefficients would be required to describe the findings. A fit index is more elegant than a series of multiple correlations. Fit indices have a range between zero and one, and higher coefficients indicate a better fit between the data and the model. A coefficient of .90 or higher represents a good fit between the model and the data.

Figure 1 summarizes results of the structural equation model of parental commitment to swimming. On the figure, latent variables (factors) are shown by ovals, and measured variables are shown by rectangles. Also, straight arrows represent presumed causal relations, and curved arrows show nuisance correlations that we do not consider causal.

## RESULTS

Means and standard deviations for all variables are shown on Table 1. In addition, items on *parental commitment, swimming as enhancing* and *socioeconomic status* were factor analyzed using maximum likelihood estimates.The four items on *parental commitment* loaded between .46 and .63. Factor weightings on the five items of *swimming as enhancing* to the swimmer loaded above .50. All four items loaded at least .46 on the factor, *socioeconomic status* (see Figure 1).

The first hypothesis stated that a greater *number of swimmers* in the family should predict greater *parental commitment*, and the data supported the prediction ($\beta$=.40; p<.01). This $\beta$ (*BETA*) contained the assumption that the relation was linear. Our rationale (above) predicted that due to an economy of scale, the relation would be curvilinear. A plot of the mean *parental commitment* scores for one, two, three, or four swimmers confirmed a slight departure from linearity. The Scheffe post hoc test showed that parental commitment rose significantly (p< .001) when the number of swimmers increased from one to two. We observed no significant differences in *parental commitment* for increases from two to three swimmers or for increases from three to four swimmers. To gauge the amount of curvilinearity in this relation, we compared the value of a correlation coefficient for these variables (.27) with the value of the $\eta$ (*ETA*) statistic (.28). The correlation coefficient assumes a strict, linear relation, but the $\eta$ reflects curvilinearity of any form. Since the difference between these two measures was so small (.01), we treated the relation as linear, and we reported the $\beta$ above.

The second hypothesis predicted that a greater belief that *swimming enhanced* the swimmer would lead to increased *parental commitment*. The data supported this prediction ($\beta$=.24; p<.01).

The third hypothesis predicted that as *parental commitment* increased, parents would judge swimming to create less *interference with family life*. The data supported the nonzero prediction of the relation between these

variables, but we did not accurately predict the direction of the relation. We expected the $\beta$ to have a negative sign; however, the observed $\beta$ was .29 ($p<.01$).

The fourth hypothesis predicted that as swimming was perceived as *enhancing* to the swimmer, the less swimming would be perceived as *interfering with family life*. The data supported this prediction ($\beta$ =-.30; $p<.01$).

The fifth hypothesis predicted that the greater the *socioeconomic status*, the greater the *interference with family life*. The data supported this prediction ($\beta$=.18; $p<.01$). We conducted additional analyses to test our rationale that greater SES resulted in greater social activity that interfered with family life. Results showed that families of higher socioeconomic status belonged to more golf clubs, tennis clubs, sports clubs, racquetball clubs, running clubs, exercise clubs, regular exercise, and ownership of a vacation home. All relations were significant beyond the.05 level. The data supported the rationale for the fifth proposition.

Finally, the derived proposition was tested. It predicted a direct effect between the *number of swimmers* in the family and *interference with family life*. Results did not support this prediction ($\beta$ =.04; not significant). As reflected by this low $\beta$, we did not observe a relation between the *number of swimmers* and *interference with family* when *parental commitment* was held constant. Therefore, *parental commitment* interprets the relation between *the number of swimmers* and *interference with family life*.

### Fit of the Model

The aim of our structural equation model was to capture the maximum amount of covariance (interrelation) among all of variables by using as few statements of relation as possible (shown by arrows). A *saturated* model would contain every relation, so it would have an arrow connecting every pair of variables. The model presented in Figure 1 was *restricted*. It attempted to capture as much covariance as possible using only the relations shown by the arrows. The Comparative Fit Index (*CFI*) is a measure of how well a model captures all of the covariance (Bentler 1990). The model on Figure 1 had a *CFI* of .94, a value that shows a well-fitting model. The $X^2$ statistic tests the hypothesis that the restricted model is identical to the saturated model. Results showed that the two models were different ($X^2$ =175.77; $p<.01$), but this finding almost certainly was a result of the still large sample size rather than a true, substantive difference. A rule of thumb is that the $X^2$ statistic should be at least twice as large as the degrees of freedom. Our model had 84 degrees of freedom, so the ratio was 2.09, a level just above this threshold. Therefore, the model captured much of the covariance among the variables.

## DISCUSSION

Participation in competitive swimming occurred in households that were financially affluent. Not only was the income for these households very high, but also parents were highly educated, and generally, they had jobs and lifestyles that provided them with considerable security and stability. Most often parents currently were married, they owned their own home, and they had lived in their home an average of six years. These households had considerable resources to facilitate a wide range of family activities, including the sport participation of their children.

Parental commitment to a child's involvement in competitive swimming suggests a pattern of prioritizing. *First*, parental commitment seems to be grounded primarily in beliefs by parents that competitive swimming provides a positive developmental experience for their children. These beliefs emphasize that participation in swimming enhances their children's self-confidence, family life, academic achievement, quality of family time, and general social life. In other words, parents are committed to their children's sport participation to the extent that they believe that participation is associated with positive developmental outcomes that manifest themselves outside the family as well as inside it. For this reason, parents devote many hours of their lives and a high proportion of their "free" time to supporting programs and program organization, providing transportation, and attending club activities. The analyses suggest that an *attitude-behavior* approach is more appropriate than a *minimum justification* approach to model these relations.

The data suggest that the parents of competitive swimmers are highly invested in their children, and that they take a proactive approach to influence their children's lives. Their educational and material resources en-

able them to do so, and their commitment increases in cases where more than one child in a family is involved in swimming.

*Second*, the data highlight a model of parental commitment that involves setting priorities among participation in alternate activities. Even when a child's participation interferes with other family activities, parents tend to persist in their commitment. Parents are likely to say that swimming interferes with other family activities when more than one child in a family swims and when the family's socioeconomic standing is high. This interpretation suggests that when families have the time or money to engage in alternative activities, parents realize that the investment of time and energy into any one activity inevitably precludes participation in other activities. However, the data suggest that parents accept interference with family life. Thus, interference is associated positively with commitment to swimming. In other words, these parents seem to believe that a commitment to participation in competitive swimming is important, even when it interferes with other family activities.

**Inconsistencies in the Structural Equations Model**

The $\beta$ for the relation between *swimming as enhancing* and *parental commitment* was positive. The $\beta$ for the relation between *swimming as enhancing* and *interference with family life* was negative. When these two signs were multiplied, they should have deduced that predicted sign for the relation between *parental commitment* and *interference with family life* was negative, as per our rationale (above). The product of these two "doglegs" (Davis 1971) predicts the sign of the relation shown on the third leg of the triangle. Instead, the observed relation between *parental commitment* and *interference with family life* was positive. That is, increases in parental commitment resulted in greater interference with family life. This finding makes sense, so we are not overly concerned with the mathematical inconsistency. The deduction of the sign of a third relation is unambiguous only when the variance explained by the first relation plus the variance explained by the second relation is greater than 1, and this level of prediction is not often reached in social science research.

**Theorizing About Parental Commitment**

We suggest that the sport participation of the children in the USA Swimming families was initiated and maintained by a particular *family habitus* that emerged primarily among affluent households in the United States in the 1990s. Our use of *family habitus* is an application of Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1978, 1984, 1985; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). He used the concept to identify the social and cultural contexts in which people live their everyday lives. Bourdieu explained that habitus is an open, yet relatively durable system of dispositions, perceptions, tastes, preferences, and activities that are learned through socialization and which are habitually are expressed by people as they make choices in everyday life.

*Family habitus*, as we use it here, refers to a historically and socially situated system of dispositions and associated family activities. It encompasses a combination of a belief system and lifestyle that is associated with the objective material conditions and historical practices that currently constitute family life in U.S. culture. This concept is useful because it enables us to simultaneously consider cultural and structural factors as we try to understand the choices made within families.

Bourdieu was concerned with how lifestyles and the choices that constitute those lifestyles vary with class position. He used concepts such as economic capital (money), social capital (social connections), and cultural capital (education and knowledge about the world) to illustrate how variations in people's "tastes" reproduce patterns of class relations and class. Therefore, actions of individuals and groups are the vehicles through which social class becomes and stays relevant in everyday life. Of course, "taste" is expressed partly through the use of economic capital. People use money to pay for the things and experiences they choose to buy. "Taste" also is connected with what might be called "circles of consumption" in which meanings are given to the lifestyle choices that people make. In this way, people accumulate "social profits" that can be used to open doors to social networks.

For the swimming families in our study, *family habitus* involves a belief system and lifestyle that encompass identifiable dispositions and practices related to social class, family life, parenting, child development, and

sport participation. *Family habitus* incorporates developmental goals and identifies the types of activities that are helpful in reaching these goals. By implication, *family habitus* subsumes appropriate activities that parents think will best facilitate the development of their children while also conforming to the current, widespread belief that parents are directly responsible—and even legally accountable—for the behaviors and the characters of their children. As such, *family habitus* entails the interrelated notions that child development is important, that the development of young people ultimately depends on the actions of parents, and that the type of development most valued among many middle- and upper-middle income parents is achieved best through participation in adult-supervised, rationally organized programs in which skills are built and manifested visibly and progressively through regular performances. Parents also see these programs as sites for accumulating social capital in the form of peer acceptance, and for accumulating cultural capital in the form of knowledge about how to succeed in organized, competitive reward structures such as those that characterize many educational and occupations settings.

*Family habitus* also is expressed in connection with norms that prescribe individualism and personal responsibility (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton 1985). In a society in which individualism and personal responsibility are given such high normative priority, parental support and love can be

> ...narrowed to a reward for doing well. [Under this condition] moral standards give way to the aesthetic tastes and technical skills of the achievement-oriented middle class. 'Being good' becomes a matter of being good *at things*... (Bellah et al1985 60; italics in original).

Competitive swimming is one of these *things*, as are other performance-based, organized, competitive sport programs. Of course, parents also value competence in things other than sports, and they see that competence as an important form of cultural capital for their children. However, organized, competitive sports are special for two reasons. First, they are highly visible in culture at this historical moment, and they involve a form of progressive skill development that enables parents to assess their children's achievement relative to age peers. These two factors have led organized, performance-oriented youth sports to become a high priority activity in the culture at large, but the substantial cost of participation in most high performance sport programs limits participants to those from affluent families.

*Family habitus* among middle and upper-middle income families includes the commitment to participation in such activities; economic capital enables them to act on their commitment. As our analyses demonstrate, parents take this participation very seriously. They are willing to forego other activities so their children can experience a form of measurable, progressive achievement that often is used as an absolute indicator of overall development as well as a barometer of how well their children are doing relative to age peers.

While our data do not deal with other consequences of this parental commitment, we argue that *family habitus* is associated with a high degree of sport specialization, a willingness to pay handsomely for lessons to perfect specialized sport skills, accommodation to nearly year round participation in a sport, and a definition of achievement that emphasizes competitive success.

Social class is directly implicated in *family habitus* because resources are required to supervise one's children throughout the day, to sponsor participation in adult-controlled activities that build individual skills, and to provide a forum in which measurable and progressive individual achievements may be displayed. To the extent allowed by family resources, responses to current expectations for total parental responsibility and accountability take the form of parental commitment to their children's involvement in the best and most reputable organized youth programs available. These programs include—but are not limited to—organized youth sport clubs, programs, and camps. In line with our application and use of *family habitus*, parental commitment to participation in particular sport programs is not unlike the commitment to enroll children in exclusive private schools. Private youth sport programs are popular in affluent communities today because so many parents see them as serving some of the same developmental and control functions served by private schools while at the same time helping their children

to accumulate social and cultural capital. In addition, parents realize that the fees for exclusive youth sport programs, clubs, and camps are less expensive than tuition at most exclusive private schools. Therefore, if the exclusive schools are out of reach economically or academically, the sport programs are a valued alternative.

Inherent in the idea of parental commitment to a child's participation in youth sports is the expectation that the child will benefit. Commitment is in part instrumental. Also inherent in parental commitment is the belief that youth sport participation is intrinsically valuable. In fact, Bellah et al (1985 335) defined "Practices of commitment" as activities that have clear, altruistic intent. They are not simply means to an end; they are ends in themselves. We argue that *family habitus* expresses both instrumental and intrinsic value in the case of parental commitment to youth sport participation.

Finally, it is important to recognize negative factors that may be associated with the parental commitment to organized youth programs and activities that, in part, constitute *family habitus* in middle- and upper middle-income households. The informal play and games that provide unique developmental experiences for children may languish for lack of time and parental encouragement and support. The emphasis on development as measured by progressive achievements and competitive success that is characteristic in organized, performance-oriented youth sport programs may subvert spontaneity, experimentation, and creativity in children's lives (Adler & Adler 1998). The demanding schedules associated with these programs may create what Elkind (1988) has described as "the hurried child" whose everyday life is organized by adults on adult terms. Similarly, parental commitment may be expressed in ways that are perceived as forms of pressure by children (Leff & Hoyle 1995). The loss of autonomy and the constriction of experience sometimes associated with highly structured youth sports may also lead to high rates of burnout (Coakley 1992).

**Policy Implications**

USA Swimming commissioned this research in part to discover how they might increase and diversify the participants in their programs. However, given the family habitus that may be expressed in such a commitment, it could be very difficult for them and for similar private, high performance sport programs to make changes that would encourage participation among a larger and more diverse collection of young people. In fact, efforts to become more inclusive might even erode the basis for current expressions of commitment among many middle- and upper-middle-income families in which parents feel that sport participation enables their children to accumulate relatively valued forms of social and cultural capital. To the extent that family habitus incorporates parental commitment to programs and activities through which their children receive rationalized forms of training that is not available to all children, inclusiveness would not be welcomed (Boulanger 1988).

Future research is needed to explore further the family-based choices underlying youth sport participation to understand how those choices are related to class-based lifestyles and cultures. Prior to conducting additional quantitative studies, there is a need for qualitative studies designed to, 1) identify the processes through which parents choose to commit family resources to their children's participation in organized youth sports, 2) describe how the participation of one or more children fits into the overall lives of family members and the family as a whole, and 3) explain the connection between commitment and participation in terms of the social and cultural context in which they occur. The notion of *family habitus* may be helpful in conceptualizing such research and dealing with the relationship between the cultural and social structural factors that constitute family life for many people in the United States today.

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# PATTERNS OF MODERN CONTRACEPTIVE USE IN INDIA

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**ABSTRACT**

Theoretically informed models are estimated using the MicroCase data set for India to examine "availability" of contraception as predictors of both contraceptive use and method of contraception chosen. More specifically, this research examines the availability of health facilities and health professionals as predictors of total contraceptive use and as predictors of sterilization and IUD insertion as contraceptive methods. Partial support was found for the hypothesis that availability of contraceptives is a predictor of the rate of IUD insertion in the states of India. Availability was not a significant determinant of the percentage of couples using contraception or the rate of sterilization within India.

## INTRODUCTION

Population growth is undeniably of great concern and increasingly so within a global economy. Fertility control is not simply a concern in the West or among the leaders of the Third World, but instead is perceived, with great conviction, as a necessity. Fertility decline has been explained in terms of demographic transition theory since the development of demography as an academic field in the post-World War II era. The classic demographic transition is a theory of population change presented as a classification of evolutionary stages from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates with mortality rates preceding fertility declines. This occurs within a process of socioeconomic development (Chatterjee & Riley 2001). Much initial research examined the societal changes that are likely to bring about reductions in fertility (Friedlander, Okun & Segal 1999). Initially, a lack of development was purported to be the reason that Third World countries maintained high birth rates and failed to follow the classic demographic transition. Subsequently, it was proposed that developing countries did not follow the pattern because they evidence significant differences from developed countries especially in terms of an obvious socioeconomic gap (Teitelbaum 1975). Other research recognized social, economic, and institutional changes as factors bringing about lower fertility rates (Caldwell 1982; Caldwell et al 1982; Caldwell 1999; Greenhalgh 1990). These social, economic, and institutional changes include

> decreased infant and child mortality, the spread of urbanization, increased costs of raising children, rising parental aspirations, increases in literacy, rises in women's status, a rise in individualism, a decline in religiosity, and changes in other cultural factors. (Friedlander et al 1999 4)

Eventually the connection was made between economic development factors and their effect upon the proximate determinants of fertility (Macunovich 1999; Suri 1991).

> The proximate determinants of fertility are a limited set of biological and behavioral variables through which sociocultural, economic, and environmental conditions determine fertility. (Almgren 1992 313)

In other words, the proximate determinants are the intervening variables between economic development factors and decreased fertility rates. John Bongaarts (1982) recognizes the four most important intermediate (proximate) variables in determining the level of fertility in a country to be: marriage; contraceptive use; abortion; and infecundability due to breastfeeding. Lerman (1992) argues that the rising use of contraceptives is the proximate determinant considered the most responsible for lowering fertility rates in developing nations.

Prime Minister Nehru's declaration in the early 1950s that India would establish the world's first national family planning program was of huge importance to India's fertility decline (Acharya 2001). Although there were no immediate declines in fertility, India has recently evidenced significant declines in its total fertility rate (6.2 in 1965 to 3.75 in 1994). Still, India maintains a fast growing population (UN Estimates & Projections 1994). Adding nearly 17 million to the population each year, India is expected to surpass China as the most populous country by 2035 (Chatterjee & Rily 2001; Progressive Population Network 1995; Visaria & Visaria 1997).

There is an undeniable link between a country's fertility rate and contraceptive use,

or the extent to which those at risk (women between the ages of 15 and 49) use modern contraceptives. Furthermore, without attention to the predictors of contraceptive use, there is an inability to accurately assess to what degree policy, in terms of governmental provision of contraceptives and/or advocacy on the part of government and community leaders, will be effective in lowering fertility or even what type of policy is needed (Chatterjee & Riley 2001). Because contraceptive methods have different rates of effectiveness, choice of contraceptive method is also an important factor in determining the type and effectiveness of policy. Thus, the present study examines the determinants of modern contraceptive "use" in India as well as the determinants of the choice between two methods of modern contraception (sterilization and IUD). These are the two most common methods of contraception in India and are also promoted by the Indian government. Attention to availability as a determinant of both "use" of contraception (in terms of the percentage of reproductive-age couples using contraception) as well as "method" of choice (sterilization vs. IUD) may shed light on the contradictory results in fertility studies of the relevant factors predicting declining fertility rates.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the research on the determinants of contraception (use and/or specific methods) in India is somewhat limited as much of the research tends to employ regional studies, take a micro approach, or address only a limited number of factors as determinants of contraception. Clearly, micro approaches provide necessary answers to understanding contraception, and a macro approach ultimately rests on individual level studies. Still, when we seek to understand contraception, it is of obvious use to study the arrangements made by a society for distributing goods and services among its members. Another shortcoming of much of the research is that it seeks to determine how modernization, sociocultural, and economic variables affect fertility rates rather than examining them as indirect determinants of fertility rates, through their effect upon the proximate determinants of fertility. Still, these studies provide useful knowledge concerning the patterns of modern contraception in India.

In the 1950's, a project began in Khanna, India in which for six years, an entire village was provided with nutritional supplements, public health, and medical care. Everyone was taught about contraception and the villagers were responsive to the health care workers and all the services that they brought. A positive outcome was that infant mortality fell considerably. Still, the fertility rate remained high. Eventually the health care workers realized that the reason for the consistent high fertility rate was that the Khanna people liked large families. The villagers were delighted that now, with lower infant mortality and more health care services, they could have the large numbers of surviving children that they desired (Mamdani 1972; Wyon & Gordon 1971). According to Mamdani, the Khanna contraceptive study conducted in the late 1950's failed because it was not economically profitable to limit family size. This supports Caldwell's (1982 152) theory of "Intergenerational wealth-flow." Caldwell argues that the import of Western ideas, particularly the recognition of the importance of the nuclear family and the subsequent acceptance of reversing the wealth flow in the direction of parents to children, brings about fertility decline. Once the wealth flow is in this direction, it becomes rational for the decline in fertility as children then incur costs to parents rather than provide advantages in terms of sources of wealth (care for elderly parents; actual labor provided, etc.). Economic development's role in fertility decline is that it may further the education within a country, thus increasing the import of western ideas, particularly those promoting the nuclear family and expenditures upon one's children (Caldwell 1982, 1999). Because India is largely rural, it is probable that there remains a wealth flow from children to parents, at least from sons (Visaria & Visaria 1997).

According to Bhende and associates (1991), determinants of method choice in India have been of little interest in research because the government has largely determined the methods that are available. This is supported by evidence that currently the government is promoting sterilization and IUD insertion as a means to lower fertility (Progressive Population Network 1995). However, a regional study of a national family planning program permitting contraceptive choice was conducted in an industrial city in the state of Bihar. Findings revealed

several factors as determinants of contraceptive use and method. Among the determining factors, religion/caste affected contraceptive use in that Muslims and Hindu scheduled castes had lower contraceptive use than the other 75 percent of the population. Muslims were less likely to use female sterilization than other nonpermanent methods. Hindus in scheduled castes had lower use of female sterilization, and other nonpermanent methods (condom and natural methods) than the remainder of the population. Reasons for lower contraceptive use among Muslims is due to religious nonacceptance of contraceptives. Second, husband's occupation was a factor determining contraceptive method choice, but not overall use. That is, professionals and managers preferred using the condom, while skilled, non-skilled, and all others, preferred female sterilization. Third, there's a strong positive relationship between wife's education and all nonpermanent methods of contraception, as well as a negative relationship between male and female sterilization (Miller 1986).

The overall level of education within a community has been found to have a positive effect on specific methods of contraception, regardless of the education level of the individual. Findings suggest that Roman Catholic women with moderate education or none at all, living in villages with a higher overall level of education, as opposed to those living in villages with very little overall education, make greater use of family planning methods, especially sterilization (Roy, Rao & Prasad 1991).

In examining the effect that modernization has on fertility in India, Srinivasan addresses modernization's effect upon increases in contraceptive use.

> The use of modern methods of contraception for spacing or limiting the number of children is in itself an index of modernity. (Srinivasan 1988 97)

Srinivasan recognizes the variability between states in the success of family planning strategies. He contends that the factors determining this variability is that the delivery of services varies as well as do demand factors such as those determined by demographic and/or sociocultural characteristics of the population. In examining the factors that may affect contraceptive practices, Srinivasan (1988 98) collected "data on selected social, economic and health service variables" within 15 of the larger states of India. His findings point to the significant effect of "the number of auxiliary nurse-midwives per one million population" (Srinivasan 1988 101) as affecting the rate of contraceptive use among couples. He recognizes that although India is undergoing significant developmental changes due to industrialization, transportation, agriculture, etc., it is likely that the data used was inadequate in capturing these developmental factors, which may account for the lack of significance of these factors. Other factors such as female literacy, urbanization, and income level did not appear strong enough to determine changes in contraceptive use among couples (Srinivasan 1988).

Lerman's (1992) research on contraception in the developing country of Indonesia may provide evidence of factors relevant to contraception use in India. Although Lerman sought predictors of women's current contraceptive method as well as the type of service point selected, he addresses issues of supply and demand. Findings indicate that, in Indonesia, type of contraception service point selected is determined primarily by demand factors. These include both personal and social demand factors constrained by such characteristics as education, income, age, religion, value of children within the culture, as well as prominent cultural attitudes based on religion or politics. However, contraceptive method "choice" may be based more on government provided availability of varying contraceptive methods.

Lerman's (1992) findings indicate that contraception use increases with wife's education and with husband's professional employment. There was a negative relationship between contraception use and being Muslim. There is a positive relationship between contraceptive use and women employed and earning an income. In addition, contraceptive use was higher in economically depressed as well as advanced segments of the country (a curvilinear effect). In regards to predictors of method of choice, women are less likely to use IUD and sterilization as contraceptive methods when their husbands are employed in "sales, service, and manual occupations...than women whose husbands work in agriculture" (Lerman 1992 151).

The importance of education as a component of modernization for lowering fertility

rates in India is recognized as occurring through its effect on many factors, including its effect on the increased likelihood that educated women will be more likely to seek birth control information and contraceptives from family planning facilities and to correctly use them (Suri 1991). Education is also synonymous with increasing literacy rates. Female literacy as a predictor of fertility has been examined from several perspectives. First, female literacy is an indicator of the status of women and their subsequent ability to make their own decisions about their reproductive behavior and to seek information about contraception (Suri 1991). Second, in a society in which males are economically dominant, son preference is the norm (Miller 1986). Sons provide for security in old age and are also a source of status for women, who otherwise have very low status (Caldwell 1982; Miller 1986). These factors promote fertility, thus, increasing the likelihood of larger families (Miller 1986). Third, in line with Caldwell's wealth-flow theory (1982), fertility and female literacy rate have a close affinity because education results in increased exposure to Western ideas, including fertility norms of women from industrialized countries. Finally, research has indicated that educated women are purported to use more effective birth control methods.

Although some research has called for a reformulation of demographic transition theory, due to a lack of relevance for developing countries, still development/modernization remains a factor in declining fertility rates (Teitelbaum 1975).

> Modernization can be defined as the process of transforming society from its traditional values to a modern set of values and associated behavior. (Srinivasan 1988 95)

Modernization's effect upon fertility rates is purported to occur through what has been termed developmental effects either linking, or interchangeably using the concepts of "urbanization," increasing "density," or "industrialization" (Firebaugh 1982; Srinivasan 1988; Suri 1991). Just as terminology has been diverse, so have the purported reasons for modernization's negative effect upon fertility rates. For example, urbanization has been posited to affect fertility rates through its effect upon positive attitudes towards birth control. Furthermore, as industrialization increases and production moves outside the home, there is less need or value in having a large family (Suri 1991). Furthermore, high-density areas (characteristic of urban areas) have been found to aid the acquisition of contraceptive information (Collver, Speare & Liu 1967). Therefore, urbanization is expected to have a positive effect on contraceptive use as well as on contraceptive method.

## HYPOTHESES

While it is evident that social factors affect modern contraceptive use, little attention is paid to the supply of health facilities as an objective element of availability, as well as an element of state structure that may affect contraceptive use. Logically, lack of availability of health facilities may act as an environmental constraint to lower fertility rates through its impact on the insufficient availability of contraceptives as well as insufficient information about contraceptives. The present research postulates that the exposure to contraceptive information is likely to increase the use of contraceptives. Knodel, Chamratrithirong & Debavalya (1987) also recognize the importance of availability of resources in Thailand through the presence of government fertility programs promoting the diffusion of knowledge concerning the ability to control fertility as well as dissemination of contraceptive information. This is important since some prefer to argue that individual motivation, rather than differential access to modern contraception, is the primary determinant of fertility. We must surely recognize that while individuals do make choices, those choices are influenced by societal features that surround them. This is the very essence of sociology.

Lerman (1992) argues that the prevalence of contraceptive use is an important factor for lowering fertility rates as it is an area in which the government has some control. That is, the government allocates health facilities and family planning personnel. This provides the potential to influence personal considerations of both contraception use and method due to the ability to provide information and recommendations. Simmons (1992) also argues the need to recognize the importance of the availability or "supply" of government or private programs whose purpose is to reduce fertility. He posits that both supply considerations, in terms of family planning programs, as well as demand characteris-

**Table 1 - Means, Standard Deviations, Value Ranges and Specification of State Extremes on Variables in the Analysis (31 State and Union Territories of India)**

| | Hosp | Disp | Pract | Nurses | %Hindu | %Muslim | %Castes | %Contra | Rate/ster | Rate/IUD | %Urban | Fem/Lit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean | 17.19 | 52.46 | 528.19 | 274.14 | 65.34 | 11.95 | 12.23 | 23.82 | 40.46 | 21.35 | 27.02 | 31.6 |
| Std. Dev | 17.38 | 44.77 | 300.81 | 263.43 | 31.25 | 19.56 | 7.86 | 8.00 | 31.17 | 22.20 | 20.60 | 14.76 |
| Range of values | 1.36 to 77.98 | 2.88 to 200.00 | 240.06 to 1375.58 | 53.27 to 1044.19 | 3.1 to 96.20 | 0 to 93.70 | .03 to 26.87 | 11 to 37 | 2.70 to 100.70 | 1.20 to 78.40 | 6.70 to 93.60 | 11.30 to 65.70 |
| State Extremes | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lowest | Naga-land | Naga-land | Uttar Pradesh | Himachal Pradesh | Lakshadweep | Sikkim | Mizoram | Jammu & Kashmir | Naga-land | Mizoram | Arunachal Pradesh | Rajasthan |
| Highest | Goa, Daman & Diu | A.&N. Islands | Punjab | Punjab | Orissa | Lakshadweep | Punjab | Maharashtra | Pondicherry | Punjab | Chandigarh | Kerala |

tics, influenced by sociocultural and demographic characteristics, influence fertility. Myrdal (1968) recognized that, in conjunction with economic and social development, government sponsored availability and measures to spread contraception are the keys to lowering fertility rates. Yet studies are limited. Moreover, according to Tsui (1985), studies using World Fertility Survey data examine contraceptive availability from the perspective of "perceived availability" as this is the type of data available.

The present study postulates that the exposure to contraceptive information is likely to increase the total use of contraceptives, thus, it is hypothesized that availability (in terms of supply) of health facilities and health professionals is a predictor of contraceptive use (measured in terms of the percentage of reproductive-age couples using contraception). In addition, because India employs government policy promoting sterilization and IUD insertion, it is hypothesized that availability (in terms of supply) of health facilities and health professionals is also a predictor of sterilization and IUD insertion as contraceptive methods. Therefore, both choice to use contraception as well as method chosen would logically be affected by availability considerations.

## DATA AND METHODS

### Sample

MicroCase data set for India was utilized for this study. MicroCase is a complete statistical analysis and data management system created for social scientists. The MicroCase data set consists of aggregate data from the 31 states and "Union Territories" of India. There are 194 variables in the primary file, all converted into rates. A secondary file containing raw data has 291 variables. The data are from three sources, *India's Statistical Abstract*, the World Bank's 1990 report, "India: Trends, Issues and Options", and *The Statistical Pocket Book* (1990). A problem within the data is the underreporting from many states and territories. This has substantially reduced the number of cases in many of the models.

### Variables

The models to be tested specified the effect of availability of contraception (in terms of health facilities and health professionals) on contraceptive use and choice of method

after controlling for a number of variables that might be related to both contraceptive use and choice of contraceptive method, and so might have rendered the relationship spurious. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of the variables analyzed in this paper, indicating not only the means, standard deviations and ranges of all variables, but also indicating which states are in the extremes on each measure.

**Dependent variables.** Contraceptive use and contraceptive method are the dependent variables. The following three variables comprise the three dependent variables, with the first variable measuring "use" and the second and third variables measuring "method."

1. The percentage of reproductive-age couples using contraception (%CONTR) (Values range from 11 to 37 percent)
2. The rate (out of 1000) of the population sterilized (RATE/STER) (Values range from 2.7 to 100.7)
3. The rate (out of 1000) of IUD insertions (RATE/IUD) (Values range from 1.2 to 78.4)

**Independent variables.** The independent variable of interest is the "availability" of modern contraceptives. These variables were generated by dividing each independent variable of interest (the number of hospitals, dispensaries, practitioners and nurses) by the population and then multiplying by 1000. Each of the following four proxy variables for availability are expected to be positively related to contraceptive use and method:

1. The rate (per 1000 population) of hospitals (HOSP) (Values range from 1.36 to 77.98)
2. The rate (per 1000 population) of dispensaries (DISP) (Values range from 2.88 to 200.00)
3. The rate (per 1000 population) of practitioners (PRACT) (Values range from 240.06 to 1375.58)
4. The rate (per 1000 population) of nurses (NURSES) (Values range from 53.27 to 1044.19)

**Control variables.** Additional variables have been proposed within the literature to affect fertility rates and, therefore, have been included in the models. These include the female literacy rate, the extent of development/modernization, the percentage of the population that is Muslim and Hindu, as well as the percentage of the population who are members of a scheduled caste.

Most studies indicate a close relationship between female literacy rate and fertility rates (Kapoor 1991; Srinivasan 1988; Suri 1991). The female literacy rate (FEM/LIT) of a population is expected to be positively related to both contraceptive use and method.

Urbanization (%URBAN) has been included as a control variable as a proxy for development/modernization. The theory of demographic transition was a catalyst to later affirming modernization's role in affecting fertility rates (Coale 1973).

The percentage of the population Muslim (%MUSLIM) and percentage Hindu (%HINDU) have been included as control variables. India's population in 1981 was 82.6 percent Hindu and 11.4 percent Muslim (India 1991). Within both Hinduism and Islam, artificial means of interfering with procreation are not well received. Furthermore, both are conservative religions, less tolerant of change, especially that from other countries. This dislike or distrust of change includes notions of contraception from other countries (Suri 1991). These religious values are factors that promote fertility and increase the likelihood of larger families. Therefore, the percentage of the population who are Hindu or Muslim is expected to have a negative effect on aggregate contraceptive use as well as on contraceptive method.

The percentage of the population who are a member of a scheduled caste (%CASTES) has also been included as a control variable. The caste system is a rigid system of inequality in which those who are "untouchable" are denied access to resources, including social advancement (Khare 1984). Because members of scheduled castes continue to experience social discrimination and deprivation, they are less likely to have access to contraceptive information. Therefore, the percentage of the population who are a member of a scheduled caste are expected to have a negative effect on aggregate contraceptive use and contraceptive method.

**Analysis**

Preliminary regression analysis employed ordinary least squares (OLS) regression with careful attention to influential outliers. Scatterplot matrices within the STATA sta-

Table 2 - Zero Order Correlation Matrix of Independent and Dependent Variables

| | Hosp | Disp | Pract | Nurses | %Hindu | %Muslim | %Castes | Contra | Rate/ster | Rate/IUD | %Urban | Fem/Lit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hosp | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Disp | 0.64 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pract | 0.23 | 0.63 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | |
| Nurses | 0.25 | 0.67 | 0.90 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | |
| %Hindu | -0.12 | -0.64 | -0.85 | -0.83 | 1.00 | | | | | | | |
| %Muslim | -0.36 | -0.43 | -0.35 | -0.54 | 0.20 | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| %Castes | -0.54 | -0.10 | 0.49 | 0.45 | -0.62 | 0.04 | 1.00 | | | | | |
| Contra | 0.81 | 0.51 | 0.39 | 0.36 | -0.06 | -0.38 | -0.47 | 1.00 | | | | |
| Rate/ster | 0.10 | -0.05 | 0.34 | 0.25 | -0.10 | -0.07 | 0.04 | 0.33 | 1.00 | | | |
| Rate/IUD | 0.37 | 0.77 | 0.80 | 0.80 | -0.88 | -0.48 | 0.42 | 0.24 | -0.08 | 1.00 | | |
| %Urban | 0.53 | 0.55 | 0.52 | 0.46 | -0.22 | -0.07 | -0.19 | 0.73 | 0.49 | 0.22 | 1.00 | |
| Fem/Lit | 0.57 | 0.51 | 0.71 | 0.59 | -0.35 | -0.22 | -0.09 | 0.85 | 0.42 | 0.40 | 0.83 | 1.00 |

tistical program were used to identify the presence of outliers (Belsley, Kuh & Welsch 1980). Because elimination of cases recognized as influential would have resulted in the elimination of a substantial number of crucial cases, an iteratively reweighted least squares (IRLS) procedure (a robust regression technique) was determined to be more suitable in analyzing the data. With each iteration, the IRLS procedure estimates the

> regression parameters, calculates the residuals, and downweights cases with large residuals. The process repeats until weights no longer show much change. (Hamilton 1993 126)

Although IRLS does not permit comparison of the independent variables as coefficients cannot be standardized, this was deemed the most appropriate method as OLS results are biased due to leverage from outliers. The IRLS analyses were conducted using the statistical package STATA (Computing Resource Center 2001). Twelve models were estimated in which each of the availability variables and the control variables, that were not highly correlated, predicted to each of the three dependent variables.

**RESULTS**

Table 2 presents the zero-order correlation coefficients of the bivariate relationships between the independent and dependent variables analyzed. In all but three of the correlations between the independent and dependent variables the direction specified is supported. The direction of the relationship between the percentage of the population who are a member of a scheduled caste and the rate (out of 1000) of the population sterilized and between the percentage who are a member of a scheduled caste and the rate of IUD insertions is positive, but was predicted to be negative. The direction of the relationship between the rate of dispensaries and the rate of the population sterilized is negative, but was predicted to be positive.

The correlations indicate potential problems of multicollinearity. The relationships among the availability variables (dispensaries, hospitals, practitioners, and nurses) are naturally substantial. However, no more than one availability variable appears in any regression model at the same time. Also positively correlated are urbanization and female

**Table 3 - Unstandardized and Standardized Coefficients for OLS Regressions on Dependent Variable Indicators of Availability**

| | Rate/Contr | | Rate/Ster. | | Rate/IUD | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | B | b | B | b | B |
| | **Model 1** | | **Model 1** | | **Model 1** | |
| Rate/Dispenary | .0001 | .3348 | -.0000 | -.0944 | .0002 | .2925* |
| %Hindu | .1090 | .2657 | .1905 | .1758 | -.0469 | -.0598 |
| %Muslim | -.2402 | -.4599* | .2799 | .1125 | -.5014 | -.2783* |
| %Castes | -.3512 | -.2578 | 1.6624 | .4092* | 1.7070 | .5804* |
| Rate/Fem.Lit. | .3809 | .6262 | .8549 | .4098* | .5520 | .3655* |
| | 5df, N=16 | | 5 df, N=26 | | 5 df, N=26 | |
| | **Model 2** | | **Model 2** | | **Model 2** | |
| Rate/Hospitals | .0002 | .1914 | .0007 | .3263 | -.0003 | -.2036 |
| %Hindu | -.0072 | -.0175 | .3887 | .3508 | -.1935 | -.2425 |
| %Muslim | -.2730 | -.5228* | .5136 | .2040 | -.5342 | -.2946* |
| %Castes | -.3834 | -.2814 | 1.9850 | .4846* | 1.6228 | .5500* |
| Rate/Fem.Lit. | .2727 | .4483* | .7439 | .3510* | .6277 | .4113* |
| | 5df, N=16 | | 5df, N=27 | | 5df, N=27 | |
| | **Model 3** | | **Model 3** | | **Model 3** | |
| Rate/Practioner | .0000 | .3427 | .0000 | .0069 | .0000 | .9248* |
| %Urban | .4405 | .3726* | 2.0998 | .5033 | -.7856 | -.3010 |
| %Muslim | -.3142 | -.6070* | -.1106 | -.0605 | -.4517 | -.3952* |
| %Castes | -.8111 | -.5507* | .7456 | .1435 | -.3690 | -.1135 |
| | 4df, N=12 | | 4df, N=12 | | 4df, N=12 | |
| | **Model 4** | | **Model 4** | | **Model 4** | |
| Rate/Nurses | -.0000 | -.0688 | -.0000 | -.1529 | .0000 | .3436 |
| %Muslim | -.6049 | -.5022* | .4994 | -.0984 | -1.0755 | -.3215 |
| %Castes | -.4536 | -.3472* | 1.2541 | .2279 | 1.1737 | .3234 |
| Rate/Fem.Lit. | .4366 | .7782* | 1.5206 | .6431* | .2111 | .1355 |
| | 4df, N=15 | | 4df, N=15 | | 4df, N=15 | |

*p<.05 (one-tailed test)

literacy rate. The strong positive correlation of .83 between urbanization and female literacy rate indicates redundancy in their measures. With one exception, it was decided that urbanization would be dropped from the models as literacy rate of females theoretically captures more precise causative dimensions of fertility declines. The exception in which female literacy rate was dropped and urbanization was left in the equations are those in which the availability variable, the rate of practitioners, is too highly positively correlated with the female literacy rate (0.71). Therefore, when the rate of practitioners is predicted to each of the three dependent variables, urbanization is placed in the equation as it is only moderately correlated with the independent variable, the rate of practitioners. Collinearity is also a problem between the percentage of the population that is Hindu and the rate of practitioners, and between the percentage of the population that is Hindu and the rate of nurses. Because the percentage of the population that is Hindu and the rate of practitioners are too highly negatively correlated (-.85), and the percentage of the population that is Hindu and the rate of nurses are too highly correlated (-0.83), the percentage of the population that is Hindu has been dropped from the equations in which the two independent variables of interest, the rate of practitioners and the rate of nurses, are predicted to each of the three dependent variables.

Table 3 presents the robust regression coefficients on the indicators of availability.

The effect of availability on both contraceptive use and contraceptive method indicates only partial support for the second hypothesis, that availability of health facilities and health professionals is a predictor of the rate of sterilization and the rate of IUD insertion in the states of India. Availability was found to predict only the rate of IUD insertion, not the rate of sterilization. Moreover, only two of the four availability variables were significant predictors of the rate of IUD insertion.

The results for Model 1& Model 3 predicting the rate of IUD insertions indicates that both the rate of dispensaries and the rate of practitioners within the population are significant predictors of the rate of IUD insertion within the population ($p<.05$, one-tailed test). As the rate of dispensaries and the rate of practitioners increases within the population, so does the rate of IUD insertion. However, availability does not support the hypothesis that "availability of health facilities and health professionals is a predictor of contraceptive use" as none of the availability variables are significant for the rate of contraception within the population (the percentage of reproductive-age couples using contraception).

As expected, there were other determinants of both the percentage of reproductive-age couples using contraception and the rate of sterilization and IUD insertion. As is apparent in Table 3, of the four independent variables regressed on the dependent variable, "contraception" (the percentage of reproductive-age couples using contraception), the female literacy rate was a significant predictor of the percentage of reproductive-age couples using contraception. In addition, in all models predicting "use" (the percentage of reproductive-age couples using contraception), the control variables "the percentage of the population Muslim" and "the percentage of the population who are a member of a scheduled caste" are negatively related, although not significant in Model 1. Therefore, in three of the four models predicting to contraception use (the percentage of reproductive-age couples using contraception), as the percentage of Muslim and percentage of Castes in society increase, the percentage of reproductive-age couples using contraception decreases. The female literacy rate was also a significant predictor of the rate of IUD insertion in the population in Model 1 and Model 2 in which the rate of dispensaries and the rate of practitioners were the availability variables modeled. Urbanization, a proxy for development/modernization, was found to be a significant determinant of contraceptive method (the rate of the population sterilized and the rate of IUD insertions) when included in the model testing the rate of practitioners in the population as a determinant of each of the dependent variables. Percent Hindu was not found to be significantly related to the dependent variables of contraceptive use or method.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study sought to determine the effect that availability of health facilities and health professionals would have on total contraceptive use and specific contraceptive method. This study finds partial support for the hypothesis that availability of contraceptives in terms of the rate of health facilities and health professionals is a predictor of the rate of sterilization and rate of IUD insertion in the states of India. While the rate of hospitals and nurses did not increase the rate of IUD insertion or the rate of sterilization, the rate of dispensaries and the rate of practitioners did increase the likelihood of IUD insertion. None of the availability variables (hospitals, dispensaries, practitioners, and nurses) were a significant determinant of the percentage of reproductive-age couples using contraception or the rate of sterilization within India.

The importance of availability in effecting contraceptive use and method cannot be denied. Although this analysis does not overwhelmingly substantiate this claim, undeniably availability is an important factor in the realm of modern contraception. It appears that local availability (in terms of dispensaries) as well as the presence of doctors (practitioners) does result in an in increase in IUD insertion. Beyond these specific findings, availability is important for two reasons. First, while often a change in norms is seen as one of the factors affecting the proximate determinants, especially contraceptive use, it might be argued that availability, in terms of progressive, accessible, fertility programs may also bring about a change in the norms of society. It must be recognized that often norms change in such a way that "what is, becomes what should be." That is, "what is, becomes what is normative." Second, because fertility is a social process, as the norms of society change, technology and re-

sources need to be available. In any case the support, albeit limited, of the findings that the rate of dispensaries and the rate of practitioners in the population affect the rate of IUD insertion as a method of contraception, suggests the importance of affecting choice of contraception method through availability of technology and resources.

As expected, and supported in prior research, female literacy rate, religion, and class distinction are important determinants of the rate of contraceptive use and method. The effect of the female literacy rate as a predictor of fertility and contraceptive use and has been examined from several perspectives. Female literacy is associated with an increase in the status of women and their ability to make their own decisions about fertility and to seek information about contraception (Suri 1991). In addition, according to Caldwell's wealth-flow theory (1982), fertility and female literacy rate are closely associated because education results in increased exposure to Western ideas, including fertility norms from industrialized countries. Finally, research has indicated that educated women are purported to use more effective birth control methods

Religion is another variable associated with contraception. Religion often promotes fertility. Especially important for India is that within Hinduism and Islam, both conservative religions, artificial means of interfering with procreation are not well received which means that it is expected to have a negative effect on contraceptive use. They are also less tolerant of change, including notions of contraception, from other countries (Suri 1991). Thus religion often increases the likelihood of larger families.

The caste system is a rigid system of stratification resulting in inequality and oppression. In such a system that exists in India, those who are "untouchable," members of the lowest class, are denied access to resources, including social advancement (Khare 1984). Because members of scheduled castes continue to experience social discrimination and deprivation, they are less likely to have access to contraceptive information.

Perhaps only finding partial support for the hypothesis that availability of contraceptives is a predictor of the rate of sterilization and rate of IUD insertion in the states of India may be accounted for by the inadequacies in measurements and data. The proxies for "availability" may not capture the true effects of availability of fertility resources. Therefore, better measures might yield stronger results. Moreover, it is apparent that the data was less than adequate due to so few cases in the majority of the models. This was due to underreporting from many of the states. Although beyond the scope of the present research, the agenda for future research should examine fertility resources, "availability," in terms of actual family planning programs.

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# GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SEXUAL DREAMING, DISINHIBITION, AND NUMBER OF COITAL PARTNERS

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**ABSTRACT**

This study attempts to determine if various self-reported evaluations of a person's dreams can explain significant unique variance in the number of coital partners he or she has experienced. A number of gender differences were found. While promiscuous females were most ashamed of their sexual dreams, promiscuous males were least ashamed. Although males reported significantly more coital partners than females, more variance was explained in the female model than in the male model. Disinhibition was the most powerful predictor of number of partners for both sexes. As predicted by evolutionary theory, gender differences in sexual dreaming and behavior reflect gender-differentiated reproductive strategies as predicted by evolutionary theory.

## INTRODUCTION

The examination of gender differences in sexual behavior and attitudes has a long history in the behavioral and biological sciences (Alcock 1998; Buss 1994; Geary 2000; Oliver & Hyde 1993). Gender differences in dream content have also attracted researchers (Beck 2002; Kolchakian & Hill 2002), but research combining the two domains is virtually absent. We combine these two gender-difference domains and examine the relationships among gender, disinhibition, and various aspects of the dream content and evaluation. Although dreaming is an intensely private affair, it is strongly influenced by biology and culture (Halton 1992).

Sigmund Freud (1953) saw dreams as the royal road to the unconscious, and hence to self-knowledge. He saw dreams as resulting from intrapsychic conflicts, primarily between the instinctual urges of the id and the proscriptions of the superego. Sexual and other such urges that impinge on the conscious minds of adequately socialized individuals are quickly relegated to the unconscious mind, but these denied urges strive for recognition during sleep via their dreams. Although the superego was less vigilant during sleep, it nevertheless managed to censor our dreams through distortions of meaning. In Freud's formulation, dreams served to disguise rather than reveal the dreamer's wishes and concerns.

Modern neurophysiological explorations of the dream process disagree with Freud's notion, characterizing dreaming as a function of relatively haphazard firings of neurons as the neocortex takes the opportunity provided by rapid eye movement (REM) sleep to purge itself of irrelevant information (Pinel 2000). The only "conflict" taking place is that between interacting excitatory and inhibitory neurons. The bizarre nature of many dreams is attributed to random firings from which the brain does its best to make sense of these firings rather than any attempt to censor dream content (Peterson 1997). The dreamer's sensorymotor system is value-neutral, not censorious, and simply provides a framework "into which ideational, volitional, or emotional content may be projected to form the integrated dream image" (Hobson & McCarley 1977 1347). Likewise, Beck (2002) contends that when external stimuli are withdrawn (as in the sleep state) the person's cognitive patterns derived from experience shape the content of his or her dreams.

According to this conceptualization of dreaming, the subjective content of the dreamer's mind imposes order out of the chaos of chance neuronal firings in much the same way that different people see different patterns in amorphous cloud formations. Because cerebral activity is unconstrained by sensory input during sleep, the content of dreams is likely to reflect the thoughts, memories, and emotions of individual dreamers. Winson (1990 95) notes that dreams "take note of life's experiences" and react according to their own "scheme of interpretation." Thus, the content of dreams reflect the private logic of the dreamer and provides insight to his or her desires, motives, and experiences (Slaviik 1994). Given the absence of outside sensory input, the dreamer's subjectivity has free rein to organize and structure the neurochemical activity taking place in the cortex, thus infusing neurophysiology with meaning (Pinel 2000).

A person's dreams about sexual activity

are likely prompted by memories of sexual activity. Unless a person has significant memories related to a particular activity, there will be few neuronal traces in the hippocampus to be called upon during REM sleep to be manifested in his or her dreams (Pinel 2000; Ogawa, Hiroshi, & Tadao 2002). On the other hand, Kuiken also points out that

> recent developments suggest that dreams mirror our *conceptions* of our actions and feelings rather than what we *actually* do (1987 225)

which suggests that dreams may symbolically reflect and express our desire-states, feelings, and emotions, both fulfilled and unfulfilled.

Thus, contemporary models of dreaming do not view the process as reflecting conflict between innate urges and culturally imposed morality. Rather, they view these twin determinants of behavior operating in tandem to produce the content of our dreams; the brain's neurotransmitter secretion patterns providing raw materials, and the individual dreamer painting pictures with them that fit his or her own subjectivity. Dreams mirror the dreamer's private psychological world and reflects his or her waking life (Schredl, Sahlin, & Schaefer 1998). The interpretations we place on our sexual dreams—whether or not we enjoy them or are ashamed of them, as well as how real and vivid they appear to be—say something about our sexual attitudes, and perhaps even our sexual behavior. That is, people who have vivid sexual dreams and who enjoy them can be expected to be more sexually active in terms of number of sexual partners than people who are ashamed of their sexual dreams.

## DISINHIBITION

Some dream research suggests a relationship between personality and dream content (Cann & Donderi 1986; Pinel 2000; Wang et al 2000). One such personality trait is disinhibition, which has been succinctly defined by Rosenblitt and his colleagues (2001 398) as "the desire for uninhibited behavior in social situations." Such uninhibited behavior would include a casual attitude toward sex, binge drinking, and drug abuse (Walsh 1995). Disinhibition is a component of the more general trait of sensation-seeking, a trait that describes a person's attempt to provide the optimal level of stimulation for his or her self (Zuckerman, Eysenck, & Eysenck 1978). Some people have very low thresholds for stimulation, others have very high thresholds and are constantly seeking new experiences. Those individuals with high thresholds tend to be extroverts, adventure seekers, and easily bored. In addition to a wide range of impulsive and acting-out behaviors, high sensation-seekers of both sexes report a greater range of sexual activities with more partners than do low sensation-seekers (Zuckerman, Buchsbaum, & Murphy 1980; Walsh 1993). Because the disinhibition subscale of the sensation-seeking scale has been found to most strongly to differentiate the genders in England (Daitzman & Zuckerman 1980), the United States (Rosenblitt et al 2001), and China (Wang et al 2000), we limit ourselves to this trait.

Although not discounting socialization effects for significant differences between the genders on disinhibition, Daitzman & Zuckerman (1980) found that high disinhibitors had significantly higher levels of testosterone (T) ($r = .43$), and that T levels correlated significantly with interest in erotica ($r = .40$), dominance ($r = .31$), and number of coital partners ($r = .43$). T is the hormonal mediator of sexual arousal in both men and women (Udry 2000), and it has been asserted that T switches women off their "safety first approach [to sexual activity] and onto a more masculine approach" (Nyborg & Boeggild 1989 29). In other words, T levels beyond the normal female range has the effect of biasing female behavior in the direction of a more male-like casual approach to sexuality (Fisher 1998; Geary 2000).

A number of theorists speculate that there is more sociosexual variation among women than among men (Gangestad & Simpson 1990; Walsh 2000). One behavior genetic study based on Australian Twin Registry data reported heritability coefficients of .20 and .60 for the sociosexuality scale for males and females, respectively (Bailey 1997). These different coefficients suggest that the genes underlying male sociosexuality have almost gone to fixity, while there is still abundant genetic variation among females, leading us to hypothesize that disinhibition among women may have a greater affect on their sexual behavior than it will among men.

This study explores various correlates of number of coital partners. The hypothesis

**Table 1 - Correlation (r) Matrix, Means, and Standard Deviations of All Variables For Male and Female Subsamples**

| Variable | Dis | Age | SR | SA | Sen | SMR | Mean | S.D. | Sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Part. | .48*** | .12 | .28** | -.13 | .52*** | .48*** | 12.39 | 11.36 | Male |
| | .70*** | .44*** | .39*** | .27*** | .33*** | .07 | 7.07 | 7.55 | Female |
| Dis. | | -.09 | .17 | -.41*** | .07 | .35*** | 9.09 | 1.57 | Male |
| | | .42*** | .39*** | .27*** | .32*** | .13 | 8.52 | 1.35 | Female |
| Age | | | -.09 | .27* | .34** | .14 | 30.23 | 10.83 | Male |
| | | | .18** | .12 | .19** | .07 | 28.08 | 8.24 | Female |
| SR | | | | .23* | .37*** | .48*** | 5.87 | 2.43 | Male |
| | | | | .03 | .33*** | .33*** | 6.31 | 2.40 | Female |
| SA | | | | | .00 | -.09 | 0.33 | 0.47 | Male |
| | | | | | .08 | -.00 | 0.40 | 0.49 | Female |
| Sen | | | | | | .52*** | 0.37 | 0.49 | Male |
| | | | | | | .22** | 0.36 | 0.48 | Female |
| SMR | | | | | | | 1.09 | 0.72 | Male |
| | | | | | | | 0.78 | 0.76 | Female |

*p< .05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Underlined correlations are those significantly different at p<.05 (Fisher's r to Z test) or means between males and females significantly different at p<.05 (t-test).

CODING: Part. = number of sexual partners. SS = sensation seeking. SR = rating of sex dreams as "real and vivid" (responses scaled from 1 to 10). SA = "ashamed of sexual dreams" 0=no, 1=yes. Sen = "enjoy sexual dreams" 0=no, 1=yes. SMR = "dreams more sexual than romantic" 0=no, 1=undecided, 2=yes

being tested is whether a person's sexual activity is reflected in the content and self-evaluation of his or her dreams. An additional hypothesis is that persons high on the disinhibition scale will report a significantly greater number of coital partners, and that they will be more positive in their evaluations of their sexual dreams than will persons low on the trait.

## METHODS

The data consist of 302 white college students (212 females and 88 males) who responded to in-class questionnaires. Means and standard deviation and coding for all variables used in this study are shown in Table 1. There were 108 married students, 32 divorcees, and 176 singles. Three non-white students were eliminated from the analysis because of insufficient numbers.

**Dream Content** was measured by asking subjects to respond to a variety of questions relating to their dreams (see, Kolchakian & Hill 2002; Martinetti 1989). Of interest to this study were questions relating to (a) how "real and vivid" on a 10-point scale they experienced their sexual dreams to be, (b) whether or not they enjoyed their sexual dreams, (c) whether or not their sexual dreams made them feel ashamed, and (d) whether their dreams were more sexual than romantic. These latter three questions were dispersed among a number of other dream related questions of no interest to the present study (see Table 1 for coding).

**Disinhibition** was measured by the disinhibition sub-scale of Zuckerman's sensation-seeking scale. Zuckerman, Buchsbaum, and Murphy (1980) report a reliability coefficient of .87 for this scale.

Each student was also asked to indicate the number of coital partners they had experienced. Values ranged from 0 to 30, with an overall mode of 1, and a median of 5; both the mode and median for the male subsample were 10, and for the female subsample they were 1 and 4, respectively (means are shown in Table 1). As seen in Table 1, the mean age of these students is considerably greater (range = 18 - 57) than is usual for studies using student samples, perhaps reflecting the greater proportion of non-traditional students in urban-centered universities, and perhaps the greater propensity of non-traditional students to take summer courses. This wider than usual age range is viewed as a plus, since it implies a wider range of life experiences among our subjects.

**Table 2 - Regression Models of all Significant Predictors of Number of Coital Partners**

| | Entire Sample | | | | Females Only | | | | Males Only | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **b** | **s.e.** | **beta** | **t** | **b** | **s.e.** | **beta** | **t** | **b** | **s.e.** | **beta** | **t** |
| Dis | 3.05 | .29 | .474 | 10.63*** | 2.82 | .31 | .502 | 8.97*** | 3.20 | .57 | .433 | 5.63*** |
| Age | .12 | .04 | .111 | 2.57** | .18 | .05 | .186 | 3.64** | n.s. | | | |
| Gender | -3.50 | .83 | -.178 | -4.23** | | | | | | | | |
| Sen | 4.02 | .84 | .214 | 4.80** | 1.30 | .79 | .084 | 1.65* | 11.14 | 1.77 | .488 | 6.34*** |
| SA | n.s. | | | | 2.04 | .73 | .134 | 2.79** | n.s. | | | |
| SR | .38 | .18 | .095 | 2.12* | .41 | .17 | .122 | 2.36* | n.s. | | | |
| (a) | -23.03 | 2.71 | | -8.51 | -25.90 | 2.39 | | -10.83 | -20.84 | 5.23 | | -3.99 |
| | Adj. R = .473 | | | | Adj. R = .517 | | | | Adj. R = .442 | | | |
| | F=48.25, p<.00001 | | | | F=47.81, p<.00001 | | | | F=38.58, p<.0001 | | | |

*p<.05; **p<.01;***p<.001. See Table 1 for variable labels and coding.

**FINDINGS**

Table 1 presents a correlation matrix of all variables included in this study and their means and standard deviations for male (above) and female (below) subsamples. Underlined correlations indicate significant differences between male and female correlations (Fisher's r to Z transformation). Disinhibition has the strongest correlations with number of partners for both males and females. Males had a significantly greater number of coital partners than females (t = 4.82, p < .0001). The present sample is consistent with national means for males (12.26) but overestimates national means for females (3.32) based on a NORC representative sample of 1,401 adult Americans (Smith 1991).

The different effects of the variables in the matrix on number of coital partners across genders are noteworthy. Disinhibition, age, and being ashamed of sexual dreams, have significantly greater positive affects for females on number of partners than they do for males. Only the "dreams more sexual than romantic" variable is significantly more powerful for males (r = .48) than for females (r = .07) in predicting number of partners.

Males were significantly more disinhibited than females (t = 3.12, p < .01). Although the correlation between disinhibition and age among males is not significant, it is negative (r = -.09); among females it is positive and significant (r = .42). Among males, the more disinhibited they are the less they are ashamed of their sexual dreams, but the correlation is positive for females, which may reflect the greater stigma attached to female sexual behavior (Walsh 1999). Disinhibition is also significantly and positively related to rating of dreams as "real and vivid," and to "enjoy sexual dreams" for both genders. Consistent with previous findings that disinhibition differentiates the genders more than other sensation-seeking subscales, all the male/female correlations between it and the other variables are significantly different from one another.

Males rated their dreams significantly more sexual than romantic than did females (t= 3.29, p < .001). Although the correlations between "enjoy sexual dreams" and "dreams more sexual than romantic" were positive and significant for both genders, the male correlation (.52) is significantly greater than the female correlation (.22) at <.05.

Table 2 presents all significant variables regressed on number of coital partners. In the full model (total sample), only "dreams more sexual than romantic" failed to enter the model. The most powerful predictor of number of sex partners is disinhibition (β = .474). Other variables impact only minimally on the criterion variable given the presence of disinhibition in the model. The full model accounts for 47.3 percent of the variance in number of sexual partners.

In the gender-specific models, disinhibition is again the most powerful predictor for females, while "enjoy sexual dreams" was slightly more powerful for males. Although males are more disinhibited than females, disinhibition impacts more strongly on number of coital partners for females. Disinhibition and "enjoy sexual dreams" are the only variables to affect number of coital partners significantly across both subsamples. Age, ashamed of sexual dreams, and rating of sexual dreams affects number of partners among females but not among males, and "enjoy sexual dreams" is the only variable other than disinhibition that significantly ef-

**Table 3 - Assessing Mean Differences Between Variables Based on Median Split on Disinhibition**

| | | Females | | | | Males | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **Disinhib. Level** | **Mean** | **s.d.** | **t** | **eta²** | **Mean** | **s.d.** | **t** | **eta²** |
| Number Coital Partners | Low | 3.03* | 3.44 | -9.04 | .284 | 9.44* | 11.45 | -2.45 | .065 |
| | High | 10.92* | 8.45 | | | 15.31* | 10.75 | | |
| Sexual Dream Rating | Low | 5.25 | 2.45 | -6.28 | .187 | 5.62 | 1.60 | -1.33 | n.s. |
| | High | 7.27* | 1.85 | | | 6.23* | 6.23 | | |
| Dreams More Sexual | Low | .68 | .66 | -2.75 | .035 | .89 | .75 | -2.19 | .053 |
| | High | .96* | .83 | | | 1.23* | .70 | | |
| Enjoy Sexual Dreams | Low | .21* | .41 | -4.86 | .011 | .44* | .50 | .56 | n.s. |
| | High | .52 | .50 | | | .38 | .49 | | |
| Ashamed Sexual Dreams | Low | .27* | .45 | -2.96 | .040 | .56* | .50 | 3.26 | .110 |
| | High | .48* | .50 | | | .23* | .42 | | |

*means that differ < .05 by gender within disinhibition category; e.g., the low female disinhibition category's mean number of sex partners (3.03) differs significantly from the low male disinhibition category mean (9.44).

fects number of partners for males. The female model explained 7.5 percent more of the variances (51.7% vs. 44.2%) in number of sexual partners than the male model.

Curiously, being ashamed of sexual dreams is associated with having *more* sexual partners among females. We would expect that women who are ashamed of their dream sexuality would be least likely to be very sexually active, as indeed is the case among males. What may be reflected in this finding is female ambivalence about sexual activity given that the social mores define very sexually active males positively ("studs") and very active females negatively ("whores"). Seventy percent of the highly sexually active females (defined as women having a number of sexual partners greater or equal to twice the female median) stated that they were ashamed of their sexual dreams, compared to 49.5 percent of the virgins, and 29.4 percent of the remaining females. The corresponding percentages for males were 27.2, 33.3, and 44.4, which is exactly the reverse ordering. It might be conjectured that some of the more sexually active females feel that they have to be sexually active as a prerequisite to becoming romantically involved (Guttentag & Secord 1983; Hrdy 1999; Walsh 1993), but their behavior may be a cause of subjective concern for them due to the negative image society has of females who are sexually active with many partners.

If this is the case, it is reasonable to assume that it is among divorced women that the link between sexual activity and being ashamed of one's sexual dreams would be most strong because it has been shown that divorced women tend to be more sexually active than married or never-married women (Zinn & Eitzen 1987; Smith 1991). ANOVA results show that divorced women (n = 28) had significantly more sexual partners than either married or never-married women, with a mean number of sexual partners of 12.29 ($F = 15.48$, $p < .0001$). The relationship between number of partners and being ashamed of sexual dreams is much stronger among divorced women than among marrieds or never marrieds (r's of .56, .32, and .10, respectively).

Given the gender differences reported, and given the powerful influence of disinhibition, it was decided to dichotomize disinhibition into high and low categories with a median split and explore its effect on other variables separately for men and women. Only those variables that are significantly different between disinhibition categories for one or both genders are addressed. Because "enjoy sexual dreams" and "ashamed of sexual dreams" are dummy coded, the reported means represent the proportion of cases that are affirmative on each variable.

Table 3 shows that disinhibition explains about 4.4 times more variance in female sexual activity ($\eta^2 = .284$) than it does in male sexual activity ($\eta^2 = .065$), although males had more partners in each category. Males high on the disinhibition scale (Mean= 15.31) had significantly more coital partners (as indicated by the asterisk in the table) than highly disinhibited females (Mean = 10.92). However, females high on disinhibition had more

sexual partners than low disinhibited males (Mean = 9.44), but the difference is not statistically significant.

High disinhibition women rated their dreams more real and vivid than did low disinhibition women, but there was no difference between the categories for males. For both men and women, the highly disinhibited rated their dreams as more sexual than romantic than the low disinhibited. More highly disinhibited women reported that they enjoyed their sexual dreams than did the low disinhibited women, but no difference was found among the men.

Finally, we see that "ashamed of sexual dreams" operates in different directions for males and females. It is the highly disinhibited among the females who are the most ashamed; among the males it is the low disinhibited. Gender differences are significant across both disinhibition categories. As shown in Table 1, the zero-order correlations between disinhibition and "ashamed" for males and females are -.41 and .22, respectively, and between number or partners and ashamed are -.13 and .27, respectively. Thus, males who are ashamed of their sexual dreams are less disinhibited and have fewer sexual partners, but the more ashamed females are the more disinhibited they are, and the more sexual partners they have had.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study offer modest support for the hypothesis that dreams are a "mirror of the mind," reflecting, not distorting or censoring, one's experiences, wishes, desires, and attitudes (Beck 2002). The more coital partners reported, the more subjects rated their dreams as real and vivid, the more they enjoyed their dreams, and the more their dreams were sexual rather than romantic. The latter finding is true for males only, which perhaps reflects the separation of sex and romance among males and the intimate connection of sex and romance among females (Oliver & Hyde 1993; Walsh 1999).

It cannot be determined from these data whether dreams are thus rated *because* of plentiful sexual experiences, or if both the experiences and the evaluation of dream content arise from a common cause, namely a strong subjective interest in sexual behavior. While it may be true that the brain plucks images from long-term memory storage in response to eye movements during REM sleep, those memories may well be neurologically-entrenched fantasy rather than memories of actual experiences. Given the links between disinhibition, T, MAO levels, gender, and number of coital partners (Daitzman & Zuckerman 1980; Bogeart & Fisher 1995; Udry 2000), the possibility that physiological differences may be impacting both dream content and number of coital partners should be considered.

Gender differences were quite evident in his study. For males, the enjoyment of sexual dreams was the best predictor of number of partners when entered into the regression equation, eclipsing even disinhibition, the most powerful overall predictor. This may be a consequence of a stronger interest in sexual behavior among males (see Oliver & Hyde 1993 for a meta-analysis of gender differences in sexual interest), in terms of both behavior and fantasy, which is reflected in their dreams. The strength of this interest may, in turn, be a function of higher levels of circulating T (Bogaert & Fisher 1995; Udry 2000).

The fact that males had statistically significantly more sexual partners than females, even after adjusting for age and other relevant variables, a ubiquitous finding in the literature on gender differences (Oliver & Hyde 1993), requires comment. Phillis and Gromko (1985) have commented that male and female means must be equal (each unique partner for a male necessarily means a unique partner for a female) and that statements to the contrary should be viewed with some suspicion. While this logic is undeniable in terms of overall population means, it does not preclude the notion that *most* females are much less sexually active than *most* males. Ellis points out that

> extremely active females (e.g.., prostitutes, 'nymphomaniacs') are not fairly represented in colleges where most surveys are conducted. (1989/1990 28; see also Roche 1986)

Some males may be obtaining partners from the ranks of very sexually active females who exist in small enough numbers to preclude their likelihood of inclusion in typical college surveys.

Given the ease with which females may obtain sexual partners relative to males (Wilson 1983; Walsh 1999), females who are

disposed to having sex with numerous partners will have more impact on the female mean than will males who are similarly disposed. In the present sample, the coefficients of skewness for the male and female distributions of number of partners are .298 and 1.345, respectively. These coefficients indicate that atypically sexually active females do indeed contribute more to the female mean (pulling it further toward the tail of a positively skewed distribution) than do atypically sexually active males.

Women who had the most coital partners (divorcees and the highly disinhibited) were most ashamed of their sexual dreams, while males showed the opposite effect. Evolutionary theorists might explain this by pointing out that sexually promiscuous women are not following the "female-typical" reproductive strategy, while sexually promiscuous males are following the "male-typical" strategy (Hrdy 2000; Walsh 1991). We may speculate that highly sexually active women are ashamed of their dreams because they are (unconsciously or otherwise) ashamed of their conduct. On the other hand, highly sexually active males are not ashamed of their sexual dreams because, from an evolutionary perspective, they are following their evolved reproductive strategy. If there is such a thing as an "optimal" reproductive strategy for females, it would be to be sexually pragmatic, conservative, and discriminating because of their greater parental investment (Geary 2000; Hrdy 2000).[1]

Although some may balk at such an explanation, it is consistent with evolutionary theory and is well grounded in an empirical literature which has consistently found male and female attitudes about love and sex to be quite different (see Buss 1994, and Oliver & Hyde 1993, for reviews). In general, males tend to believe and behave in a manner evolutionary theorists would predict (game playing with a variety of partners), and females tend to believe and behave conservatively and pragmatically (Udry 2000; Walsh 1993). When females are observed to conform more to the male reproductive strategy, it tends to occur during time periods in which females outnumber males. A licentious mating environment is produced during such periods, whereas during periods when the male/female ratio is reversed, men tend to conform to the female strategy, and a less lusty and more romantic dating and mating environment evolves (Barber 2000; Geary 2000; Guttentag & Secord 1983). Thus mating tactics depend on current environmental conditions and individual differences as well as evolved species traits.

In summary, the present data support the notion that dreams reflect experience, and that the interpretations of these experiences, as manifested in dreams and how they are evaluated, differ across the genders. Although based on a relatively small sample, and with due recognition of the difficulty inherent in attempting to measure dream evaluations, these findings are interesting enough to prompt further research. Unfortunately, we omitted to inquire about the sexual orientation and drug usage of our respondents, both of which are known to influence sexual activity and dreaming (Walsh 1995). These variables should be included in future research. Future research relating number of coital partners and dream content would be particularly useful if T levels were actually assayed rather than using disinhibition as a proxy as it was in the present study. While we have reviewed studies relating to the relationships between T, sexual activity, and disinhibition, we could locate no study in which these variables were examined in conjunction with dream experiences. An elaboration of the relationships among T, other biological mechanisms, social-psychological factors, and the sexual content of dreams should prove most useful.

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## ENDNOTE

1. The term parental investment has nothing to do with individual differences, but rather with the sex-differentiated reproductive strategies char-

acteristic of all mammals. The so-called *Bateman's rule,* that states the sex with the least parental investment is always the most promiscuous, is the closest thing that biology has to a law. Among mammals, parenting effort is primarily a female strategy, & mating effort is primarily a male strategy. The reason for this gender asymmetry rests with the different levels of obligate parental investment. The only biologically *obligatory* investment of males is limited to the time & energy spent copulating. Males can increase their reproductive success in proportion to the number of females they can copulate with, & they have an evolved propensity to seek multiple partners. Female parental investment requires an enormous expenditure of time, energy, & resources, & thus females have evolved a tendency to be much more careful & choosey about with whom they will mate.

# GOING OUT OR HANGING OUT: COUPLE DATING AND GROUP DATING IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

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**ABSTRACT**

A review of the literature on dating patterns suggests that the traditional dating format, based largely on traditional gender roles, has given way to group dating. Recent research suggests that this change may be overestimated. This exploratory article investigates the existence of such changes in dating patterns. Data for this study were collected from a total of 226 undergraduate students at a southeastern university. The data reveal that couple dating and/or group dating are directly related to the degree of involvement between the participants, with the dyad still the norm for individuals who regard their relationship as exclusive.

## INTRODUCTION

In the decade of the 1950s dating norms were entrenched such that a man asked a young woman "out" on Wednesday for a Saturday night "date." "Out" always implied that the norms in this social encounter were never in flux. Dating followed a formal and very traditional social process where each person performed his or her role (Bailey 1988). Dating has been described by some social commentators (for example, Waller 1937) as a "courtship game" that has its own set of rules, strategies, and goals. The male makes the first move and the female waits to be "asked out." She must play coy, appear shy, and demonstrate her attraction by employing certain paralinguistic techniques as body language, changing her tone of voice, making furtive glances, or simply appearing vulnerable (Bailey 1988).

During traditional dating the participants follow traditional gender roles. The male makes the plans, creates the evening's itinerary, picks her up at a predetermined time, meets her parents, opens doors, picks up the tab and overall behaves like a gentleman. Although he talks about himself (Tannen 1990) he is very careful not to disclose personal and highly intimate biographical information (Gallmeier, Zusman, Knox, & Gibson 1997). The dating couple may go to a school dance like the prom, attend a rock concert, have dinner, take in a movie or frequent a sporting event. They each dress properly adhering to societal gender role proprieties, especially for more ceremonial and ritualistic social events like the prom (Best 2000).

The symbolism of the male paying is significant for it connotes the female's economic dependence on the male, which enables him to dominate and control the conversation serving as a form of anticipatory socialization for marriage (Bailey 1988; Tannen 1990). If the male pays, he often expects that he will get something in return, usually in the form of sexual favors. The woman knows this and depending on her age, she may feel obligated to reciprocate by kissing her date good night, "making out," or engaging in sexual intercourse with him (Eder, Evans & Parker 1995; Moffat 1989).

On a traditional, formal date the woman expects to have her escort pay all the expenses and while remaining passive she attempts to please the male without compromising herself in any way. In keeping with the traditional female sexual script she is expected to exhibit less sexual interest than her male counterpoint and to curb the male's amatory advances (Asmussen & Shehan 1992; Bailey 1988; Fine 1988). It is important to note that this traditional pattern represents "ideal norms" and as Coontz has revealed (1992), history suggests dating couples have followed a combination of "ideal norms" with what sociologists call "real norms" while practicing courting rituals. Nevertheless, this traditional dating pattern has continued to be the dominant form throughout much of the 20th century.

Over the last decade and as we move into the 21st century an alternative to the traditional dating pattern has emerged (Gallmeier et al 1997; Knox, Zusman, & Nieves 1997; Eder & Parker 1987; Kessler et al 1985). It is often referred to as "getting together" (Gallmeier et al 1997), or "hanging out," (Eder et al 1995) and is illustrated well by the popular situation comedy, *Friends*.

**Table 1 - Differences Between Couple and Group Dating**

| | Couple Daters | Group Daters | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Current age | 21.2 | 19.9 | p<.04 |
| First date | 14.8 | 14.0 | p<.003 |
| # of date same person | 7.95 | 6.21 | p<.032 |
| Sex - male | 80% | 20% | p<.02 |
| Sex - female | 64% | 36% | |
| Engaged | 78% | 22% | p<.005 |

During the 1960s and 1970s, changing sexual norms, the increasing availability of contraceptives, a decline in parental authority, and the increasing activism of young people helped reverse the conservative dating trends of the 1940s and 1950s. Dating was transformed into a casual and spontaneous form of courtship. Greatly influenced by the women's movement, women no longer waited to be asked out but instead began to initiate dates and intimate relationships. There was an increasing emphasis on "going Dutch," where each person paid her or his own way. Going Dutch was particularly common among middle-class youth, who were financially more independent than poor and working-class youth (Ramu 1989). Paying one's own way was seen as a way of reducing the exploitation of young women by males, who in the past, expected sexual favors in return for the money spent on dating.

The impact of feminism and the women's movement in promoting more egalitarian gender roles probably are the most important factors responsible for this emerging pattern. Although most Americans continue to find mates through dating of some sort, dating is no longer what it was prior to the mid 1960s (Murstein 1980). Not only have the structure and content of dating changed, but so has the terminology. The term dating has been replaced with such terms as "going with," "hanging out," or "getting together." Some observers have even suggested that not only has the language changed but dating itself is obsolete. They argue that dating has been replaced by informal pairing off in larger groups, often without the prearrangement of asking someone out (Whyte 1995 61).

"Hanging out" or "getting together" are centered on cooperation and sharing. Equality is an important value, and to symbolize equality, participants "go Dutch," each paying his or her own way. Since each person pays their way the feelings of obligation or dependence that are associated with one individual defraying all the financial costs is missing. A man does not expect the woman to go to bed with him in exchange for his showing her a good time. The woman does not feel that she owes the man anything. They go "out" together as equals (Gallmeier et al 1997). "Out" now implies the norms are in flux. The young woman may ask the young man out. The individuals may not go out together but "see each other" at a party, or several women and men will go to the same place "just to hang." Although a particular man and woman may spend most of their time talking with each other they may not label their evening together as constituting a "date." Because there is less emphasis on traditional gender roles, the masks that hide the real person are discouraged. Honesty and intimacy are highly valued and self-disclosure is considered an important quality for both men and women (Gallmeier et al 1997; Knox et al 1997; Eder & Parker 1987; Franklin 1988; Kinney 1993).

Instead of being centered around an event, getting together emphasizes spontaneity. Males and females do not necessarily hang out as couples, but often meet in groups (Adler, Kless, & Adler 1992; Eder et al 1995; Moffat 1989). Sexuality is moved from the arena of exchange and the symbolism of a contest to mutual involvement, coadjuvancy, and mutual satisfaction. Individual feelings are important. Expressing one's inner-most thoughts, aspirations, trepidations, and goals are encouraged and welcomed regardless of one's sex (Gallmeier et al 1997; Knox et al 1997). Sexual involvement, intimacy, and personal relationships reflect the true feelings and desires rather than the need to prove oneself or pay a debt. Friendship, respect, communication, and common interests serve as the basis for decisions about whether to become intimate, sexually involved, or coupled.

The purpose of this exploratory study is to

examine and clarify dating norms as we enter the new millennium.

## METHODS

### The Data

The data for this study are based on the responses of 226 undergraduate students at a southeastern university who completed an anonymous confidential questionnaire of 22 items in regard to their current dating behavior. Sixty-seven (67%) percent of the respondents were female; twenty-three (23%) were male. Most (88%) of the sample were white; twelve (12%) were black.

### Findings

About seventy percent (69.4%) of the respondents reported that they usually go out as a couple in contrast to going out as a group. Table 1 identifies several significant differences between "couple daters" and "group daters."

Couple daters, when compared to group daters, are older, began dating at a younger age, have had more dates with the same person and are more likely to be male. Other findings and the associated significance level include that couple daters in contrast to group daters, place more importance on dating someone of the same religion ($p<.003$), same race ($p<.014$), and that their parents approve of the person that they date ($p<.018$). Furthermore, couple daters are more serious about their relationships than group daters. On a continuum from "not involved" to "casually dating" to "dating exclusively" to "being engaged," couple daters were more often the latter two categories and group daters are more often the first two categories. Indeed, exclusive daters and the engaged were more likely to only date as a couple ($p< .005$). Couple and group daters also differ in what they do on dates. Couple daters tend to go out to dinner alone whereas group daters tend to go to a party ($p<.000$).

## DISCUSSION

The data confirm that dating in a dyad is still the norm for individuals who regard their relationship as exclusive or involved. Eighty percent (80%) of persons who labeled their relationship this way reported they dated as a couple. Similarly, persons committed to each other reported considerable concern over racial or religious differences and whether their parents approved of the person they were dating. Previous research (Knox et al 1997) has demonstrated the importance college students attach to homogamy as the nature of their relationship becomes more serious.

Just as dyad dating among serious daters is the norm, beginning to date early and dating for the first time are associated with dating in groups. This may represent a significant shift from the 1950s in which early uninvolved dating was in pairs. The social phenomenon driving the normativeness of group dating may be the general lack of early commitment to marriage. Increasingly, individuals are delaying marriage in favor of getting their careers established. In 1970, the median age at marriage for women was 20.6 and the median age for men was 22.5; by 1990, the median age for marriage for women was 24; for men it was 25.9 (*Statistical Abstract of the United States* 1998, Table 159).

Fear of marriage and wanting to avoid a divorce may also be operative in the delay of age at marriage. Giuliani, Iafrate, and Rosnati (1998) found that individuals whose parents were divorced were more pessimistic about marriage. By dating in a group, individuals maintain the distance necessary to avoid falling in love by pairing off. Lee (1973) described this love style as ludic which is characterized by two behaviors, ensuring that one is involved with several people at once and not seeing any one person too often. The group context lends itself to ludic style dating.

The exploratory nature of this article cannot provide a comprehensive picture of dating and mate selection for all groups. Our data is limited to 20-something white females and to some extent, white males. Our data reveal nothing about the changes in dating patterns of people of color. Unfortunately, the literature in this area is highly limited. The most extensive literature on dating among groups of color deals with African Americans (see Staples 1991). Little work has been done on courtship among Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos. According to most research, traditional dating patterns among blacks, as among whites and other groups, is more prevalent among the middle and upper class than the lower class. For the African American middle class, dating is typically sequential, occurring over the course of several stages: getting together in the teen

years, keeping company on the porch and, eventually, in the house under family supervision; group dating; and finally, individual one-on-one dating, engagement, and, most often, marriage (Scott 1988). Moreover, since the 1970s, blacks, like whites and several other groups, have been delaying marriage until later ages, which means they are dating or getting together for longer periods of time than in the past.

Discussing gender differences in dating in the context of social-learning theory, social scientist Susan Basow (1992) argues that men's dating scripts focus on planning and paying for the date as well as initiating sexual behavior, whereas women's scripts focus on enhancing their appearance, making conversation, and controlling sexual behavior. This paradigm clearly captures the traditional dating patterns of the 1950s. "Hanging out" or "getting together" is more adequately explained by a variation of exchange theory called equity theory. When used in this sense, the term *equity* signifies "fairness." Equity theory proposes that a person is attracted to another by a fair deal rather than a profitable exchange (Walster, Walster, & Traupman 1978). It argues that most people believe that they should benefit from a relationship in proportion to what they give to the relationship. Group dating not only becomes more egalitarian but it can serve as a filtering process (Klimek 1979). Individuals use a series of filters to sort through a large number of potential mates to arrive at the final choice. Each filter, in descending order, reduces the pool of eligible mates until relatively few eligibles are left. We then choose a mate from among this final group. Filter theories or process theories as they are sometimes called, suggest that many factors, are involved in mate selection.

What is needed are more investigations focusing on these different forms of mate selection. More empirical studies which compare traditional dating patterns with "hanging out" or other alternative mate selection processes could provide insight into the changing nature of gender role socialization and sex role expectations in the new millennium.

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# EVALUATING INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAMS: THE OKLAHOMA CITY SMOKE ALARM PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation of injury prevention programs is critical for measuring program effects on reducing injury-related morbidity and mortality or on increasing the adoption of safety practices. During the planning and implementation of injury prevention programs, evaluation data also can be used to test program strategies and to measure the program's penetration among the target population. The availability of this early data enables program managers to refine a program, increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes. The Oklahoma City Smoke Alarm Project illustrates how an evaluation was designed to inform program decisions by providing methodologically sound data on program processes and outcomes. This community intervention trial was instituted to reduce residential fire–related injuries and deaths in a geographic area of Oklahoma City that was disproportionately affected by this problem. The distribution of free smoke alarms in targeted neighborhoods was accompanied by written educational pamphlets and home-based follow-up to test whether the alarms were functioning correctly. Early evaluation during the planning and implementation phases of the program allowed for midcourse corrections that increased the program's impact on desired outcomes. During the six years following the project, the residential fire–related injury rate decreased 81% in the target population but only 7% in the rest of Oklahoma City. This dramatic decline in fire-related injuries in the target area is largely attributed to the free smoke alarm distribution as well as to educational efforts promoting awareness about residential fires and their prevention.

Evaluation is the process of determining whether programs are appropriate, adequate, effective, and efficient and may indicate if a program has unexpected benefits or creates unexpected problems (Deniston & Rosenstock 1970). Evaluation is an ongoing process: It begins with an idea for a particular program, is interwoven with activities throughout the life of the program, and is completed in the final assessment of whether program objectives were met and program effects sustained over time (Thompson & McClintock 1998). Determining that a program is not effective or has negative consequences is as important as knowing that a program substantially improved outcomes. This ensures that resources are not wasted and persons are not harmed. All injury prevention programs should be evaluated, but not necessarily in the same way or at the same level of methodological rigor (National Committee for Injury Prevention and Control [NCIPC] 1989). Interventions that have been subjected to thorough evaluation in a variety of settings and found to be effective do not require the same intensity of evaluation as new and untried interventions.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the importance of evaluating injury prevention programs and to illustrate how the evaluation process and results inform program decisions, using a community-based residential fire injury prevention program as an example. The Oklahoma City Smoke Alarm Project was implemented in 1990 in an effort to decrease injuries associated with residential fires in an area of Oklahoma City that had a high rate of these injuries. The primary component of the intervention was a targeted smoke alarm distribution program. This was accompanied by written education material and periodic follow-up to test whether the smoke alarms distributed were functioning correctly (Mallonee, Istre, Rosenberg, et al 1996). Evaluation was an integral part of the program from its inception, and early evaluation results led to changes in the intervention design. These changes allowed the program to achieve results beyond its original goals and objectives.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

In the past, many interventions were undertaken based on intuition, advocacy, or legal considerations rather than on scientific evidence of what works and what does not work to reduce unintentional injuries (Institute of Medicine 1998a). Because many of these prevention programs are well received

**Figure 1 - Stages of Program Evaluation**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Formative Evaluation** | The process of testing program plans, messages, materials, strategies, and activities for feasibility, appropriateness, acceptability, and applicability to the program and the target population. Formative evaluation is generally used when a new program is being developed or an existing program is being modified. |
| **Process Evaluation** | The mechanism for testing whether a program is reaching the target population as planned, such as by counting the number of people or households reached. Process evaluation should begin when a program is implemented and continue throughout the life of the program. Programs often are fine tuned during the implementation phase because of process evaluation results. |
| **Impact Evaluation** | It measures the changes in the target population's knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors associated with the program. These changes are measured prior to beginning the program and during and/or following the program. |
| **Outcome Evaluation** | Used to determine how well the program achieved the goal of reducing morbidity and mortality. Baseline data must be collected for an adequate time period prior to and following the implementation of the program to determine program effects. Documenting changes in morbidity and mortality also requires a large study population and analysis of the same data for a similar population that did not receive the program (control group). |

Sources: Thompson & McClintock 1998; Fitz-Gibbon & Morris 1987.

and popular, funding often continues in the absence of scientifically rigorous evaluations. Currently, however, there is a movement toward implementing interventions of demonstrated effectiveness. Nonetheless, relatively few communitybased injury prevention programs have been rigorously evaluated to the extent that would justify the resources allocated to these programs (Klassen et al 2000).

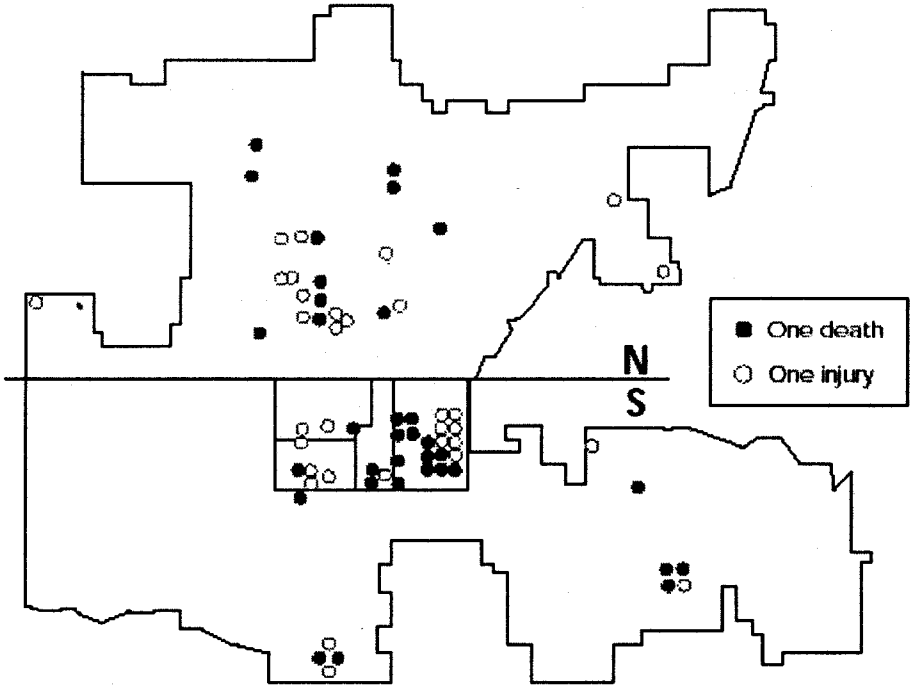
Many potential reasons exist for the lack of rigorous evaluations. Program staff and funders often place a higher priority on service delivery (that is, distributing bicycle helmets, car seats, etc.) than on evaluating program effectiveness. Program managers may not understand the importance of evaluation, may lack staff trained in evaluation, or may be concerned that negative findings will doom a program. Additionally, target populations often are too small or the injury events being studied are too rare to demonstrate significant effects on injuries or deaths, and program managers often are not aware of other appropriate evaluation measures. Even when programs are small and have few resources, evaluation is essential, and program managers should design their efforts so that useful evaluation data are collected throughout the program. Without evaluation, it is not possible to determine whether a program benefits or harms the target population (Thompson & McClintock 1998), or wastes valuable resources.

While the most common use for evaluation is to determine whether proposed program goals and objectives are met, evaluation data is often used in other ways. Many evaluations compare the cost and effectiveness of multiple approaches to a problem, often leading to a program's redesign. Demonstrating a program's effectiveness to the target population, the public, policymakers, researchers, and practitioners also advances knowledge and can enhance funding and future program development in injury control. Because of the multiple ways evaluation data are used, most programs need to design evaluation plans that incorporate four stages of evaluation (see Figure 1). Each of these stages was addressed in the Oklahoma City Smoke Alarm Project.

## THE RATIONALE FOR THE OKLAHOMA CITY SMOKE ALARM PROJECT

More than 800 children and adolescents under age 20 died of unintentional firerelated injuries in the United States during 1996 (Grossman 2000). Residential fires account for 90% of all childhood burn deaths, and in many states, more children die in residential fires than as motor vehicle occupants or pedestrians (Wilson, Baker, Teret, et al 1991). The majority of fire-related deaths are due to the poisoning effects of smoke inhalation and asphyxiation, not the burn itself (Baker, O'Neill, Ginsburg & Li 1992; Gormsen, Jeppesen & Lund 1984). Smoke alarms are an

**Figure 2 - Injuries Due to Residential Fires in Oklahoma City, September 1987 to April 1990**




Source: Mallonee et al 1996.

effective, inexpensive means of providing early warning of fire (NCIPC 1989; Karter 1994; National Fire Data Center [NFDC] 1980; Derry 1979) and are 50% to 80% effective at preventing death or injury (NFDC 1980; Hall 1994). While more than 90% of U.S. homes have a smoke alarm, as many as 25% to 34% of these alarms may be nonfunctioning (Hall 1994; Smith 1994; Centers for Disease Control 1986). The absence of functional smoke alarms in residential dwellings is a risk factor for residential fire–related injury or death (NFDC 1980; Birky, Halpin Caplan et al 1979; Runyan, Bangdiwala, Linzer et al 1992). An estimated 80% of fire-related deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms (U.S. Fire Administration 1990).

In Oklahoma, burns and smoke inhalation are the leading cause of death among children ages one to four (Oklahoma State Department of Health 1999). In an effort to better assess the occurrence of injuries, the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) made hospitalized and fatal burns/smoke inhalation a reportable condition in 1987. The OSDH acquired data from hospitals, the chief medical examiner, and the local fire department as part of a statewide, population-based injury surveillance system. Analysis of the surveillance data indicated that a total of 312 residential fire–related injuries occurred statewide between September 1987, when surveillance began, and April 1990, just before this program was implemented. Among persons injured in residential fires, children under five years of age had the highest annual mortality rate (6.8 per 100,000 population) of any age group. Among children injured in residential fires, 64% (41 out of 64) died.

Oklahoma City had the highest residential fire injury rate in the state. Sixty-six people in Oklahoma City were injured in residential fires between September 1987 and April 1990; 34 of these people died (52%). Six children under five years of age suffered nonfatal injuries, and five children died (45%). When Oklahoma City injury data were linked to fire department run data and then mapped according to place of occurrence, a high-risk geographic population was identified. This 24-square-mile "target area" included 16% of the Oklahoma City population, but it expe-

rienced 45% of the total residential fire injuries and deaths (see Figure 2). The target area included a population of 73,301 persons and 34,945 residential dwellings (single- or multiple-family dwellings, excluding apartments). The residential fire injury rate in the target area was more than four times higher than the rest of Oklahoma City (15.3 and 3.6 per 100,000 population, respectively) (Mallonee et al 1996). In the target area, only 4 of the 30 fatal and nonfatal injuries (13%) occurred in homes with functioning smoke alarms.

The demographic characteristics of the target population showed a higher proportion of Hispanic, American Indian, and other nonblack minorities, lower household income and property/rental values, and fewer high school graduates compared with the rest of Oklahoma City. Prior to the intervention, the statewide prevalence of smoke alarms was estimated to be 70%, although the prevalence in Oklahoma City households was not known. However, data from the Oklahoma City Fire Department indicated that homes in the target area in which fires had occurred were less likely to have a smoke alarm (23%) than were homes in the rest of Oklahoma City that had a fire (40%).

To address this important public health problem, a community-based intervention that included a smoke detector giveaway program in conjunction with a fire and injury prevention educational effort was implemented in the target area of Oklahoma City in May 1990. Prior to the Oklahoma City intervention, no comprehensive evaluation had been conducted to determine whether a program to increase the prevalence of smoke alarms in a high-risk population would reduce fire-related morbidity and mortality.

## THE EVALUATION OF THE OKLAHOMA CITY SMOKE ALARM PROJECT

The evaluation of the Oklahoma City Smoke Alarm Project used the four types of evaluation discussed previously (Thompson & McClintock 1998). The *outcome evaluation* focused on the program's primary goal—to decrease hospitalized and fatal burn and smoke inhalation injuries associated with residential fires by 50% in the targeted population. This component of the evaluation relied on the injury surveillance system developed by the OSDH. Two programmatic issues critical to the primary injury outcomes also were evaluated. Specifically, the effectiveness of methods of distributing alarms and soliciting household participation in the program was measured in the *process evaluation*. The subsequent and appropriate use and function of the smoke alarms distributed was measured in the *impact evaluation*. Finally, as a result of the demographic composition of the target population, educational material provided to participants in conjunction with the smoke alarm distribution was refined during the *formative evaluation* and written at a third-grade reading level in both English and Spanish.

The state health agency had the lead role in this project and was responsible for identifying the target population, acquiring funding, and implementing and evaluating the intervention. The local health and fire departments, the Red Cross, and a large coalition of volunteers from the community also were actively involved. Evaluation began when the intervention was designed, was ongoing throughout the intervention, and has continued for nine years (though only six years are reported here) to ascertain whether the program's effects have been sustained over time. The rest of Oklahoma City (outside the target area) was used as a comparison population because of the similarities in characteristics (such as weather, fire department response, city ordinances) that could affect or confound the evaluation of this program.

### Components of the Program

The two major components of this communitybased project were (1) the distribution and testing of smoke alarms in residential dwellings and (2) written educational material provided to each individual participant and selected populations (schools, churches, media, and so on). This material addressed prevention of the major causes of residential fires resulting in injury in the target area, including children playing with fire (47%), smoking (17%), and flammable liquids (13%) (Douglas, Mallonee & Istre 1998). The material also covered 911 emergency calls, escaping fires, and installing and maintaining smoke alarms.

Based on the estimated baseline prevalence of smoke alarms statewide (70%), this intervention was designed to distribute smoke alarms to more than 10,000 homes in the target area and compare two methods

**Table 1 - Inspection Results at 3, 12, & 48 Months: Alarm Installation & Functional Status in Oklahoma City, 1990 to 1994**

| Alarm Status | 3 Months | 12 Months | 48 Months |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alarm installed & functioning | 65% | 53% | 46% |
| Alarm not yet installed | 20% | 6% | 4% |
| Alarm/battery did not function | 2% | 5% | 7% |
| Removed the batteries | 2% | 10% | 19% |
| No longer had the alarm | 7% | 14% | 9% |
| Moved & took the alarm with them | 4% | 11% | 15% |
| Sample size | 875 | 5,617 | 749 |

Source: Mallonee et al 1996

of distributing them. The first method distributed smoke alarms by "canvassing" the area using a fire truck slowly driving down each street, intermittently sounding its siren, and broadcasting a public announcement that volunteers were distributing free smoke alarms curbside to households without an alarm. The second distribution method required participants to go to a neighborhood fire station to obtain a smoke alarm.

While the canvassing method solicited participation of household occupants at the time of distribution, the areas that required visiting a fire station to obtain an alarm used three different methods of distributing flyers to solicit household participation in the program. These flyers educated residents about the risks of residential fire injuries, notified them of the residential fire prevention program, and listed the location of fire stations, dates, and times where smoke alarms were distributed for free. In one area, the flyer was mailed to all residents; in another area, the flyer was distributed only in public places; and in the final area, volunteers placed the flyer in residential doors. The flyers mentioned that alarms also were available by calling the Red Cross and would be installed by program representatives upon request.

## PROCESS EVALUATION: MEASURING SMOKE ALARM DISTRIBUTION

To evaluate which distribution method most effectively reached the target population, the baseline prevalence of smoke alarms in the target area was estimated prior to the program via a targeted telephone survey (Douglas et al 1998). The baseline prevalence was then reevaluated very early in the program by surveying a random sample of homes. The household survey was conducted by off-duty uniformed firefighters who visited the selected addresses unannounced and requested information on the presence or absence of a functioning smoke alarm in the home, verified the presence and function of alarms in the home, and installed or replaced alarms or batteries when necessary. Based on this survey, the estimated baseline prevalence of smoke alarms in the target area was 66% (Douglas, Mallonee, & Istre 1999). Thus, an estimated 11,881 of the 34,945 target area homes were in need of an alarm.

In May 1990, 3,564 smoke alarms were distributed to 3,433 homes in the target area of Oklahoma City. In addition, approximately 350 batteries were distributed to homes with alarms that needed a battery. Evaluation of the impact of the two distribution methods revealed that 31% of all homes in the canvassed area received a smoke alarm compared with only 6% in the other areas combined. More homes in need of a smoke alarm also were reached in the canvassed area (68%) than in the other three areas combined (17%). Finally, 56% of all alarms were distributed in the canvassed district, although it accounted for only 17% of homes in the target area (Douglas et al 1998).

In addition to reaching more homes in need than the other methods, canvassing also allowed volunteers to distribute more alarms per hour (5.9) than the other two methods (3.1) (Douglas et al 1998). Since only one-third of the 10,000 smoke alarms were distributed during May 1990, and only 17% of the population in need in the noncanvassed area had been reached, program managers decided to canvass the rest of the target area. By November 1990, the entire area had been canvassed and a total of 10,100 smoke alarms had been distributed to 9,291 homes; nearly 80% of the *homes in need* and approximately 25% of *total homes* in the target area received an alarm during

**Table 2 - Final Results: 72-Month Follow-up, Annual Injury Rate per 100,000 Population and Injury Rate per 100 Residential Fires, Oklahoma City, 1990 to 1996**

| | Injury Rates per 100,000 Population | | | Injury Rates per 100 Residential Fires | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Location** | **9/87-4/90** | **5/90-4/96** | **Rate Change** | **9/87-4/90** | **5/90-4/96** | **Rate Change** |
| Target area | 15.35 | 2.96 | -81% | 5.02 | 1.20 | -76% |
| Rest of city | 3.63 | 3.37 | -7% | 2.95 | 2.19 | +12% |

Source:*Innovative Strategies to Prevent Residential Fire-Related Injuries* 1998. State and Territorial Injury Prevention Director's Association 1998.

the program. During the second year of the program, batteries were distributed to all participants. During the third year, postcards reminding residents to change the detector battery were mailed to all participating households. No contact was made with participants during subsequent years.

**Impact Evaluation: Use and Functional Status of Smoke Alarms**

Determining whether alarms distributed by the program were installed and maintained was an important question for evaluating program effectiveness, because smoke detectors must be installed and functioning appropriately to reduce fire-related injuries, and only 6% of the smoke alarms distributed were installed by program representatives. To answer this question, off-duty uniformed firefighters visited a random sample of homes that had received an alarm and assessed the alarm status at three intervals over four years following the intervention (see Table 1) (Mallonee et al 1996). Nearly two-thirds of the alarms were installed and functioning within three months of implementing the program. At 48 months, nearly 50% were still installed and functioning. The primary reasons for the decrease in the number of functional alarms at 48 months were batteries being removed from the alarms and participants moving and taking the alarms with them (see Table 1).

**Outcome Evaluation: Impact on Morbidity and Mortality**

The primary goals of this evaluation were to estimate the impact of the smoke detector giveaway program on residential fire–related injuries and deaths in the target area, and to determine whether any impact observed was sustained over time. These questions were answered by calculating fatal and nonfatal residential fire injury rates per 100,000 population and per 100 residential fires in both the target area and in the remainder of Oklahoma City and by comparing these rates over time. Fire-related injury rates were calculated between the time when surveillance began until the smoke detector giveaway program was implemented (September 1987 to April 1990), and again for six years following program implementation (May 1990 to April 1996). The injury rate associated with residential fires decreased 81% in the target population, but it decreased only 7% in the remainder of Oklahoma City during this six year time period. Similarly, the injury rate per 100 fires decreased 76% in the target area, but it increased 12% in the rest of Oklahoma City (see Table 2). Among children under five years of age, only two were injured in the target area during the six years after intervention. It is estimated that at least 60 injuries and deaths were prevented in this high-risk area of Oklahoma City during the six years following the implementation of the smoke alarm giveaway program.

The 81% decline in the rate of injuries in the target area following the intervention is striking and cannot be explained on the basis of the smoke alarm giveaway program alone. It is likely that educational efforts, increased awareness about preventing the most common causes of residential fires, and publicity about the program also contributed to the decline in injuries (Mallonee et al 1996). In addition, the relatively small number of injuries during the study period could have made the observed decline more variable.

Some of the decrease in fire-related injury rates may have resulted from "regression to the mean." (James 1973). This phenomenon occurs when the observed effect of an intervention is higher than expected because the baseline incidence has fluctuated by chance above its long-term average. In this instance, by picking an area of the city that had the highest rate of fire-related inju-

ries, one would expect the rate to be reduced in subsequent years, even without an intervention. However, it is unlikely that this phenomenon had a major effect on these results, for several reasons. Data on the injury incidence for nearly three years was analyzed before the intervention, and the sudden, marked decline in the injury rate coincided precisely with the program's implementation and persisted for at least six years. The number of injuries per *100 residential fires*, as well as *per population*, also was analyzed, minimizing any potential bias introduced by a substantial change in the number of fires. While the number of fires per 100 homes was high in the target area prior to the intervention, it continued to be higher there even after the intervention. In addition, the type of housing in and demographic characteristics of the target area were known to be associated with a high risk of residential fire–related injuries, and it seems unlikely that these factors would have changed rapidly (Mallonee et al 1996).

While randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are considered the gold standard in evaluating the effectiveness of interventions, they are expensive, time-consuming, and not always feasible (DiGuiseppi & Roberts 2000; Institute of Medicine 1998b). Community intervention trials such as the Oklahoma Project can generate valuable evaluation results, but do have limitations, including the unavailability of data to control for "confounding variables"—characteristics that differ between the target and comparison communities and independently influence the outcome (Rothman 1986). However, it is unlikely that potential confounders, such as changes in the population prevalence of smoking or drinking or changes in weather conditions, were present only in the target area and thus caused or substantially contributed to these results (Mallonee et al 1996).

## CONCLUSIONS

This article discusses the importance of evaluating injury prevention efforts. Evaluation encompasses assessments of a program's feasibility, efficacy, effectiveness, and cost effectiveness. Perhaps the most important use of evaluation data is to assist managers, policymakers, funders, practitioners, and researchers to expand successful interventions to larger groups of at-risk populations. Evaluation data also help managers create the best possible programs, learn from mistakes, modify programs to capitalize on the most effective strategies, and monitor progress toward program goals and objectives. Whether large or small in scope, evaluations of injury prevention programs should be designed to provide a sound assessment that can be replicated (Rossi & Freeman 1985).

The Oklahoma City Smoke Alarm Project illustrates how evaluation was used to guide programmatic decisions and alter interventions in a real-world setting. Using surveillance data, it was demonstrated that an intensive, targeted smoke alarm distribution program significantly reduced residential fire–related injuries and deaths in a low-income population. Process evaluation during the first month of the program also showed that distributing smoke alarms door-to-door was significantly more effective at reaching this population than promotional methods requiring residents to go to a fire station to receive an alarm. In response to this finding, the program was refined and the entire target area was canvassed to strengthen the program's impact.

The impact evaluation of the functional status of the alarms suggests that most alarms were installed even though they were just handed to the participants. While having program staff install the smoke alarms may have increased the prevalence of alarms in participating households, it is not clear whether this would have significantly decreased the number of alarms that had the battery removed or that were not functioning at the time of follow-up. Future programs should evaluate whether installing every alarm substantially increases the number of homes with functioning alarms during the several years following a giveaway program.

The evaluation of the functional status of the alarms suggests that smoke alarm programs using alkaline battery–powered alarms, like the ones used in the Oklahoma City intervention, should address the need for annual battery replacement. The impact of using smoke alarms powered with lithium batteries also should be explored. These batteries —which are estimated to last 10 years and usually have a silencer button to disable the alarm if there is nuisance smoke such as from cooking—may increase the prevalence of functioning smoke alarms at follow-up and decrease the likelihood of occu-

pants removing batteries. The disadvantage of alarms that use lithium batteries is that they cost two to four times that of standard alkaline battery–powered smoke alarms, and their effectiveness and cost effectiveness in community injury prevention programs have not been evaluated. Finally, evaluations should be conducted on the effectiveness of residential sprinkler systems in conjunction with smoke alarms.

Funding for the entire nine-year period reported here (1987 to 1996) came from a variety of state and federal funding sources. It is estimated that more than 50% of the three-year research project costs were expended for the program evaluation. Current federal awards to design, implement, and evaluate prevention programs are for two- to three-year projects and may not provide adequate funding to complete a thorough and meaningful evaluation within a realistic time frame. As this example indicates, rigorous evaluation requires a longer followup period than the traditional award of two to three years (Lescohier, Gallagher & Guyer 1990). Practitioners and researchers must work with policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels to ensure that more resources are allocated to enhance evaluation capabilities and to increase the duration of grants and cooperative agreements awarded to implement and evaluate new community-based programs.

In summary, the Oklahoma City Smoke Alarm Project demonstrates that combining a well-conceived program design and a rigorous evaluation can lead to a successful community-based intervention that reduces the burden of injury by preventing death, disfigurement, and disability. Although this model was used to reduce residential fire injuries, the basic framework is applicable to a broad array of childhood injuries.

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