The Hilltop Review:
A Journal of Western Michigan University
Graduate Student Research

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The Hilltop Review is a peer-reviewed student run journal of graduate student research and artwork. This multidisciplinary journal is published twice a year. For the last several years Josh Berkenpas served as the editor. During his time as editor, the Hilltop truly flourished. His work for the journal and university was remarkable. I only hope that my time with the journal produces a similar quality of work as Josh produced.

Keeping with the spirit of the journal from the past editor, this edition features articles that cover diverse and critical topics. Specifically in this issue, several articles deal critically with gender. Additionally issues such as bureaucracy, the media, and youth and criminal justice are explored in this issue. As is the case with every issue, a diverse fields are represented in the journal.

Additionally the art work of several graduate students is featured in this issue. Also for the first time in the Hilltop, poetry has been featured. Hopefully the Hilltop will continue to receive submissions that represents the many talents of the graduate students at Western Michigan.

Thanks go out to all of those who have served on the editorial board and as reviewers. Without their help this journal would not be able to exist. The process of reviewing articles is a service that does not often receive much praise, but without the process of peer-reviewing, academic work would cease to exist. So my thanks goes out to all of those who have helped in the process of getting this edition out.

I hope you enjoy reading the work of these fine WMU scholars.
An Exploratory Ethnography of the Gendered Communicative Behaviors of Bouncers

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An Exploratory Ethnography of the Gendered Communicative Behaviors of Bouncers

This research study focuses on combining my interests in interpersonal communication and organizational communication, and work experience as club security. Specifically, the research explores the communicative behaviors of club security (i.e., bouncers) in two different situational contexts, specifically those based on population and demographic composition. The communicative behaviors of bouncers were explored in two specific contexts in the Midwest: (1) a college town with mid-size city population, and (2) an urban center of one of the largest cities in the U.S. Utilizing an ethnographic methodological approach – as a participant-observer – as the primary data source, a commitment of 32 hours of observations were recorded. Through field notes, the data collected focuses on a variety of security communicative behaviors and how those behaviors are similar and different depending on different situational contexts. In the end, the analysis of the data focuses on interpersonal factors, gendered communicative behaviors, and the relational and business orientations of bouncers.

Participant-Observer Observations: My Multidimensional Position(s)

A primary motivation for this research is my six months of working as a bouncer. Being my first and only experience as a bouncer, I was trained in ways un-parallel to what I thought was the stereotypical, traditional bouncer. I became very interested in the ways I was told to interact with patrons, both verbally and nonverbally, and wanted to further explore the actions of bouncers outside of my place of employment. This experience gave me an interesting vantage point to negotiate the ethnographic gaze as “participant,” both as a bouncer and patron, as well as an “observer,” in a scholarly sense.

Existing Literature on Bouncers

Defining the Role

In order to maintain a safe environment socializing in barrooms and other various types of night clubs, owners employ individuals to enforce safety and regulate alcohol consumption. These individuals represent a form of security and have multiple titles, including “security personnel, floormen, door supervisors, or most commonly, bouncers” (DeMichele & Tewksbury, 2004, p. 539). Traditionally, bouncers are perceived as young men, usually muscular, that enjoy violence. While studies of bouncers are absent in the field of communication, this abbreviated literature review will summarize existing research in other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and gender and women’s studies.

Body size and physical strength are key factors in the occupation of bouncing. In their study, Tewksbury and DeMichele (2004) consider these key traits as a necessity to the occupation. Their study of a strip club reports that the only male employees were bouncers, with the exception of the DJ and manager of the club. Job requirements were to “carry ice, stock the bar coolers with beer, remove trash, clean the parking lot of debris (usually broken beer bottles), escort female employees to their cars, coordinate with taxi cab services to transport customers, and perform other related tasks” (p. 544). Bouncers in the study were expected to regulate not only patrons’ behaviors – not allowing them to touch dancers and enforcing the one drink purchase per hour minimum – but also to monitor strippers’ actions while working as a way of making sure they are following the rules of their job.
and conducting their job correctly.

In a study by Winlow, Hobbs, Lister, and Hadfied, one researcher was chosen to work as a bouncer, resulting in many different understandings from the unique perspective of a participant-observer. They concluded that customers understand the significance of muscles, the tattoos and shaved heads, and they learn to read the narratives of intimidation that provide order in venues that are steeped in intoxication and an escape from daytime regulation. In fact, being a bouncer allows a cultivation of hyper-masculine persona to be demonstrated and reinforced. As Goffman suggests, “From body language to the cut of their clothes to the way they smoke their cigarettes, these men present their behavior for display and their bodies become tools of ‘impression management’” (as cited in Winlow et al. 2001, p. 541). Their bodies, expressions, tattoos, scared tissue, and body language all represent a means of messaging, easily understood by patrons: Do as we tell you and do it now” (Winlow, et al. 2001).

Aggression

By virtue of the job, many conflicts exist between club security officers (i.e., bouncers) and patrons. In one study, Tomsen (2005) created focus groups and designed interview questions specific for bouncers and patrons from various local venues in Newcastle/Hunter region of New South Wales. In these interviews patrons described many quarrels between themselves and bouncers, commonly perceiving bouncers as “bullies” who found enjoyment on victimizing smaller or intoxicated customers. They described their interactions with security as a “masculine rivalry over physical attributes” (p. 287). Several complained about how security bouncers amplify their immediate power over patrons with arbitrary decisions. They suggested that security bouncers often make inconsistent evaluations on who is allowed entrance into the club, generally favoring younger females, putting younger males under greater physical scrutiny. Participants also described instances where security bouncers held personal identification cards for no specific reason or overlooked acts of aggression or misbehavior from their own friends while at the club.

In an attempt to further understand predictors of aggression within the barrooms across multiple venues in Sydney, Australia, Homel, Tomsen, and Thommeny (1992) used a team of observers who spent 300 hours conducting unobtrusive observation in 23 sites within 17 separate licensed drinking establishments. An analysis of the data revealed “groups of male strangers, high boredom, and high drunkenness” (see also, Roberts, 2008) as the primary variable present during violent occurrences and in bars known to be high risk for violence. To supplement these predictors, unreasonable bouncers showing high levels of aggression were another variable present during violent occasions. Observers in this study reported witnessing bouncers initiating and encouraging fights between themselves and patrons as well as patron and patron. In addition, some occurrences of bouncers following patrons out of the venue and into the parking lot to continue fighting were reported. Bouncers observed in the study indirectly contributed to aggression in one of the bars by ignoring unruly patron behavior. At least one fight observed in this bar occurred after bouncers failed to address complaints by females regarding unwanted sexual contact, leaving it up to male companions of these females to resolve these situations.

In another study conducted by Roberts (2007), the absence of bouncers and doormen was revealed as the strongest predictor of aggression in Hoboken, New Jersey barrooms. Physical aggression was defined as “deliberate unfriendly bumping, grabbing, pushing, punching, kicking, etc.” (p. 432). Non-physical aggression included “one-way abuse, heated arguments, and challenges and threats” (p. 432). While bouncers and doormen were drinking alcoholic beverages while on duty, aggression was witnessed in 74.1% of the observation periods. When bouncers and doormen were not drinking only 8.8% of the observation periods witnessed aggression. Aggression was 36.342 times greater when bouncers and doormen were not present compared to being present and not drinking (Roberts, 2007).
While working as a bouncer, one researcher took into account the significance of actually being one of them. That is, the primary researcher was required to “talk like them, laugh at the same jokes, comment on the same things, and express similar opinions and sentiments” (Winlow et al., p. 543). The premise was that failure to assimilate to the co-culture within the club would result in exile from the group or create obstacles for the research. The researcher also took note on the attire of patrons and the connection to aggression from bouncers: “Wearing your Sunday best informed the bouncers that you were less likely to get in a fight and so damage your attire. Jeans and trainers were fighting clothes and more likely to be worn when with a large group of male friends” (p. 544).

Women’s Role

Limited studies exist that study the increasing role that women are playing as bouncers. The role of the bouncer has been defined by power, control, toughness, and violence—all traits that would be considered as masculine. However, as more and more women have served in the role of a bouncer, some studies have challenged this traditional gendered role. Empirical research indicates that male bouncers are most likely to embrace a violent approach to bouncing (Hobbs, O’Brien, and Westmarland, 2007, p. 24).

One interview conducted by Hobbs et al. (2007) depicted a female’s perspective on females in the occupation. The participant in the interview has worked as a bouncer for six years before starting up her own security company in North West of England explained that:

Women are a necessity in the business. I used to look at it as women providing a niche market but it’s not anymore, women have to be employed in these venues. You can’t have men searching women or dragging women out of toilets with their knickers round their ankles. It’s a necessity; it’s got to be done. You need females in those roles to deal with those situations. (p. 24)

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) is now actively attempting to ‘clean up’ the image of bouncing, and a strategy being used to achieve this objective is placing more women in the occupation. In this effort, the attempts to remove the violent and aggressive view of bouncing are helped by having more women present. Women are perceived to have “emotional qualities more suited to the non-aggressive style of door work that the State via SIA is advocating” (Hobbs et al., 2007, p. 25). After interviewing one of the first club owners in the area to employ females as bouncers, it was reported that women generally had a better attitude, showed less aggression, and showed a better ability of “talking down” to the patron who was angered.

In summary, many different key points were found within the interdisciplinary literature already pertaining to bouncers. Bouncers are stereotyped as being large, muscular men who have a tendency toward violence. Many conflicts arise between bouncers and patrons, and blame usually is typically placed on the bouncers for being “bullies” or “looking for a fight” from the perspective of patrons. Women are an increasing amenity to the occupation and are believed to conduct the job in a calmer manner compared to men in certain contexts. Although bouncers are sometimes held responsible for increased aggression and violence, it has been found that aggression and violence were more likely without their presence. Legalities also come into play when bouncers conduct their jobs. This is mostly due to unclear discretion allowed to be acted upon by the bouncers. Given all of this, the objective of this particular research project is to investigate the communicative behaviors of bouncers in two different contextual locales. More specifically, I will utilize an ethnographic methodology to explore the following research question: What communicative behaviors do bouncers, in two different situational contexts, use in their interactions with patrons? The next section outlines the methods for the exploratory study.
Methods: Observer-Participant Ethnography

The data for this paper was collected through observations by one researcher acting as an observer-participant. According to Rubin, Rubin, and Piele (2000), “ethnography is used to form objective descriptions of social norms and events as they occur” (p. 205). Ethnographers try to explain behavioral commonalities within social situations. An ethnographer may also interview those involved with the observation, as well as examine documents and artifacts to supplement the observations. This technique usually results in a case study such as describing the culture of a classroom, the language used by superiors and subordinates in an organization, or the social rules of male and female children at play on the playground (p. 205). In this research study, ethnography was used to observe the communicative behavior of bouncers in relations to patrons at two different venues.

Consistent with DeMichele and Tewksbury (2004), I utilized an ethnographic approach when studying bouncers. More specifically, I modeled my research after this particular study in terms of note taking while in the field. Throughout that study, the primary researcher took notes on loose paper found within the bar such as napkins or receipts within a private location such as a bathroom stall. These field notes were transcribed at a later time, parallel to how data was gathered for this study. Also consistent with DeMichele and Tewksbury (2004), both that research study and this one focused on the broad sociological issue of how masculinity is central to the social control activities within the specific setting. Although the setting of the research of DeMichele and Tewksbury’s (2004) study was a strip club, masculinity played a key role in both the strip club research as well as the two locations chosen in this research study – both of which included actively monitoring and controlling the patrons in these socially constructed environments.

For my research project, observations took place in two locations in the Midwest: (1) a college town with mid-size city population, and (2) an urban center of one of the largest cities in the U.S. These locations were chosen for two main reasons. First, both locations were well known for high occupancy during the observation times chosen, and second, both locations hosted to the necessary demographic composition desired at each location. I conducted observations on four separate weekends: a Thursday and Friday night at each location, and a Friday and Saturday night at each location. During each night, four hours of observation took place from 10 p.m. until 2 a.m. By the end of data collection, sixteen hours of observation were completed at each venue, totaling 32 hours of observations in all.

The decision on what bars to make observations at were dependent on multiple factors. First, I needed to go to a bar where the entrance would easily be granted to avoid loss of observation time. Second, the bars selected needed to fit the demographic composition desired. In the college town venue, a population consisting of college attending males and females between the ages of 21 and 28 was necessary, whereas the venue located in one of the largest cities in the U.S. needed to fulfill a population of males and females not specific to the traditional college aged patron. In the large city, a population with adults in their 20’s was the main focus – similar to, but different from the first ethnographic site. Third, the bars selected needed to have a security force large enough to study the communicative behavior of multiple employees in easily accessible ways. Accordingly, the size at the college town venue was 8 to 11 bouncers and 400 – 500 patrons, whereas the size in the large city was 14 to 16 bouncers and 500-1,000 patrons. After researching various bars in these two locations via Internet and personal and professional networks, two locations were selected. Anticipation of maximum capacity being reached at each venue was taken into account, so early arrival was a necessity. To avoid being noticed, I sought to assimilate with other patrons within the venue, and could not openly take field notes. Instead, notes were taken down from time to time in private settings (e.g., personal automobile, bathroom stalls, etc.). The next sections of the paper highlight the different points of analysis that were revealed through my ethnographic observations.
Ethnographic Observations: Three Points of Focus

The following ethnographic descriptions are organized around three points of focus: (1) physical environment, (2) gendered communicative behaviors, and (3) relational versus business orientations. I begin by describing the physical environment of each venue.

Physical Environment

Large city venue

The entrance from the street has two doormen standing side by side in front of the doorway. After a proper identification check, no cover is charged and no wrist band is given. The entrance leads directly to a stairway which hosts the venue entrance at the top. There is a bouncer standing in place at the top of the upstairs entrance way. The entrance is at the top of the stairs, and is closed off by a built in walkway that can only be entered or exited through the end of the stairway.

Directly in front of the entrance is a DJ booth that reaches shoulder height. The DJ booth is about 20 feet long and looks like a bar. Facing directly opposite of the DJ booth, at the complete opposite wall of the venue, is the front stage. The stage is small, maybe 15 foot-by-15 foot, with a small bar to the left of it that is about 10 feet long. A bouncer stands to the left of this small bar. To the left of the small bar is an upper level that is surrounded by railing. A bouncer stands at the entrance of this upper level, leaning against the railing. The upper level can only be entered in front from the dance floor, or in back by the restrooms.

There is a large dance floor in front of the DJ booth, located near the entrance. The floor of the dance floor is made up of square, white, shiny tile. Between the DJ booth and the stage represents the north and south area boundary of the dance floor. To the east side of the venue, there is a large bar alongside the wall representing the eastern side boundary of the dance floor. Throughout the night, multiple bouncers weave their way through the many patrons scattered throughout the dance floor. The dance floor hosted the majority of the patrons within the venue throughout the night.

In the back southwestern corner of the venue, parallel with the stairway entrance but at opposite walls of the venue, is a sectioned-off darker area away from the dance floor. This sectioned-off area is a type of “lounge” with red carpet and leather couches. Within this area are four sets of “U” shaped couches able to seat 15 people at each. Behind these couches on the north and south walls that enclose the sectioned off darker area, are posters and artwork on the wall of naked women, past musicians such as Jimi Hendrix and Robert Plant, and decorative mirrors that cover the walls. At the end of the 10-foot walkway that separates the two sets of couches, is a bar the stretches across the west wall of the section. In this “lounge” area, a bouncer roams freely, picking up empty drink glasses and bottles, and cautiously watching patrons.

College Town Venue

Entrance is through a set of big barn stable-type doors. Three doormen stand at the entrance to check for proper identification. The entrance walkway is roped off to divide entrance and exit lines. The entrance walk way leads to the right and ends at a small booth with a desk where a cover charge is collected, proper identification is checked, and a wrist band is given. Turning directly left of the booth is a walkway to the main bar area.

Along the left hand side of the walkway is railing which is about waist high. To the right are two steps that lead up to an upper level. Directly in front is a large square bar that surrounds the mechanical bull. This walkway leads in one of two directions; right to the upper level or left which leads to the main bar. Between the steps to the upper level and the main bar is about 40 feet. On the left hand side of this walkway is railing which sections off an area of tables and chairs known as the “VIP” section. To the left, following alongside the railing that divides the “VIP” section from the walkway, the walkway ends at the main bar.
Facing right from the main bar there is a 15 foot space between the main bar and the bar that surrounds the mechanical bull. This walkway is about 100 foot long, which both bars running along each side. On the upper level are two pool tables to the right, and multiple tables and bar stools to the left. The upper level area is about 20-feet wide by 100-feet long. Halfway down the 100 foot stretch is the mechanical bull operation booth to the left. The mechanical bull is about a 40 foot by 40 foot area with a mechanical bull in the middle. It is a 5 foot by 5 foot booth with one employee, presumably a bouncer, operating it. Facing the booth, there are two TV’s above the booth facing the main bar. At the end of the main bar, the bathrooms are directly to the left.

The dance floor is a large square. At the entrance of the dance floor area, directly left in the southwestern corner of the dance floor, is a tall DJ booth which can only be accessed by stairs against the west wall of the dance floor. Proceeding alongside the west wall to the northwest corner of the room is a large stage. This stage rests in the northwest corner of the dance floor area and is a triangular shape that comes out about 30 feet from the corner it rests in. On the stage, a bouncer stands front and center and observes the dancing patrons. Throughout the night, multiple roaming bouncers make their way through the dancing patrons, observing cautiously, but also laughing, smiling, and having friendly conversations with patrons.

On the east wall of the venue, located on the northeast corner of the upper level, is the back bar. This back bar is on the same level as the upper level near the entrance and they both connect. This back bar is up two steps and is about half the size of the main bar. A bouncer stands in center at the top of the steps to this back bar.

**Venue comparisons**

In comparing the two venues, a couple of differences were observed. The venue in the large city seemed to host a “classier” environment. This venue offered leather coaches for anyone to use, and the waitresses and servers were always dressed exuberantly and wearing attractive and expensive clothing. The bar stools consisted of shiny aluminum with comfortable leather tops. Tables were tile topped with foot rests. The men’s room was clean, had a doorman who handed out paper towels by the door, and offered free gum, candy, cologne, condoms, mints, etc. in wicker baskets next to bathroom sinks, none of which was offered at the college town venue. The decorations were much more vintage and had a more fashionable look than the college town venue. The leather coaches, decorations, tile floor, lighting, color scheme, and employee attire created an elegant environment. The manager of the bouncers and assumed bar manager were always wearing button up shirts and ties and/or suits and ties, while the regular bouncer attire was made up of black undershirts, purple and black button up dress shirts, black polo’s, dark slacks, and black dress shoes. Each bouncer also wore an ear piece to communicate with one another.

The venue in the small college town created a much different atmosphere. When initially entering, a cover amount is charged which was not present at the large city venue. The venue hardly had any seating, and the bar stools that were present were old, tarnished wood. The waitresses and servers had on t-shirts or polo t-shirts and were not as flashy as the large city venue waitresses and servers. The men’s room was always dirty with paper towels and toilet paper lying all over the place, along with empty cups and broken beer bottles everywhere. The bouncer attire had similarities and differences to the attire in the large city venue. The bouncers wore dark polo’s, had ear pieces, and wore dark shoes. However, the bouncers were dressed in jeans instead of black slacks, and did not have button up dress shirts. Also, no employee at the small college town venue stood out as a manager for all the bouncers wore the same attire.

Proxemics, defined as the study of individual’s perception and use of space (Hall, 1968) of the two venues was another key difference. The venue in the large city was only
2/3rds the size of the venue in the college town, however, the venue in the large city generally
drew in a larger amount of patrons, making the venue in the large city much denser. To sup-
plement more patrons, the venue in the large city also had more bouncers on duty each night
(14-16) of observation compared to the venue in the college town (8-11). These proxemics
affected the location of bouncers that were given specific areas to monitor, affected the
“roaming” bouncers when they moved through the crowd, and thus made an impact on the non-
verbal communicative behaviors chosen.

**Gendered Communicative Behaviors**

Overall, there seemed to be a difference in terms of the gendered communicative
behavior enacted at the two venues. At the large city venue, assertive, dominant, and report
talk was expressed much more often than rapport, empathetic, and communicative behavior.
During all nights of observation at the large city venue, the bouncer located at top of the stair-
way entrance seemed uneasy, and was moving around a lot. He maintained a stern facial ex-
pression with patrons as they entered. This bouncer was very critical of everyone who entered
the venue. He gave nearly all patrons entering a very thorough look over, scanning them up
and down with his gaze as they walked by.

The eight other bouncers were roamers and didn’t have a direct post. They kept
themselves spread out from one another, usually keeping a far distance from one another ex-
cept when needing each other’s assistance. These bouncers would walk throughout the entire
club, getting as close as a few inches to patrons when weaving through the crowd. During
“roaming,” the bouncers were constantly scanning the crowd. Facial expressions were usually
serious, somewhat intimidating looking. The bouncers rarely smiled or had facial expressions
of joy, other than when talking to one another.

Roaming bouncers were not very friendly at the large city venue. During one in-
stance a patron accidentally bumped into a bouncer, and the bouncer reacted in an angry man-
ner. He gave the patron a dirty look and pumped his chest up toward the patron in a display of
power. The patron reacted by putting up his hands to signal “I’m sorry” and the bouncer
walked away sternly. The patron and his friends talked amongst each other with looks of dis-
gust, presumably about the bouncer’s attitude. This one specific bouncer seemed more irritat-
ed or in more of a negative mood than the other bouncers.

In one instance during a Thursday night a customer, presumably intoxicated, reached
the top of the stairs and dropped a beer in front of the entrance bouncer at 11:34pm. The
bouncer put his hand on the man’s shoulder and said something to him. He allowed the man
to enter, and spoke on his microphone to the other bouncers directly after the man walked
past. At 11:42pm, the man was in the middle of the dance floor, dancing very aggressively,
bumping into other patrons frequently and with force. Within moments of the man dancing on
the dance floor, patrons showed signs of discomfort and uneasy or angry facial expressions.
At 11:43pm, three bouncers from opposite directions made their way to the middle of the
dance floor where the man was dancing. They formed a triangle around him, and all ap-
proached him simultaneously until standing within inches of the patron. One bouncer spoke
with the man and the man responded. The bouncer put his hand on the man’s shoulder and the
man brushed it off. The other two bouncers’ body language got tense when this happened.
The bouncer again tried to put his hand on the man’s shoulder and lean in to talk to him. The
man brushed the hand off hard and put his chest into the chest of the bouncer speaking to him.
At that moment, the other two bouncers present each grabbed one of the man’s arms and es-
corted him out. At first the man put up a little struggle, but within seconds cooperated after a
little coercion from the bouncers. The bouncers walked him all the way down the stairs to the
entrance from outside where they helped him to the sidewalk and left him on his way.

At the college town venue, friendly communicative behavior was used and displayed
more often. In situations of talking to patrons, one bouncer would approach the patron and
speak with them nicely, smiling, calmly, with a hand on the shoulder of the patron while another bouncer would keep an eye on the situation. In two instances of asking patrons to leave the venue, the patrons agreed with the bouncer and the bouncer walked within a foot or so next to the patron from the bar to the door.

In one instance a single bouncer did the same approach to a patron on the dance floor, talking to the patron nicely with one hand on the shoulder. The patron reacted in an upset manner. While the one bouncer approached, another bouncer kept an eye on him. When the patron reacted, two other bouncers came in for back up within five seconds. No force was necessary and the patron was eventually talked into leaving. All three bouncers walked out within an close distance with the patron. Overall, the bouncers at the college town venue expressed less dominant or powerful communicative behavior and seemed to practice much better communication competence. Communication competence refers to an individual’s ability to use a variety of styles and strategies, contingent to the situation (Burke, Burroughs-Denhart, McClish, 1994). In most situations, bouncers at the college town venue were able to smooth situations over through communication and not by using physical force.

In summary, the bouncers in the large city were forced to communicate within a more tight-spaced environment. They expressed more assertive and dominant nonverbal communicative behavior such as crossed arms, stern facial expressions, and strong body posture. In the college town with more space, the bouncers expressed more passive and inviting nonverbal communicative behaviors such as pats on the back, high fives, smiles, or even hugs with patrons. This could possibly be due to established relationships with a “regular crowd‖ of patrons at the small college town venue compared to the diverse ever-changing crowd of patrons that enter the large city venue. The emergence of nonverbal communication differences across venues resonates with different orientations to being a bouncer. This point of insight is explored next.

Relational vs. Professional Orientations to Bouncing

Upon reflection, the gendered communicative behaviors of bouncers can be understood within a general orientation to their job responsibilities. This difference orientation seems to take the form of a relational versus business (non-relational) approach to interacting with patrons. Relational messages within relational communication are the communicative actions that attribute to framing and defining interpersonal relationships, and can be expressed verbally and nonverbally (Burgoon, Le Poire, 1999).

At the large city venue, most of the bouncers’ communicative behavior was business oriented. The bouncer located in front of the DJ booth stood with his arms crossed, scanning the crowd and looking left into the “lounge.” He kept a far distance from patrons until the dance floor became so packed that a closer distance was forced upon patrons. The dress code was very strict at the large city venue and bouncers expressed this to patrons often. When someone violated the dress code, a bouncer would approach the patron, put a hand on the patron’s shoulder, and tell them to fix whatever violation was being broken. Bouncers did not interact with patrons in a friendly manner. No smiles, hugs or high fives were shared between any bouncers or patrons, maybe due to a large city bringing in more people and bouncers not establishing any relationships with specific patrons. Close distance was only reached in bouncer-patron interactions when a bouncer was telling a patron of a dress code violation, when moving through crowds of patrons, giving warnings, or asking patrons to leave.

At the college town venue, a mixture of both business and relational oriented communicative behavior was displayed. The bouncers clearly had established hand gestures and facial expressions that they used to communicate with each other in distances where verbal communication could not be deciphered. In multiple instances, bouncer-to-bouncer nonverbal communication was in display with fists held up and different fingers pointing to indicate different messages. This seemed to be a very effective medium that was used at the college town
venue quite often. Although very friendly to patrons, as the crowd increased, the bouncers
socialized less and less. As more people showed up, bouncers seemed to be more focused.
Bouncers would stand at their posts and be more observant of patrons.

In one instance of a fight between patrons, the business oriented non-verbal communica-
tive behaviors were very vivid. Two male patrons began fighting on the dance floor at 1:12am on a Friday night of observation. The bouncer on the stage, as well as the bouncer on
the back bar entrance way instantly ran out to the fight. Taking no time, the two bouncers did
their best to intervene by getting in between the two patrons. Within five seconds, two more
bouncers came to assist the situation. There were two bouncers to each patron as they pulled
the two apart. The bouncers took the two patrons in opposite directions to exit the venue. The
patron being escorted out the back way did not want to leave and gave the bouncers a hard
time. Finally, the bouncers were forced to push, shove, and even carry the patron out of the
venue. Once out of the venue, the patron gave in and left. The other patron who was escorted
out the front was much more cooperative and walked out in a calm manner. Both patrons
were out of the venue by 1:20am. At the college venue, bouncers would attend to fights out-
side the club, compared to city venue where they wouldn’t because it wasn’t part of their pro-
fessional responsibility.

More clearly displayed at the college venue was relational oriented communicative
behavior from the bouncers. Bouncers would approach patrons in a very “loose” manner,
smiling, and an overall friendly manner. Facial expressions were smiles and very pleased.
Occasionally bouncers would place their hands on the shoulders of patrons to get their atten-
tion and lean in close to speak into patrons ears so that patrons could hear. These types of
interactions were presumably enacted when patrons were either making minor offenses or
bouncers knew the patron and were just making a joke or friendly comment. When overhear-
ing a conversation a patron was having with a bouncer at the bar, the bouncer articulated: “We
are told to be friendly and not intimidating. When we stand we are told to not cross our arms
(displays crossed arms), or ‘mean mug’ people (demonstrates a facial expression of anger).
We want the customers to feel comfortable around us and seem approachable.”

Discussion

After analysis, this research study had multiple key findings. First, the atmosphere
and physical environment of each venue was different and may have played a role in the com-
municative behaviors of the bouncers. The large city venue was “classier” compared to the
more casual college town venue. The physical environment was found to play key roles in
multiple nonverbal communicative behaviors of the bouncers. Nonverbal communication, in
a brief definition, refers to the nonverbal actions displayed by an individual within a commu-
nication situation generated by both the individual and influenced by the environment which
hold value to the message being transmitted (Wang, 2009). Nonverbal communication, host-
ing a wide range of descriptions, can be broken down into seven categories; body motion and
kinesic behavior, physical characteristics, touching behavior (haptics), paralanguage (tone,
rate, pitch of voice), proxemics, artifacts, and environmental factors (Wang, 2009). Of these
categories, proxemics were found most prevalent when observing bouncer-patron interactions,
as well as bouncer-bouncer interactions.

Proxemics can be defined as the study of individual’s perception and use of space
(Hall, 1968). Where bouncers were posted, how they moved through crowds of patrons, as
well as how bouncers communicated with each other were all influenced by the physical
environment, and the space used within the venues. Proxemic perception is broken down into
four categories dependent on distance; (1) Intimate space; 1.5 feet from an individual, (2) Per-
sonal space; 1.5-4 feet from an individual, (3) Social space; 4 – 12 feet from an individual,
and (4) Public space; 12 feet and beyond an individual. During observation, it was found that
bouncers at the large city venue generally attempted to stay at a social space from other
patrons, giving them the ability to observe a wide range of activity. Bouncers at the college town venue used a mix of proxemic distance, usually to engage with patrons in a friendly manner. However, when situations that called for aggressive actions at both venues cultivated, bouncers seemed to slowly stray away from social space, progressively approaching patrons and intruding personal and at times intimate space. This progression into different space boundaries was necessary in moments of patron aggression or misconduct, and other nonverbal cues such as haptics and kinesics became more apparent during these moments.

Haptics, described as touching actions (Wang, 2009), and kinesics, referring to body motion (Wang, 2009) were utilized much more often when infractions of personal and intimate space were necessary. As mentioned in observations, moments of aggression from patrons resulted in bouncers placing hands on shoulders of patrons, and when necessary, using hands and body to remove patrons from bars. This was witnessed at both venues. In contrast, less aggressive haptics and kinesics were witnessed at the college town venue, whereas more aggressive haptics and kinesics were witnessed at the large city venue. At the college town venue, hugs and “high-fives” were witnessed, whereas in the large city venue, only haptics and kinesics that required controlling aggressive patrons were witnessed. These similar and different uses of nonverbal communicative cues were believed to be influenced by the gendered communicative behavior, as well as the relational/business oriented communicative behavior at both venues.

At the large city venue, masculine and even hyper-masculine nonverbal communicative behavior was expressed much more fluently and often than androgynous non-verbal communicative behavior. At the college town venue, androgynous communicative behavior was used and displayed more often. Characteristics of feminine gendered language include rapport talk, empathy, and inclusive communication, whereas characteristics of masculine gendered language include report talk, assertiveness, competitiveness, and dominance (Dow, Wood, 2006). According to Bem (1974), androgynous communicators have high levels of both femininity and masculinity. Using an action based definition of gender in that gender is something we enact and something that we negotiate and think with, representing a social practice and a method of gaining cultural meaning (Rakow, 1986), we can see a direct connection between gender and communicator style. Norton (1983) defines communicator style as “an accumulation of ‘microbehavior’ giving form to literal content that add up to macro-judgement”(p. 38). This means that communicator style is a constant pattern of small, seemingly influential actions that are repeated time and time again. This is also true for gendered communication.

The combination of style and gender create many parallels. There are three general communicator styles identified by previous scholars; Rhetorically Sensitive, Noble Self, and Rhetorical Reflector (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998). Rhetorically Sensitive communicators can be described as individuals who show “concern for self, concern for others, and avoid being rigid in communication” (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998, p. 13). Noble Self communicators can be described as individuals who speak what is felt regardless of the situation (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998). Finally, Rhetorical Reflector communicators can be described as individuals who are unlikely to speak what they feel, feel concern for appropriateness in any given situation, and tend to blend in with the wishes of others without expressing their own (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998).

These three communicator styles show many parallels to masculine, feminine, and androgynous role characteristics. Traditionally, women have been found to make tentative statements, incorporating “tag questions, hedges, and qualifiers” (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998, p.13). By doing so, an atmosphere of inclusion and equal status is maintained. These characteristics could easily be representative in the style of Rhetorical Reflector. Men generally speak to defend or maintain personal status, in an assertive and unyielding manner.
Gendered Communicative Behaviors

This assertive and unyielding communication approach has similar characteristics to that of the Noble Self. Finally, similarities between an androgynous person and a Rhetorically Sensitive communicator include a balance of self-interest and concern for others, and the ability to select from a selection of multiple behaviors depending on the situation (House, Dallinger, Kilgallen, 1998). It was found that a combination of these dyadic views of communication were expressed and utilized by bouncers throughout observation at both locations.

In general, bouncers at the large city location tended to be masculine, Noble Self communicators when interacting with patrons, and even amongst themselves. Whether this be instances of social proximity, personal proximity, or intimate proximity, the overall perception in the large city venue was masculine communicative behavior. In contrast, witnessed at the college town venue was a more androgynous, Rhetorically Sensitive approach. Bouncers seemed to adjust their communicative behaviors based upon the situation much more often. This was not witnessed at the same magnitude at the large city venue.

The last significant finding from observation was the use of relational oriented communication versus the lack of relational oriented communication (coined business oriented communication). Relational messages are the communicative actions that attribute to framing and defining interpersonal relationships, and can be expressed verbally and nonverbally (Burgoon, Le Poire, 1999). There are many as twelve relational message dimensions, four of which were observed in various degrees at both venues; intimacy, dominance, composure, and formality (Burgoon, Le Poire, 1999). Intimacy refers to expression of “affection, closeness, interest, trust, openness, receptivity, familiarity, and similarity or their opposites toward the relational partner” (Burgoon, Le Poire, 1999, p. 107); dominance reflects different degrees of expression for “conversational control, assertiveness, power, persuasiveness” (p. 107); composure encompasses “expressions of arousal and tension or relaxation and composure that are tied to the relationship” (p. 107); and finally, formality which is important to task relationships and include “maintaining a polite, businesslike, and formal demeanor or inviting casualness and informality,” (p. 107). Given this downsized framework of interpersonal relationships, examination of the four dimensions took place at both observation locations.

At the large city venue, dominance, both verbally and nonverbally, was fluently expressed. When communicating with patrons there were no smiles, no easy flowing conversation, and no lack of assertiveness. Little intimacy, composure, or formality were witnessed at the large city venue. In contrast, at the college town venue, dominance was only witnessed when necessary to take action. When patrons chose not to cooperate after multiple attempts, bouncers would enact dominance in their communication. Intimacy was witnessed quite often. Bouncers would hug, “high-five” and joke with patrons to show trust, openness, and similarity. Composure was also witnessed at the college town venue. Little tension was witnessed with the college town bouncers, and for the most part, they were in a relaxed state. Finally, formality was witnessed at the college town venue from bouncer/patron interactions in that bouncers always approached patrons politely and professionally, but showed a demeanor that invited casualness when the situation was appropriate.

Limitations

This study encountered multiple limitations. Only 32 hours of observation time were conducted, and the time slots were 10pm – 2am during each observation period. Additional time in the field and different time frames could have presented supplemental research at each venue. Observations were only taken on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Observations throughout different days of the week may have presented additional and/or different findings. A second limitation was the lack of interviews from bouncers and patrons. More interviews from both bouncers and patrons could have given the research a multifaceted perspective, both from an observer-participant and from a participant. Additionally, not being able to view
the entire venue all at one time served as a limitation. Undoubtedly, interactions and communicative behaviors went unnoticed due to the inability to cover the entire venue at one time. With multiple researchers, each venue could have been more thoroughly covered and observed.

Conclusion

With communicator style and gendered communication playing such a key role at each venue, the question of what style works best comes to mind. When training bouncers, should an androgynous, Rhetorically Sensitive be implemented when training bouncers? It was found that the two different venues enacted two different communicator styles. Were these styles implemented due to the context of each venue, or can a culture be developed where the Rhetorically Sensitive style can be utilized? Many gender studies have shown that men entering a “female” job or women entering a “male” job are forced to enact gendered norms established by the job, in turn creating gender within the job (Deutsch, 2007). Can a gendered norm be created within the occupation of bouncing, in turn resulting in less aggression from both bouncers and patrons?

It is clear that females in the occupation of club security should be more thoroughly examined. Further research could indicate major differences between males and females in the occupation. Also, security in different types of venues should be examined. That is, bouncers should be examined in different environmental contexts. The two venues chosen in this study were primarily dance clubs. Bouncers should be further studied in venues such as dive bars, strip clubs, piano bars, and various other types of venues. These different types of venues bring a different demographic composition and could play a key role in bouncer communicative behavior.

References


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Youths’ Access to Public Space: An Application of Bernard’s Cycle of Juvenile Justice

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Since the late 1800s youth have been controlled in various ways. As argued in this paper, one of the ways policymakers have used to control youth throughout has been through controlling youth’s access to public spaces. When youth do not have access to public space, adult society is able to breathe a collective sigh of relief hoping that youth cannot commit crimes while out of sight. In this article, I will argue that policymakers have limited youth access to public space in a cyclical fashion. I will demonstrate this argument by discussing the issues of juvenile curfew, juvenile use of public parks, and juvenile use of social media to replace public space.

According to Thomas Bernard (2010) since the 1800s the juvenile justice system has operated in a cyclical fashion. The cycle of juvenile justice occurs in four steps. First, the general public and juvenile justice officials believe that juvenile crime is at an all-time high, there are too many harsh punishments, and there are not enough lenient punishment options (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). Juvenile justice officials begin to believe that the harsh punishments will lead to more crime and that the lack of lenient punishments leads to minor offenders being “let off scot-free” (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010:3). Since there is a “forced choice” between harshly punishing juveniles and letting juveniles get away with their crimes, juvenile justice officials and the general public see doing nothing as part of the problem (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010:3). Next, “a major reform introduces lenient treatment for juvenile offenders. This creates a middle ground between harshly punishing and doing nothing at all” (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010:4). Finally, juvenile crime is seen as being rather high again. This leads to harsh punishments being expanded and lenient punishments being contracted (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010:4). Bernard and Kurlychek (2010) argue that this cycle has been repeated several times during the history of the United States including the formation of Houses of Refuge, the formation of the juvenile justice system, and the current ‘get tough’ movement. The ‘get tough’ movement has been characterized as a shift away from treating offenders (both youthful and adult) as individuals in need of services and rehabilitation to a more widely accepted belief that offenders are deserving of punishment and that punishments should be meted out severely and swiftly (Tonry 2004). Essentially, the widely popular crime control rhetoric of punishing individuals for their wrong doing as quickly and efficiently as possible is applied to youthful offenders.

The following section describes the social construction of youth, adolescence, and delinquency over time. In addition, this section describes situates the concept of limiting access to public space, for both youth and adults, within the wider context of inequality. In each of the subsequent sections – juvenile curfew, juvenile limitation of access to public parks, and social network sites as a new type of public space – I will describe how the assumptions of the cycle of justice are satisfied. Finally, I conclude with policy recommendations towards equitable access to public space for youth.

The Social Construction of Childhood
Starting in the late 1800s, the social conceptions of youth, childhood, and delinquency changed from youth as autonomous beings to youth as dependents in need of protection.
(Sutton 1988). As these conceptions changed so did youths’ access to public space. Additionally, access to public space has been limited for both youth and adults to perpetuate inequality within the United States.

Childhood has not always been recognized as a distinct period in one’s life. According to Muncie (2004:53), “Aries’ radical notion was that prior to the seventeenth century there was no conception of childhood, adolescence or youth.” Children in pre-industrialized societies were treated as small adults who could work, drink, gamble, or other activities commonly associated with adulthood today. When conceived of as small adults, children were not subject to laws based on their age or lack of maturity (Muncie 2004).

The concept of childhood as a distinct developmental period did not begin to emerge until the Middle Ages. At this time, children began to be seen as “innocents and as objects of affection, especially within the family” (Muncie 2004:53). However, children were also seen as capable of evil. These two conceptions lead to children being viewed by society as in need of protection and in need of discipline (Muncie 2004). Primarily the family was charged with both tasks of protection and discipline. It was the family’s fault if the child did not perform up to the desired expectations of being “dependent, submissive to authority, obedient, modest, hard-working, and chaste” (Muncie 2004:54). These early conceptions of childhood only applied to upper class children who had the luxury of not working. Working class children often had to provide economic support to their family causing them to mature faster than upper class children (Muncie 2004).

With industrialization, the construction of childhood as a distinct time during a person’s life began to include all children, not just upper class children. By including all children in this construction, it was possible to start viewing children as unsuitable for factory work (Muncie 2004). Of course, not allowing children to work resulted in dire consequences for working class families. Adults in these families had to find new ways to support themselves economically. In addition, since parents had to work longer hours away from home, children were more likely to be unsupervised and neglected (Muncie 2004). Thus the social construction of children changed from worker to delinquent (Muncie 2004).

Controlling Youth with the Creation of the Juvenile Justice System

In response to the growing juvenile delinquent problem, the first incarnation of the juvenile justice system occurred in the 1820s with the formation of the Houses of Refuge. The House of Refuge, as the first juvenile institution was known, addressed the problem of delinquency by removing children from their homes and using a highly controlled education program to teach the children morals and values (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). The methods that the House of Refuge used assume that children are delinquent because their parents lack morals and values. Those targeted by the House of Refuge included the children of working families or immigrant families (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). As the House of Refuge grew, new practices such as ‘placing out’ were developed to cope with the growing population. Children would be apprenticed out in order to alleviate the growing institutionalized population and to teach the children a marketable skill (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). Over time, ‘placing out’ children led to several issues including losing track of where and with whom the children had been placed.

The use of the House of Refuge led to an important case in the juvenile justice system, “the Case of Mary Ann Crouse,” in 1838. Mary Ann Crouse was committed to the House of Refuge after her mother made a complaint. Mary Ann’s father objected to her confinement because she had not committed a crime. The case went to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, which ruled Mary Ann’s confinement to be legal (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). This is an important case for the juvenile justice system for several reasons. First, the court reasoned that Mary Ann was being helped, not punished. Second, the good intentions of
the House of Refuge were deemed to be more important than the performance of Mary Ann’s parents. Third, the state had the power to intervene in family affairs due to parens patriae. Finally, since Mary Ann was not being punished, she did not qualify for any due process protections (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). This is the first case to challenge the House of Refuge. Since the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld the House of Refuge’s claim that they are helping children they were able to continue their actions.

However, in 1868 the “Case of Daniel O’Connell” occurred. This case involved similar circumstances to that of Mary Ann Crouse, but the results of the case were the exact opposite. The Illinois Supreme Court ruled that being confined was punishing Daniel. They went on to compare the Daniel’s parents intentions to the actual performance of the institution and rejected the notion of parens patriae. Finally, they ruled that Daniel deserved due process protections since he was being punished (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). The stark difference in rulings between the Crouse case and the O’Connell case led to the formation of the juvenile court system because O’Connell effectively made imprisoning juveniles for being poor illegal.

Shortly after the O’Connell decision, juvenile courts came on the scene with the first court being established in Chicago in 1899. The purpose of the juvenile courts was to address the needs of children, whether help was asked for or not (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). Around the timeframe, biological theories of criminalization were popular. Social Darwinism argued that some people are less evolved than others. This perspective was applied to juveniles, which provided evidence for continued state intervention. Since juveniles could no longer be institutionalized for being poor, the juvenile courts used charges of disorderly conduct in order to send juveniles away (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). Another way that the juvenile courts were able to work with juveniles is by classifying the court as a chancery court. These courts, under common law, helped child without parents due to death. The logic of the chancery court was extended to delinquent youth by claiming that parents were absent because they were weak (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). Since the juvenile courts were created to get around a State Supreme Court decision, cases challenging the court were not long in coming.

The first case that challenged the juvenile court system was the case of Frank Fisher. Frank Fisher, a fourteen-year-old boy, was charged – but not convicted – of larceny. He was sent to the House of Refuge until his 21st birthday. His parents objected to his punishment because it disproportionate to the charged offense. Fisher would not have received seven years imprisonment for larceny if tried in adult criminal court. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court rejected the parent’s claims and held, as in Crouse, that Frank was being helped and that he did not deserve due process protections (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). This view of the juvenile courts persisted for another sixty years.

The U.S. Supreme Court has also had a hand in the formation of juvenile justice policy with regards to due process protections. Kent v. United States (1966) was the first juvenile case to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. In this case the court ruled that Kent should have been given a waiver hearing and that his counsel should have access to his prior records (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010: 98). The next case that the U.S. Supreme Court reviewed was In re Gault (1967). This case broadened due process protections for juveniles by granting them: “(1) the right to adequate, written, and timely notice; (2) the right to counsel; (3) the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses; and (4) the privilege against self-incrimination” (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010:102). The Gault case effectively applied the O’Connell decision to the entire country. In In re Winship (1970) the court ruled that juvenile court cases should be held to the ‘reasonable doubt’ standard, not the ‘preponderance of the evidence’ (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). Additionally, the Winship ruling applied retroactively. Finally, in the McKeiver case, the Pennsylvania Supreme ruled that juveniles are not entitled to a jury trial. This is in keeping with Gault and Winship in that the best interests of child are at the forefront (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010).
Finally, the ‘get tough’ movement has caused the juvenile justice pendulum to swing back towards harsh punishments. Many people did not agree with the U.S. Supreme Court’s intervention in the juvenile justice system and found ways to work within these new constraints while being tougher on juvenile crime. Extending the logic of the Supreme Court, juvenile delinquents were now seen as young criminals with due process protections (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). The ‘get tough’ approach has resulted in juveniles being treated like adult criminals with fingerprinting, media attention, and increased use of restraints (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). In addition, juveniles are being waived into adult court more often (Bernard and Kurlychek 2010). These changes have altered the original intent of the juvenile court system to rehabilitate and treat youth. This history of the social construction of youth, childhood, delinquency, and the cycle of the juvenile justice system leads us to the cycle of youth access to public space starting with juvenile curfew.

Juvenile Curfew, 1880 to present

Adults throughout the United States have used juvenile curfew since the 1880s to control youth access to public space directly. This particular policy has changed over time due to the cycle of juvenile justice. A curfew is “a law or ordinance that simply stipulates a time or set of times during which specified individuals are not allowed on the street or in other public places” (O’Neil 2002:49). The first juvenile curfew was enacted in 1880 in Omaha, Nebraska (Hemmens and Bennett 1999). Juvenile curfews came into vogue in the late nineteenth century as a way to control immigrant children who were seen as the primary perpetrators of juvenile crime (O’Neil 2002). In 1884, President Harrison endorsed the use of juvenile curfew causing 3,000 cities to enact ordinances by 1900 (Hemmens and Bennett 1999). According to Mrs. John D. Townsend (1896:725), “And there is no denying that prevention of crime is better than its punishment, it is certainly best to begin with care for all children. Their free and untrammeled life in this country is appalling.” Thus, juvenile curfew became a policy to limit juvenile access to public space.

Juveniles in public only became a problem when their activities were deemed unsightly. John Muncie (2004:56) describes the image of children on the street with the following passage:

Vagrancy and the sight of children eking out a living on the street (gambling, selling necklaces, matches, braces or boxes of dominoes) increasingly came to be viewed as a serious social problem. Mayhew's (1861) vivid descriptions of the rookeries in the East End of London catalogued the activities of such young 'precocious' traders, 'daring' thieves and 'loutish' vagabonds. Children attracted to the streets as a result of the 'brute' tyranny of parents, association with costermongers, orphanhood or destitution, necessarily lived on the edge of crime.

When juvenile curfews were first instituted, children were still seen as dependent and innocent. By allowing children out on the street, parents failed to teach their children proper morals and values (O’Neil 2002). As mentioned previously, immigrants were seen as being morally inferior to ‘native’ residents. New social controls were needed to ensure that immigrant children would not contribute to crime in the cities. The late 1800s were characterized by industrialization. Parents were not able to supervise their children because they were too busy working in the factories, which children were excluded from, so the use of juvenile curfew as a way to instill family morals and to control children emerged (Platt 1977).

Even though there was quite a bit of support for juvenile curfew at the end of the nineteenth century, it was not implemented fully until after WWII. At that time, juvenile crime was seen as being exceptionally high (O’Neil 2002). Enforcement efforts increased in order to get a handle on the exceptionally high juvenile crime rate (Hemmens and Bennett 1999). This increased level of enforcement carried through the post-war baby boom.
Juvenile curfews were reinstituted during the 1980s and 1990s with the ‘get tough’ movement (O’Neil 2002). Again, juvenile crime was seen as being unbearably high. Curfews are seen as a way to prevent crime and preserve the innocence of childhood. If children are at home at night, they cannot be subjected to the sights of immoral activities or be tempted to join a gang (O’Neil 2002). Policymakers do not seem to realize the fact that the punishment for violating curfew is insignificant. Therefore, this law will not deter children who want to commit crime (O’Neil 2002).

On the other hand, policymakers may not be interested in preventing crime. Rather, policymakers may be more concerned with preserving childhood innocence and ensuring that children know their place in the world when they grow up (O’Neil 2002). O’Neil (2002: 58) argues that the purpose of curfew laws is to teach children “their proper place in the raced, class, and gendered hierarchy that defines society in the United States and much of the world.” Since childhood is a social construction it follows to reason that children will not know how to behave in society without instruction about their place.

Juvenile curfew laws are designed to keep children out of public space unless a parent or another qualified adult supervises children (O’Neil 2002). In the three ordinances that O’Neil (2002) studied, juveniles were excluded from public space during late night hours unless accompanied by an adult or guardian. Additionally, each ordinance created curfew exceptions for youth who are participating in First Amendment activities, religious activities, or city-sponsored activities. Clearly, the aim of the exceptions is to create socially sanctioned spaces for children to participate.

Regulating children to socially acceptable spaces has been a both a project of race and class. White, middle-class children have access to space not afforded to non-white, lower-class children. For example, many juvenile curfews grant exceptions for children participating in socially sanctioned spaces such as religious activities or being out with parents. These exceptions privilege white, middle-class children who may not need to travel to or from their activities. Often, poor youth or non-white youth need to use public transportation in order to get to their activities. If they are travelling on their own, these children are likely to be punished for curfew violations (O’Neil 2002).

The motivations and application of juvenile curfew fits Bernard’s (2010) cycle of juvenile justice in many ways. First, these curfews were implemented throughout time when juvenile crime was perceived to be at its highest. Curfew laws served the dual purpose of “seeing to the best interest of the child, while at the same time, imposing stricter social controls on unruly youth”, which conforms to early social constructions of youth and delinquency (Hemmens and Bennett 1999: 101). Additionally, juvenile curfews allow the juvenile justice system to respond to juvenile crime in ways that fit the situation. For example, law enforcement could choose to take children home or to take them to the police department. Differential enforcement of juvenile curfew demonstrates the social construction of childhood by privileging some children as innocent and worthy of less punishment over other children as criminal and deserving of punishment.

Beyond fitting Bernard’s (2010) cycle of juvenile justice with the social constructions of youth and delinquency, juvenile curfew also fits the cycle in other ways. In Bernard’s (2010) formulation, the policy must benefit the economic interests of the rich and powerful. Juvenile curfew was first used during the industrialization of the United States to ensure that children would be cared for and instilled with proper values. This benefits the rich and powerful because factories were insured healthy and productive future workers. Additionally, juvenile curfew allows reformers to demonstrate their moral superiority in two ways. First, juvenile curfew offenders are deserving of their punishment because by committing their crime they are somehow morally deficient. Second, parents whose children violate juvenile curfew are failing their children by not teaching them proper morals and values. Finally, juvenile
curfews increase the power of the state by allowing the state to decide who is allowed to use public space.

**Public Parks and Commercial Space as Youth Acquired Space**

In addition to limiting access by time of day through curfews, youth have also been excluded from public parks by creating specific uses for parks and other spaces. For example, youth have been targeted for removal during downtown revitalization projects due to the conception of youth as dangerous and dirty. Youth are often drawn to space that does not have a specific use because it allows them to creatively decide how to best use the space for their needs (Gearin and Kahle 2006). Policies that create specific purpose space exclude youth and limit their overall access to public space.

Adults tend to create space that has a specific use in mind. This is in direct opposition to youth’s desire for open-space that allows for “youth-controlled social activities” (Gearin and Kahle 2006:39). By creating ‘youth space,’ adults ensure that youth will be supervised and that youth will conform to prevailing social norms and values. According to Gearin and Kahle (2006), this is not a new policy tactic, but a rather older strategy. Starting in the late 1800s, “social reformers argued that properly supervised play fostered respect for property and law and order” (Gearin and Kahle 2006:39). Thus, social reformers imply that unsupervised youth were prone to criminally damage property and were less likely to obey the law.

Youth often lack their own space to go ‘hang out’ since adults have appropriated most public space. Therefore, youth are forced to ‘hang out’ in adult controlled space, which is often perceived as threatening by adults (Robinson 2000). Kato (2009) found that youth will mitigate their presence in commercial spaces by “browsing.” By performing like adult customers, youth are able to use the space to socialize even though they may not be buying merchandise. “Browsing” allows youth to blend in and use the space for their own purposes as long as they act the part by appearing to be potential customers and follow the rules of the establishment (Kato 2009). Youth without access to public space face consequences of lack of appropriate space include youth feelings of isolation and distorted social constructions of youth as undesirable (Robinson 2000). However, Robinson (2000) found that youth will often avoid places that make them feel unwanted and will gravitate towards places accepting of them.

Unlike commercial space, where youth are able to blend in by browsing, public parks with specific uses prohibit youth from using public space as they wish. For example, many cities have created skate parks for youth in an effort to keep youth out of commercial space or downtown areas (Németh 2006). In the context of this paper, the example of the LOVE Park incident will be used to show youth exclusion from public space as policy choice to remove youth from downtown Philadelphia (Németh 2006). LOVE Park, known formally as the John F. Kennedy Plaza, was built in 1965. It has been used for “political rallies, civic events and electoral campaigns” (Németh 2006:300). However, LOVE Park is most well known for possessing excellent skateboarding elements. Skateboarders travel from all over the world to skate at LOVE Park.

In 2000, skateboarding was banned in LOVE Park. Policymakers cited damage to the park by skateboarders as the motivation for the ban (Németh 2006). As an alternative, skateboarders were told to go to a ‘nearby’ skate park. The ‘nearby’ skate park was several miles away (Németh 2006). Németh (2006) believes that youth were eliminated from LOVE Park because Philadelphia was in the midst of revitalizing the downtown area by renovating buildings nearby LOVE Park and building residential areas in order to attract professionals to the area. According to Németh (2006:309), removing youth from LOVE
Park was important because “public space is viewed predominately as adult space; in this context these youth are often seen as ‘out of order.’” Adults see the unsupervised use of public space by youth as unacceptable.

The control of youth access to commercial space and public parks does not fit Bernard’s (2010) cycle of juvenile justice as well as the previous example of juvenile curfew. However, it does meet some of the criteria. This example of marginalization of youth use of public space speaks to the protection of the economic interests of the rich and powerful. Merchants have a stake in keeping youth out of their commercial space because youth rarely spend money. Therefore, youth may use resources belonging to merchants that would otherwise be used by paying adult customers. For example, some stores may post signs stating that restrooms are for customers only in an effort to reduce costs and reduce youth presence (Kato 2009). LOVE Park also exemplifies the protection of economic interests because youth were removed from this public space in order to encourage gentrification (Németh 2006).

In both examples, youth were seen a potential source of trouble and therefore not welcome. This fits the social construction of youth as dangerous and in need of social control. Furthermore, skateboarders were vilified as a subgroup who cause more damage than they are worth, which comports with the ideas of juvenile delinquency (Németh 2006). Finally, the use of a skateboarding ban in LOVE Park demonstrates the power of the state (Németh 2006). Skateboarders, as a marginalized group, were unable to continue using LOVE Park because it did not go along with dominant views of proper use of public space.

Online Public Spaces

Since youth have been excluded from public spaces through juvenile curfew laws and specific use policies, youth have turned to online public spaces for places to meet others and to hang out. To date, policies that specifically address youth use of online public spaces have not been created. However, research points to growing distance between parental controls of youth and actual uses of public spaces suggesting that new policies will be coming soon (Boyd 2008).

In earlier times, youth used their access to public space to help shape their identities (Kato 2009). However, as youth access to public space has been limited, youth are increasingly turning to social networking sites such as Facebook to help them shape their identity (Freishtat and Sandlin 2010). Youth are welcome on Facebook, and the Internet in general, because it is “a frontier where people of different cultures, races, religions, and classes interact and exchange information openly” (Freishtat and Sandlin 2010:512). Essentially, Facebook as a public space has not been claimed as adult space. Thus, youth are able to use this space for their own purposes.

An interesting paradox has emerged though regarding youth and surveillance. Starting in the 1880s, youth were under surveillance in the home, with the use of juvenile curfew laws, to protect them from outside influences. Later, youth activity in public space was monitored (for example skateboarders) to ensure that youth were behaving. However, when youth engage in social networking sites they are submitting to more surveillance than ever before (Freishtat and Sandlin 2010).

Youth are willing to submit to increased surveillance on social networking sites because it is their only option. For example, Boyd (2008: 135) illustrates the privilege that adults experience by stating, “Likewise, adults spend countless hours socializing over alcohol, minors are not only restricted from drinking but also from socializing in many venues where alcohol is served.” By highlighting one area where youth are not welcome, Boyd illustrates the fact that youth have minimal access to public space. Additionally, such restrictions are placed on youth to protect them from potential harms. Therefore, youth turn to social
networking sites to be with their friends.

As a relatively new form of ‘public,’ online public space does not fit Bernard’s (2010) cycle of juvenile justice nearly as well as the previous two examples. However, online public space as a form of social control does meet a few of the criteria. First, online public space can be constructed a lenient form of social control, whereas juvenile curfew and specific use access are examples of harsh social control. Youth who use online public space as a primary form of communication with other youth are likely to do so from home. Thus, the previous two examples are not needed to prevent crime or protect innocent youth from corrupting influences. In addition, the economic needs of the elite are met with youth using online public space because youth are no longer in their commercial space. Instead, youth are shopping online, which benefits store owners in two ways: (1) youth are not seen in stores and do not trouble paying customers and (2) youth who use online public space are able to continue their browsing habits without repercussion.

This example does not seem to meet Bernard’s (2010) criteria for the cycle of juvenile justice. Youth who use online public space are not constructed as delinquents, this type of public space does not change ideas about the juvenile justice system, and reformers are not seen as morally superior. Additionally, the power of the state has not been increased based on online public space.

Policy Recommendations and Conclusion

Overall, the marginalization of youth in their access to public space fits Bernard’s (2010) cycle of juvenile justice well. Bernard (2010) argues that juvenile justice policy swings from harsh punishments to lenient punishments in an endless cycle. Youth access to public space, contrary to the current ‘get tough’ regime, is currently in a lenient phase. Starting in the late 1800s, juvenile curfews were imposed as ‘harsh’ punishments to keep youth off the streets and safely in their homes. In the 1980s, some cities such as Philadelphia began downtown revitalization projects and began to limit youth access to public space. This was a continuation of the harsh punishments from the imposition of the juvenile curfew. I think that restricting youth access to public parks was an even harsher punishment than juvenile curfew because youth were limited during daytime hours and constructed as the dangerous other. In response to be limited from real public space, youth have moved their interactions to online public space. This represents a return to lenient punishments since policies have not been enacted to limit youth access to this arena.

In addition, to fitting the cycle of juvenile justice, several policy recommendations can be made based on youth access to public space. First, policymakers need to be aware of the social ramifications of limiting youth access to public space. When youth have access to public space, they learn how to negotiate adulthood in a meaningful way. O’Neil (2002) points out that young people learn “their place” in society by interacting. Therefore, if we want to encourage a more diverse society, youth must be able to have access to all types of people – not just those who are culturally safe or adhere to social norms and values. Second, policymakers should address the needs of all of their constituents, not just those with money. In the case of LOVE Park, “it was proposed that the skateboarders’ ‘polluting presence’ in LOVE Park did not support the City’s desired image for their redevelopment efforts” (Németh 2006). Had the city embraced the skateboarders, positive changes could have occurred. However, the city chose to marginalize skateboarders and caused a cultural rift in their community. This can hardly be considered a positive outcome. Finally, parents and policymakers need to realize that the internet is a scary place for youth when they are not provided with guidance. While online public space is a relatively safe place for youth to interact, considering the alternative of interacting in real space, adults should actively seek to interact with their children in
online public space so that they are aware of what their child is doing. As Boyd (2008: 136) states:

“What is unique about the Internet is that it allows teens to participate in unregulated publics while located in adult-regulated physical spaces such as homes and schools. Of course, this is precisely what makes it controversial. Parents are seeking to regulate teens’ behavior in this new space; and this, in turn, is motivating teens to hide.”

The last thing that policymakers and parents need is for youth to hide from them.

References
Feminist Research Ethics, Informed Consent, and Potential Harms

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Abstract: Feminist research is fraught with ethical dilemmas, some of which concern informed consent and the possibility of potential harms to respondents. I review several dilemmas addressed in the literature and how feminist researchers resolved the issues. I also look at the National Association of Social Workers’ Code of Ethics and how the concepts of dual relationships and boundaries in social work practice may offer helpful guidelines to feminist researchers.

The conduct of feminist research is a common practice that is fraught with ethical dilemmas. If one takes the tenets of feminist research seriously, one is attempting to meet a very high ethical standard, and these attempts aren’t always supported by one’s peers or the processes of research. This paper explores a particular area of feminist research that has been discussed in the literature: informed consent. There are many ways to define informed consent, and all researchers have to obtain it, but determining whether or not consent is truly informed can be an ethical gray area. I explore the writings of several feminist scholars who have struggled with this issue in practice, and then discusses some of the ways feminist researchers have chosen to address informed consent. The paper then turns to some potential harms identified by feminist researchers which have resulted from their research, in spite of obtaining informed consent. I argue that feminist researchers could use some guidelines in this area, and that the National Association of Social Workers’ (NASW) Code of Ethics, particularly in relation to boundaries and dual relationships, may provide some assistance in making research decisions which minimize potential harms.

Feminist Research

Feminist social science research methods have been discussed for years, and there is an ongoing question of whether there is such a thing as “feminist methodology.” Some argue that methodology is methodology (Chafetz, 2004), or that there isn’t a “distinctive feminist method of research” (Harding, 1987, p. 456). Fonow and Cook, on the other hand, believe that there is a feminist methodology, which they state “involves the description, explanation, and justification of techniques used in feminist research and is an abstract classification that refers to a variety of methodological stances, conceptual approaches, and research strategies” (2005, p. 2213).

Harding stated that the distinctive features of the best feminist research weren’t going to be found by looking at research methods (1987). Harding’s definition of feminist research focuses on three characteristics: women’s experience as empirical and theoretical resources; research of problems which concern women and which is therefore done for women; and the placement and recognition of the researcher as a subject who exists in the same moment as the subject matter she is researching (Harding, 1987). Feminist research, in general, has varying definitions. According to Guimaraes (2007), “many propose that—whatever the method employed—what makes research ‘feminist’ is, in part, an underlying research ethic of"
‘integrity’ and ‘responsibility’ in the research process” (p. 149).

Fonow and Cook coedited the anthology, *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research* in 1991, in which they attempted to “capture the dilemmas feminists faced at each step of the research process” (2005, p. 2212). Their conception of a feminist methodology offers these guiding principles for researchers: to be reflexively aware of the significance of gender in their work; to help raise consciousness around issues; to challenge the idea that objectivity is obtainable in research; to consider the ethical implication of their research and the recognition of the potential for their respondents to be exploited; and to use their work to advance women’s empowerment (Fonow & Cook, 2005, p. 2213).

DeVault believes feminist researchers “are united through various efforts to include women’s lives and concerns in accounts of society, to minimize the harms of research, and to support changes that will improve women’s status” (1996, p. 29).

These different approaches to feminist research and methods cover most of the main tenets of feminist research. There is clearly a concern for reflexivity and placing the researcher in the same world as those being researched. There is a need for the work being done to be political in some way—to contribute to the transformation of society in a way that is beneficial to oppressed persons. There is a concern that the research be ethical, in that it not cause harm to those being researched, and that it give voice to the voiceless. These are high standards to meet, and yet many researchers use these guidelines in conducting their work.

Feminists conducting social science research have a tendency to choose methods which enable them to answer the questions they pose in a way that is true to their feminist values. Within this feminist approach to research, I look at how the “underlying research ethic” named by Guimaraes (2007) has an impact upon research and how it is addressed by feminist social science researchers in practice. Given the concern for ethical research practice, I review some ethical dilemmas being faced by feminist social science researchers in regard to informed consent. How are they are being reflexive about the ethical issues they face, and how they are able to resolve ethical dilemmas in ways that still meet the requirements of feminist research?

**Informed Consent**

One of the first ethical questions feminist researchers face is that of informed consent. Obtaining meaningful informed consent can become problematic for the research process. One area in which this is prevalent in social science research concerns the study of vulnerable populations, which may include children, young women who are being hospitalized for treatment of some sort, homeless youth, and people who are incarcerated, for example. All of these populations can be of interest to social scientists, and arguments can be made for the importance of research on these populations in terms of contributions to knowledge. Obtaining informed consent in these cases, however, is not a direct process.

According to *The Belmont Report*, the main concern of informed consent has to deal with “respect for persons,” which “requires that subjects, to the degree that they are capable, be given the opportunity to choose what shall or shall not happen to them” (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979, Part C, Section 1). All researchers have to obtain informed consent before embarking upon their research, but determining whether or not consent is truly informed can be difficult.

Providing information to respondents about one’s research is a fairly straightforward endeavor, although one still needs to make sure it is provided in terms which the respondent can understand. Comprehension of the research is more problematic. The person may understand what is being put forward to them, but may not understand the implications of granting the request. For example, some may not fully understand how they may be impacted, even if...
things are explained to them fairly completely ahead of time. Additionally, the researchers themselves, even though they have spent much time thinking through their research questions and issues, may not have a full understanding of how the research process may impact their respondents. Finally, there is the requirement of voluntariness. This means that the person has volunteered to be part of the project and is not part of the project by coercion. Voluntariness can be complex, such as when respondents are in situations where they are incarcerated or hospitalized, or when doing research with minors. In these cases, is there really voluntariness present? How does a feminist researcher, who is concerned with ethic research that doesn’t produce harms, address the issue of voluntariness?

The issue of informed consent must be taken seriously by researchers in order to conduct research with human subjects, and there are many steps in place to make sure that subjects are protected, such as adherene to The Belmont Report and submitting research requests to Human Subjects Institutional Review Boards at universities. In the studies explored here, there were several instances of feminist researchers questioning the validity of the informed consent they had been able to obtain, and those mostly concerned respondents found in vulnerable populations.

Vulnerable Populations

Obtaining parental consent is often seen as the most straightforward way to move forward with research on vulnerable youth populations, but Halse and Honey (2005) warn that “parental consent . . . is not a panacea for the ethical difficulties of consent. The tacit assumption underpinning the idea of parental consent is that parents know what is in the best interests of their daughters and are capable of protecting their interests” (p. 2151). In reference to children who are abused or neglected, that assumption doesn’t always hold true, and to take the issue seriously, the researchers have to seriously consider ways in which consent obtained can be deemed meaningful.

Halse & Honey (2005) wanted to research anorexic girls. “Through her constitution as ‘other,’ the anorexic is positioned as physically and psychologically unable to act in or to protect her own interests, thereby justifying medical and psychological intervention” (p. 2144). By this definition, the respondents may be incapable of providing informed consent. Halse and Honey asked themselves: “To what extent could girls exercise agency given their subordinate position in the world they cohabited with the clinicians [in the facility where the girls were being treated]?” (p. 2149). Parental consent is sometimes considered in such cases, but Halse and Honey found that “parental consent is a double-edged sword, protecting some girls and erasing other girls’ potential for agency by increasing the opportunity for parental coercion” (p. 2152). To counteract this ethical dilemma, they decided to use a form of consent proposed by Ramos in 1989, which she called “ongoing consensual decisionmaking.” In ongoing consensual decisionmaking, according to Ramos, “emergent difficulties are discussed openly” and “the respondent is kept informed as to his vulnerability to potential dangers” and the decisions regarding the research are made as a team (1989, p. 61, italics in original). For Halse and Honey, this meant that consent was obtained “before, during, and after the interviews so that participants had repeated opportunities to withdraw or to qualify consent” (p. 2152). This strategy didn’t address all of the issues of informed consent, “but it offered a greater degree of empowerment by providing girls with multiple opportunities to qualify and negotiate their involvement in the research” (Halse & Honey, 2005, p. 2152).

Meade and Slesnick (2002) had a similar dilemma when they wanted to study homeless youth. The Department of Health and Human Services has guidelines regarding when consent has to come from parents and when it can come from the youth themselves, which Meade and Slesnick found “allow the adolescent to consent alone in cases of abuse and neglect” (2002, p. 451). The youth’s status as runaways greatly complicates the matter of consent. In their research, Meade and Slesnick found that they had to consider each youth’s
competence to truly understand that to which they were consenting. They chose to use a standard proposed by Levine in 1995, who suggested applying “the concept of ‘mature minors’ to adolescents older than age 14 who are able to consent for themselves to ideographic or epidemiological research that poses minimal risk” (Meade & Slesnick, 2002, p. 453).

Homeless youth populations, Meade and Slesnick argued, are comparable to youth in situations of abuse or neglect. As such, “the youth should be allowed to consent alone, without parental approval” (2002, p. 460), given the fact that parental involvement could lead to larger problems for the youth.

In their work with adolescent substance abusers, Brody and Waldron (2000) confronted some similar issues in terms of informed consent. They came up with a method for addressing the concerns around the issue in the context of their research:

We recommend that researchers have adolescents read a portion of the consent form aloud and discuss the contents. Investigators may also want to ask potential clients to take a Breathalyzer test prior to agreeing to research participation, or reschedule appointments if the adolescent exhibits signs of recent substance use, in order to ensure that intoxicating effects of substances are not impacting the adolescent’s capacity to consent. (p. 220)

Brody and Waldron’s approach, making the respondents discuss the contents of the consent form leads to a greater sense that the consent given is meaningful, in that the respondent is showing understanding of that for which he or she is volunteering.

**Other Aspects of Informed Consent**

In an example of a slightly different vulnerable population, Logan, Walker, Shannon, and Cole (2008), did research on women who had been victims of partner violence and found that in general, the participants didn’t understand research, how it differed from social service programs, or what kind of participation was involved. This creates issues for informed consent.

Merely reading the forms was insufficient; explanation and examples needed to be offered to make sure participants understood exactly what they were agreeing to in order not to experience undue risk or become disillusioned with the study and hence discontinue participation. (p. 1236)

Had the authors not done such extensive preliminary work before conducting their actual research, they would not have known to what extent they needed to explain the process to the respondents. Having found what they did and then used the explanations and examples means that the informed consent they gained was more meaningful than it would have been otherwise.

Lal’s 1999 research in Dehli, India, brought up another aspect of obtaining informed consent, given that her participants may have felt their jobs were at stake if they did not comply with her requests for interviews. Lal was interested in power differentials and class inequalities that occurred in the context of observation. She was given permission to conduct her research and gained access to factories through factory management. She described the situation in which she was able to conduct her research:

Gaining access to firms with the consent of managers and owners often meant that women were called to a room that was assigned to me for interviewing, without knowing why they had been called upon. This situation was understandably seen as threatening by some of the women, who sometimes assumed that I was a sankari (government) employee and hence someone to be wary of. This was especially true for those women who were not in stable jobs. After I explained the research project and the nature of
Lal was quick to point out that she didn’t take this as actual informed consent, since the way the situation was presented to the women didn’t suggest that they had a choice in terms of being interviewed by her. The fact that the women’s supervisors had ordered them to speak to Lal meant that many of the women didn’t think they could choose to say no. In a situation in which one isn’t sure if one’s job or livelihood depends upon agreement, there is no way to have meaningful consent, although Lal’s example shows how something as seemingly simple as a method of access to respondents can lead to its own issues with informed consent.

O’Connell Davidson (2008) pushed the discussion of informed consent a little further with her feminist colleagues after she engaged in an ethnographic study. She posed the following question to feminist social science researchers:

If researchers are working in a context that requires them to secure the consent of research participants, then they are expected to understand that ‘No’ definitely means ‘No’ if they meet with refusal. But if someone does give informed consent to a lengthy period of participation in research that closely interrogates and then publicly dissects the intimate details of her life, experience and emotions, should we accept that ‘Yes’ means ‘Yes’?

In discussing her work with her research subject, she shared that she “never regarded Desiree’s consent to the research as a once-and-for-all prior event, but rather viewed it as a process. It was something that was discussed and renegotiated over time” (O’Connell Davidson, 2008, p. 55). This is similar to the approach used by Halse and Honey (2005), in which they had an ongoing process of discussion of the research process with their respondents in order to allow them chances to withdraw their consent to the process at any time. This example, however, points to some of the limitations of informed consent, especially in long-term research projects through which researchers develop relationships with their respondents.

Informed consent, then, is one major aspect of doing feminist research, and researchers need to consider such things as the ability of their respondents to give consent, the level of understanding the respondents have regarding that to which they are consenting, and the often overlooked potential for harms which comes with longer-term research projects. Taking the matter of informed consent seriously can have consequences on the research at hand. It can take more time, more effort, and more resources from the researchers. On the other hand, to be considered feminist in its approach, research is expected to meet these types of ethical guidelines and to guard against harms to the respondents involved, which is one of the reasons for obtaining informed consent. However, obtaining informed consent, many researchers have found, doesn’t always guarantee that they have been able to prevent harms to their research subjects, or to themselves.

Implications of Informed Consent and Potential Harms

Harms to respondents, as stated earlier, are a major concern of feminist social science researchers. DeVault (1996) claimed that “feminists seek a science that minimizes harm and control in the research process” (p. 33), and noted that feminist researchers have sought to limit negative consequences to participation in research, in part by “leveling hierarchies of power and control in research relations” (p. 33). Ironically, Kirsch (2005) pointed out that the attempts to level power relations and be more open with research participants “may have inadvertently reintroduced some of the ethical dilemmas feminist researchers had hoped to eliminate: participants’ sense of disappointment, alienation, and potential exploitation” (p. 2163).
Indeed, Stacey (1988) discussed the danger of ethnographic research, in which she found herself “wondering whether the appearance of greater respect for and equality with research subjects in the ethnographic approach masks a deeper, more dangerous form of exploitation” (p. 22), because, she found, “the greater the intimacy, the apparent mutuality of the researcher/researched relationship, the greater is the danger” (p. 24).

Relationships and Boundaries

Stacey’s concerns are confirmed by ethnographic researchers who discuss the issues they faced with boundaries with respondents when they engaged in research (Huisman, 2008; O’Connell Davidson, 2008; Pini, 2004). Huisman shared some of her ethical concerns in an article tellingly named “Does This Mean You’re not Going to Visit Anymore?”

Despite my efforts to avoid exploitation, betrayal, and abandonment in my work, I encountered several ethical challenges. Although I took steps to mitigate the challenges and dilemmas I faced, in the end I was left feeling as though I had let some of the participants down. Thus, more than 4 years after I completed this research, the ethical challenges I faced remain largely unresolved. (p. 379)

Kirsch (2005), similarly, warned researchers that there are ethical risks to forming rapport with research subjects, which is often a pivotal quality to obtaining research evidence. Researchers who strive for the benefits of close, interactive relations with participants must accept the concomitant risks. These risks include the potential for relationships to end abruptly and for participants to feel that they have been misunderstood or betrayed, especially in moments when participants’ and researchers’ priorities diverge, as many times they will. (Kirsch, 2005, p. 2163)

O’Connell Davidson (2008) discussed an ethnographic project she undertook in which she became very close to her main research subject. O’Connell Davidson (2008) freely discussed the way in which she and her respondent became “part of each other’s friendship circles, and our lives came to overlap in the way that lends itself to the easy flow of conversation, gossip and long-running esoteric jokes that create a strong sense of intimacy between two people” (pp. 53-54). Their relationship even included Christmas and birthday celebrations between the women and their families. O’Connell Davidson further cautions that as researchers, “we should recognize that we have asked them [respondents] to consent to an extremely intimate relationship within which they are to be used as objects” (p. 65). O’Connell Davidson continues to question the consent given by her respondent, in that the respondents in ethnographic research “consent to a relationship that is inevitably time-limited and that ultimately leads to their own objectification” (p. 61).

The issue of relationships between researchers and their respondents are clearly complex and difficult to navigate, leading Cotterill (1992) to advocate for more sharing of process for feminist researchers, since “how they engage in interviews with other women and the personal relations which develop are also part of ‘putting the subjective in the knowledge’ and have implications for feminist research” (p. 593). One such implication, beyond that of disgruntled and exploited respondents, is the unanticipated consequence of harm to researchers themselves.

Harms to Researchers

Sampson, Bloor, and Fincham (2008) studied researchers using feminist research methods and found some unexpected harms—harms to the researchers themselves. They
find “the paradigm of feminist research methods has come to influence the conduct of qualitative research, carrying with it a potentially high cost for the health and well-being of researchers” (p. 920). The ongoing nature of research was one area in which they found significant concern from feminist researchers.

Leaving the field was regarded as problematic and sometimes heart-wrenching. The nature of the activity that the women who talked about these issues had been engaged in was a ‘real’ one in which real emotion and feeling had been invested into ‘real’ relationships. Women found that ‘switching these off’ was not a straightforward matter and identified complications arising from enduring research relationships. (p. 927)

Kirsch (2005) is very concerned with how feminists do their research and the impact of relationships with research subjects, and she advocates setting clear boundaries.

I propose that feminist scholars may want to consider carefully which roles they wish to play (and which to avoid) by delineating clear boundaries between researchers and participants so that neither party unwittingly compromises expectations of friendship, confidentiality, and trust. (p. 2166, italics added)

Kirsch encourages researchers to remind participants regularly of the distinction between their relationships as researcher/participant versus that of friend/friend and of the fact that what they share will make it into published research. She also advises consideration of Paul V. Anderson’s notion of “confirming consent,” wherein “when participants find themselves in particularly vulnerable positions . . . they ought to be given the opportunity to renegotiate consent after the fieldwork is completed” (Kirsch, 2005, p. 2168). This type of consent is reminiscent of Ramos’ ongoing consensual decisionmaking, and it acknowledges the vulnerability of the participants. Giving such reminders to respondents is also a good reminder for the researcher, and may be another way to avoid potential harms to researchers themselves. Huisman’s research (2008) shows that the potential for harm in the research relationship isn’t limited to respondents.

When Mirsada looked me in the eyes and asked if I was going to visit her anymore, I feared that what I was doing ran counter to my commitment to feminist ideals of equality, reciprocity, and improving the lives of women. (2008, p. 388)

I felt overwhelmed by the emotional dimension of this work and felt as though my struggles were falling on deaf ears when I tried to talk about it with my professors. I longed for connection around these issues, but for the most part, I struggled alone. (2008, p. 389)

Her research experience has impacted her subsequent work, in that she undertook her next research project with a team, so that the relationship stresses wouldn’t burden her so deeply upon ending the research. Her example shows, however, how much support of colleagues and some clear guidelines would have aided her in this process.

Social Work Ethics as Helpful Guidelines

After reviewing all of these articles on feminist research dilemmas around informed consent and potential harms, it appears that feminist researchers seek to obtain some clarity about their roles in research and how to best manage issues around boundaries with respondents in order to reduce potential harms. Social work, which is related to sociology, already addresses issues of informed consent and boundaries in relation to working with clients, which
may be comparable in some ways to researchers’ ethical responsibilities to respondents. In The NASW Code of Ethics, both informed consent and dual relationships are addressed in terms of social workers’ ethical responsibilities to their clients. Informed consent in the NASW Code of Ethics is similar to that already used by feminist researchers, and emphasizes the use of “clear and understandable language,” “risks related to the services” and clients’ “right to refuse or withdraw consent” (NASW Code of Ethics, 1.03 Conflict of Interest, a).

The area of greater value to feminist researchers, however, concerns the concept of dual relationships. The NASW Code of Ethics defines dual relationships as relationships in which social workers have more than one relationship to a client, such as seeing someone in a therapeutic situation, but also being involved with them at an outside social setting, such as a church, in which the relationship is very different. This could be comparable to the duality experienced by feminist researchers when performing ethnographic research, in which they are both researchers and humans who develop relationships with respondents. The Code of Ethics (2008) states that:

Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (NASW Code of Ethics, 1.06 Conflict of Interest, c).

Although these guidelines are rather vague, there is other research available which addresses the topic more extensively. Dewane (2010) offers several questions for consideration when dual relationships are possible, and recommends discussing these with a trusted colleague:

1. How will this secondary relationship change the power differential or take advantage of a power differential in the therapeutic relationship?
2. How long will this relationship last? Is it a one-time occurrence or expected to last indefinitely?
3. How will ending one relationship affect the other relationship?
4. How much will objectivity be impaired?
5. What is the risk of exploitation? (p. 18).

These questions would give feminist researchers some questions for consideration and guidelines for entry into relationship with respondents, so that they have more protection, both for the respondents with whom they are working and for themselves.

Reamer identifies five areas in which boundary transgressions in social work relationships become problematic, and these can also be seen as potential dangers in the researcher/respondent relationship. These areas are: intimate relationships; pursuit of personal benefit; emotional and dependency needs; altruistic gestures; and responses to unanticipated circumstances (2003, p. 124). The danger of intimacies has already been addressed by feminist researchers, and the personal benefit is inherent in the research enterprise, wherein the researcher will benefit from the relationship by definition. Emotional and dependency needs may also arise, as seen in the relationships between O’Connell-Davidson and Desiree, and Huisman and Mirsada. There are often altruistic gestures between researchers and respondents which may require some consideration of implications, and unanticipated circumstances are also a common feature of ethnographic field research, and may require an immediate response from the researcher. As such, there are many potential dangers in the researcher/respondent relationship which need to be considered in order to conduct ethical research.

Reamer (2003) identifies ways in which social workers, or feminist researchers in this case, may work to avoid such problematic situations. He suggests six elements of a risk
management protocol:
1) Be alert to potential or actual conflicts of interest.
2) Inform clients and colleagues about potential or actual conflicts of interest; explore reasonable remedies.
3) Consult colleagues and supervisors, and relevant professional literature, regulations, policies, and ethical standards to identify pertinent boundary issues and constructive options.
4) Design a plan of action that addresses the boundary issues and protects the parties involved to the greatest extent possible.
5) Document all discussions, consultation, supervision, and other steps taken to address the boundary issues.
6) Develop a strategy to monitor implementation of action plan. (p. 130)

Even though professional social workers, sociologists, and researchers receive training and are taught to consider potential harms, situations in the field can challenge the limits of training. Having a system in place to help guide ethical decision making is important, as is being able to discuss these issues with colleagues. Feminist researchers open discussions about ethical issues and try to forge a way forward in which these dilemmas are acknowledged and discussed. Halse and Honey (2005) argued that:

It is necessary to make the ethics of research transparent in order to identify the moral crevices of ethics policy and practice and to develop new and better ways of doing feminist research and being ethical feminist researchers. (p. 2142)

In that vein, Huisman (2008) spoke of her own struggles with research ethics in the field. “I will continue to grapple with and reflect on the ethical dimensions of research and hope others will do the same by keeping the dialogue going” (p. 394), and Watts (2006) acknowledged that “researcher integrity is complex and dynamic; it functions along a continuum of practical constraint that involves mutuality, negotiation and re-negotiation of boundaries with participants” (p. 385). Through these brief excerpts, it appears that informed consent and research ethics are indeed complex issues; feminist researchers benefit from the support of colleagues and could use some guidelines in order to navigate these issues in a way that is ethically grounded.

Gatenby and Humphries (2000) noted that research is a balancing act between “being supportive of a woman in the project and maintaining our own spaces” and they noted the advantage of having two researchers involved, as it “provides a safety net, so that we each step in where the other cannot” (p. 96). By sharing their dilemmas and the ways in which they negotiate them, feminist researchers are trying to support one another in the ethically murky field of doing feminist research. It is a difficult endeavor to attempt to meet the ethical standards of both feminist research and personal ethics in terms of relationships with respondents. It is necessary for feminist researchers to have some sort of safety net, however they are able to construct it, so that they can continue their work and not be traumatized by the decisions they have made in the field in the pursuit of knowledge. Kirsch (2005) reminded researchers to:

Develop realistic expectations about our interactions with participants, recognizing that they are shaped, like all human interactions, by dynamics of power, gender, generation, education, race, class, and many other factors that can contribute to feelings of misunderstanding, disappointment, and broken trust . . .

Be as respectful, supportive, and empathetic as possible—to be as friendly as possible—as we forge ahead in relationships with those whose generosity
toward us enables the advancement of knowledge in our various fields of feminist inquiry. (p. 2170).

By approaching feminist research in a manner in which ethical dilemmas are discussed openly, and in which support and consultation with colleagues is a given, feminist researchers may decrease the inadvertent harms that come with social research. If they are able to add to this process an ethical framework to help them make decisions in the field, they will be able to feel better about their research and about their roles in the research they conduct, which will then allow them to continue to contribute important knowledge to the field.

Conclusion

Feminist research holds many ethical challenges in terms of doing research and also holds researchers to very high expectations. One of the biggest ethical challenges faced by researchers concerns obtaining informed consent, which can be a very complex thing in itself, and which requires much forethought to handle effectively. Another significant ethical challenge concerns potential harms to respondents, which feminist researchers seek to avoid. However, the opportunities for potential harms are prevalent, and they aren’t always discussed among researchers or in the literature. In this paper, I aimed to illuminate some of the ethical dilemmas experienced in the field by feminist researchers and to offer some additional considerations that may aid feminist researchers in navigating relationships with respondents. By borrowing from the NASW Code of Ethics and other social work literature, feminist researchers can develop guidelines and questions for themselves and their colleagues as a way to help avoid potential harms in relationships with respondents.

References


Bureaucracy and Income Disparity in America

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Introduction
The extent that income inequality has grown in the U.S. is disturbing. Only recently, in the wake of bank bailouts and the Occupy Wall Street movement, have Americans started noticing this disparity. Although protesters of the Occupy Wall Street movement demanded solutions, there were no clear signals on either side of the income gap what those solutions might be. Using a postmodern foundational approach, this paper explores the dynamics of income inequality. Highlighted are leading causes of the disparities entrenched in public policy with no solution. This paper submits that no single solution exists; rather a shift in American regime values is warranted. Looking through the lens of two key bureaucratic leaders, transactional and transformational leadership comparisons relative to unequal income injustices are explored. Finally, Mikesell’s “New Performance Budgeting” (2007) is considered as an alternative to Wildavsky’s budget strategies.

Theory Framework
Rational choice theory applications had a significant impact on the industrial revolution, applying positivist logic to U.S. bureaucratic organizations. It brought new focus to previously inefficient methods used to control the output of goods and service. But the pluralistic nature and increased complexity of bureaucracies have exposed the limitations of this theory. In a time of relative simplicity where the capitalist driven market from mid 1940s to the 1970s redistributed increasing income equivalently to all segments of the population (Bartels, 2008; Kopczuk, Saez, and Song, 2010; Domhoff, 2012), questioning the application of Rational Choice for income redistributive purposes was not need. As income disparity increased from the 1970s to present (Bartels, 2008; Kopczuk, Saez, and Song, 2010), exploring the causes of economic conditions through a different lens was justified.

Although Rational Choice assumes “only individuals, not collectives, make decisions” (Frederickson and Smith, 2003, p.187), individuals are lumped into meta-categories for purposes of producing quantifiable data for micro and macroeconomic purposes. The analysis of aggregate data, primarily using the Gini Index application, does enable researchers to identify clear trends in income inequality. Considering the complexity and multitude of variables, scientific inquiry is forced toward a hyper-bounded rational approach to determine the cause. This is where Postmodernism fills the gap through its devaluation of social constructs, seeking knowledge through the lens of the income-seeking individual.

The leading body of income inequality research presupposes that U.S. citizens value income. Postmodernism allows researchers to step back to reevaluate this single construct on the basis that individuals engage “in nonlinearities of thought and practice, in improbable behaviors, contingencies, and discontinuities” (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995, p.255). Some individuals may follow the rational “self-interested utility maximizer” (Frederickson and Smith, 2003, p.186) approach, and others follow thought patterns difficult to accurately predict. This is the frame of thought that has led to qualitative and mix-methods approaches, specifically narrative, phenomenological, case study and grounded theory research.

Further examining the construct of individual value as an input variable relative to
the output of income inequality, a plethora of causes can result in nearly infinite speculation. Fox and Hugh argued that “names for phenomena intrude to become part of the phenomenon itself” (1996, p.104). Therefore, the term “value”, “income”, or “inequality” may serve to pollute the logically derived results. Once value is simplified and thoroughly defined, analysis of how one values income can be explored. Cultural norms may drive the importance of income value. Income value could be derived from genetic predispositions within barriers of classes. Perhaps public and private schools reinforce value of income differently, creating future teachers who, in turn, exercise value lessons. However outlandish these examples at face value may seem, they call into question the “known variables” assumed in scientific methodology and associated epistemological approaches.

Value is only one of many societal constructs that legitimately come into question when considering income inequality of individuals. Ambition, poverty, wealth, success, and class structure, to name few, are also constructs that could be questioned. This is not to suggest that every construct should be evaluated and redefined, essentially reconstructing language itself. The Postmodernist approach, instead, redirects the researcher toward alternative approaches, and away from mainstream methodological underpinnings.

Shortly before the 2008 economic crisis, Rational Choice underpinnings had tended to led researchers of the economic community to produce a body of research indicating technological change was the basis for the growth of inequality in the U.S. (Krugman, 2007). This research pointed to income injustices that put a halt to the “American Dream” (Krugman, 2007; Weinstein, 2000). Yet, bookstores continued to carry large stocks of business advice, such as Robert Kiyosaki’s popular Rich Dad Poor Dad. When the 2008 economic crisis began, income inequality, such as corporate officer salaries and bonuses paid by banking bailout funds, was suddenly in the limelight. Even government wages, long thought to be below fair market value, was being publically ostracized. Rising unemployment and loss of retirement savings further accelerated recognition of systematic disparities. While some research explaining inequitable incomes was readily available, much additional research soon followed. Postmodernists view this public reaction as “sunspots potentially flaming up from any and all points….pulsating waves of energy….affecting the field as a whole, as well as other nodes of potential flame-ups” (Fox and Miller, 2006, p.101). While Rational Choice theorists may work to expel or, more likely, further accelerate the “pulsing waves of energy”, Postmodernists recognize that flame will naturally extinguish to be replaced with another flame. Postmodernist may view the lack of response within the Executive and Legislative branches to the Occupy Wall Street movement (the flame from pulsating waves of income loss) as justified. Conversely, they may seek to explore the true nature of the flame through the lens of individuals affected by income distribution.

Welfare related organizations, such as the Social Security Administration (SSA), perform the function of income distribution through the Supplementary Security Income (SSI), Retirement Insurance Benefit (RIB), Disability Insurance Benefit (DIB), and several additional programs. At first glance, these programs appear to increasingly favor poorer individuals. Based on income and resource tolerances, SSI is distributed to the poorest citizens. This amounts to a transfer of funds from income producing taxpayers to poor disabled clients. The RIB and DIB programs result in a higher ratio of repayment to taxpayers who have had lower lifetime earnings than those with higher earnings. Logic would drive the SSA administrator to believe that income redistribution, in these cases, is unfair to higher income producers. But the Postmodernist approach examines administrator fairness through the lens of the recipient, child of the recipient, the taxpayer in each social economic class, the politician, and the administrator.

For brevity sake, this paper will analyze only SSI payments viewed through the lens of the politician and the child of the recipient. The politician, seeking reelection and party continuance, must strike a balance between favoring SSI recipients and decreasing taxes of in-
come producing citizens. An underlying factor in this is crime reduction (Pickett and Wilkinson, 2009). The 2012 Federal Poverty Level for family size of one is $931 monthly or $11,170 yearly (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). SSI payments in 2012 for a single recipient without income are $698 monthly or $8376 yearly, well below the poverty line. A decrease in this benefit amount may result in criminal activity to subsidize money in order to attain minimal living standards. Resulting increases in policing and incarceration costs assumed by taxpayers would exceed the monthly SSI payments. Also, voter support would wane as the crime rate increased. Another underlying factor is health care costs. Typically, individuals that qualify for SSI also qualify for Medicaid. Increasing the benefit amount may lead to a high standard of living, serving to decrease Medicaid costs (Pickett and Wilkinson, 2009).

The child of the recipient often is left with few options. Dependent on the funds of the recipient, the child does not have adequate funds for books, tutors, better schools, preparation for standardized tests, transportation for academic activities, etc. Bowles and Gintis found that IQ was a primary factor in determining the positive relationship of parental income to offspring income (2002). In order to develop the cognitive skills necessary for a higher IQ, access to educational resources must be available. Given this lack of resources, it is no surprise that students planning to complete college from the highest quartile of social class were found six times more likely to graduate than those from the lowest quartile (Rumberger, 2010). The child who lacks educational resources most likely becomes the parent who can neither provide adequate resources nor give academic guidance. This loop then perpetuates for generations among the lower class.

In response to the lens viewed through the eyes of the politician and the recipient’s child, seeking to provide the best possible service to the public, the SSA street-level bureaucrat has an obligation to provide the most favorable outcomes possible within the boundaries of the regulatory policy (Lipsky, 1980). SSA street-level bureaucrats must recognize that power to wield these policy shaping decisions lies with themselves, rather than the bureaucratic organization (Peters, 1996). Desires of powerful politically influential parties will trickle to the street-level bureaucrat. This can lead to the moral and ethical dilemmas of decision making between opposing parties of the income disparity classes.

Mid-level SSA managers also have an obligation of sharing the burden of assisting street-level bureaucrats in “overcoming the problem of ‘contravention’” (Peters, 1996, p.54). Behn explains that this leadership role is an obligation, not a right (1998). He recognized that the market does not perform as theoretically predicted, and is, therefore, the manager’s responsibility to provide direction beyond ambiguous congressional legislation in order to fulfill public interests (Behn, 1996). In the case of unequal distribution of income, this entails “inventing (or reengineering) new systems and procedures” (Behn, 1996, p.216).

Public Policy

Unequal distribution of income extends beyond the borders of SSA policies, or even the U.S. welfare system. Welfare surely plays a significant role in income distribution. Yet the scope of this issue is much more broad, and encompasses every U.S. political, private, and public organization, every U.S. citizen, emigrant, and immigrant, and many worldwide organizations.

Taxes and transfers are interwoven into the fabric of society. It is at the heart of competing interests between powerful and elite groups and weak and segregated groups. From taxation of a multinational conglomerate overseas to the transfer of those taxes to the predestined child through food stamps provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. policymakers and bureaucratic administrators are subjected to immeasurable and convoluted policy outcomes. The nature of an increased complexity of networking groups and policies has evolved from Weber’s disposition that public administration should focus on “detailed and systematic execution of public law” (Fry, 1998, p.2) to Waldo’s disposition that
“bureaucracies provide important support for democratic values” (Fry, 1998, p.236).

Munger identifies three competing tensions that shape public policy; markets, experts, and politics (2000). The tensions resulting from experts and the market dictate the efficiency of public policy; the tensions from markets and politics affect the equity of policies; and the tensions from the expert and political relationship form the institutional reform of public policy (Munger, 2000).

Experts have recognized growth in inequality well before 2008 economic crisis (The Economist, 2006; Krugman, 2007). They have also recognized the important role of market self-correction and efficiencies that the role of capitalism brings. So, politicians, faced with conflicting research bodies, are pressured more by market factors. APSA Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy points to the reality that, in 1990, 86% of individuals surveyed with family incomes over $75,000 reported voting and 52% with incomes under $15,000 reported voting, and, respectively, 17% and 4% reported campaign work, 56% and 6% reported campaign contributions, 50% and 25% reported contact with a politician, 7% and 3% reported politically related protest, and 73% and 29% were affiliated with a political organization (2004). Mikesell attributes low voter turnout to perceived citizen costs of voting as higher than expected return (2007).

Political parties increasingly have separated toward opposite ends of the political spectrum since the 1920s, where Democrats symbolize protection of the interests of citizens in lower income half and weak minority groups (Krugman, 2007). This is much of the cause for the election of President Obama, following the 2008 economic meltdown, where 63.7% of citizens with a family income less than $20,000 voted (Crissey and File, 2012).

Leading up to Obama’s Presidency, 15 of the top 20 highest campaign contributions were linked to big business and 2 linked to Ivy League schools (Center for Responsive Politics, 2011). 4 of the 15 of Obama’s contributing business were U.S. banks that were among the top 6 of 734 to receive greatest amounts of 2008 and 2009 bank bailout funds (CNN Money, 2012; Center for Responsive Politics, 2011). The bailout funds, that have had repayment of 96 of 205 trillion (CNN Money, 2012), were a direct transfer of taxes to support politically powerful bank interests. This is only one example among many. This significant transfer, and others favoring wealth interest groups, reinforced the importance of lobbying and campaign contributions, effecting policy equity and institutional reform.

The combination of pre-election campaign contributions and high income voter involvement and contributions leads to political candidates that are essentially preselected and molded to protect significant supporter interests before the election takes place. This is, unless, once elected, the candidate takes a radically opposing position. Undoubtedly, this is political suicide. The increasing income equality gap only serves to provide lower income citizens with fewer resources needed to contribute to this political process. Welfare recipients, whose qualification is met if total income is well below the poverty line, are left without a voice until the vote is cast. It is not surprising that voter turnout among this group is dismal (APSA Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004), given that they must elect candidates selected and funded by more advantageous groups.

The bulk of all decision making of tax transfers leading to income inequality stems from the legislative and executive federal bodies. Explicit tax codes are administered and enforced by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), but the tax policy originates in Washington. The IRS can implement additional enforcement and more stringent corporate reporting procedures to reduce potential Enron situations, off-shore tax shelters, and creative accounting. At what expense to the taxpayer? For example, this could result to outsourcing, further inflating unemployment; or, conversely, tax breaks of the wealthy may be reduced, serving to reduce income disparity. Welfare agencies are subject to more ambiguous legislation, but they are restricted by available tax transfers. The SSA, for example, has taken little action to preserve available
funds due to political ramifications primarily from powerful interest groups, such as the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010 resulted in a 2% Social Security tax reduction that served to further deplete Social Security reserves and guarantee retirement instability, a critical source of retirement income for the middle and lower class (Social Security Administration, 2012). The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) seeks to regulate investment and market activities. Before 2008, the SEC reduced market regulations that inevitably favored advantaged income groups. The SEC could have instituted policies that further regulated market conditions to reduce investor risk (and gains before the 2008 crisis). Perhaps this would have reduced the magnitude or delayed the outcome of tax transfer absorbed by taxpayers in the wake of the 2008 crisis.

Public organizational managers must manage and lead within the scope of legislation and available funds. Even Lipsky’s street-level bureaucrat is bound to acceptable limits, whether legal or ethical (1980). Citizens and lobbying groups simply seek favorable outcomes from the political and bureaucratic processes. Arguably, citizens and bureaucrats have an obligation to preserve democratic principles through available avenues. In the case of the bureaucrat, this might be in the form of policy resistance, political influence, or policy implementation that bounds on illegality. Yet, the executive and legislative bodies ultimately determine the broader fate of citizens.

In the Federalist Papers, James Madison wrote, “In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself” (Light, 2011, p.S8). Surely Madison could not anticipate the level of complexity of competing forces and networked relationships that currently exist in government. The evolution of the pluralistic nature government does not validate inequities produced by institutional processes, nor the institutional inability to restrict powerful interest groups from obstructing the democratic process of policy design.

Policy design and outcomes of taxes and transfers can be analyzed comparing Institutional Rational Choice and Development (IAD) with Social Construction and Policy Design (SCPD). Ostrom explains that most development of the IAD framework involves “extreme assumptions such as unlimited computational capability and full maximization of net benefits” (1997). Given limited budgets of organizations, IAD is practical. Furthermore, IAD theories give researchers an excellent starting point to branch into more specific areas of research. Using game theory, one may conclude that payoffs (benefits minus effort) are greatest when individuals remain within socioeconomic classes. Yet, this may not explain Bill Clinton’s impoverished beginnings in Arkansas to his eventual Presidency and accumulation of wealth, nor Motley Crue’s bassist Nikki Sixx’s fall from wealth and stardom. The IAD framework succeeds in providing researchers a baseline of pure and bounded rational approaches formed within a set of predetermined rules that can explain the expected economic impacts of levying additional taxes to the middle class, transferring additional wealth to the lower class, increasing capital gains taxes, comparing tax structures internationally, etc. The IAD framework fails in explaining the irrational human behavior and segmented interests, for example; the lack of voter participation from the lower and middle classes as a means to shift taxes to the rich, the overindulgence of credit from the middle class, political decisions to ignore the national deficit and dwindling Social Security funds, a child’s decision to undervalue education, etc.

The SCPD framework is more fitting in analyzing the pluralistic nature of the institutions (Deleon, Ingram, and Schneider, 2007). SCPD framework realizes that policy feeds the politics that create and alter policy (Deleon, Ingram, and Schneider, 2007). The continuity of the SCPD framework ultimately serves to evolve “institutional culture, power relationships, and social constructions” (Deleon, Ingram, and Schneider, 2007, p.97).

Where IAD lacks, SCPD achieves in explaining the input power dynamics of groups
leading to the output of biased taxing and transfers. Deleon, Ingram, and Schneider recognize that all groups fall into a spectrum of social construction that rest within the four quadrants of the “advantaged”: groups that are politically powerful and viewed positively by society, “contenders”: groups that are politically powerful and viewed negatively by society, “dependents”: groups that are not politically powerful and viewed positively by society, and “deviants”: groups that are not politically powerful and viewed negatively by society (Deleon, Ingram, and Schneider, 2007, p.102). Groups that have the greatest influence on taxes and transfers that fueled income inequality are big business, CEOs, the upper-class, and the middle class. While Big business, CEOs, and the upper-class contenders tend to be in the spotlight for self-satisfying efforts to manipulate tax and transfer policies, a portion of their accumulate wealth has created significant political advantages through lobbying and campaign finance. The advantaged bureaucratic and economic experts have provided empirical evidence that free market systems, deregulation, and the “trickle-down” effect (Bartels, 2008, p.14) had and will continue to create economic gain and prosperity for all. The middle class, lying between the advantaged and dependents, derive political power through aggregate political participation. Before 2008, their disposition was fueled by expert opinion, their belief in the “American Dream”, and their ignorance of the extent of income inequality. Clearly, after 2008, the middle class disposition has begun to change, most notably in the Occupy Wall Street movement that failed to result in change of how the wealthy 1% was taxed. The dependent lower-class have previously failed to exercise their vote to gain power or mobilized in an effort to redistribute transfers.

Deleon, Ingram, and Schneider explain, “Policymakers, especially elected politicians, respond to, perpetuate, and help create social constructions of target groups in anticipation of public approval or approbation” (2007). By this rational, politicians would attempt to limit links to contenders in response to social construction. They would publically attack deviants (Bernie Mack) and support the advantaged and dependents in an attempt to gain public support. Bureaucratic leaders must be aware of these dynamics in order change policy.

Bureaucratic Leadership

Given the realities of the pluralist government, U.S. bureaucratic leaders must become a competing force in order to initiate worthwhile change. Katz and Kahn describe leadership as “an influential increment over and above compliance with routine objective” (Bass, 2008, p.19). This definition is often associated with difference between a manager and a leader, or transactional and transformational leadership.

After employment in the Justice Department, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and American National Can (a Chicago based factory), Mark W. Everson was appointed Commissioner of the IRS by the President Bush in 2003 (Olson, 2007). From May 1st, 2003 to May 28th, 2007, Everson had held the position of IRS Commissioner. In March of 2004, Everson spoke to the National Press Club, indicating that he sought to provide increased customer service by providing taxpayers with increased internet options, decreasing wait time, and simplifying the tax process (IRS, 2011). By 2006, all areas of customer service ratings had increased. While commendable, these achievements represent components of transactional leadership. These were previously established measures lacking vision. In an effort to bring back taxpayer confidence to the IRS, Everson targeted “corrosive activity by corporations, high-income individuals…..other contributors to the tax gap…..attorneys, accountants…..other tax practitioners…..domestic and offshore-based criminal activity” to be targets of IRS scrutiny (IRS, 2011). By October of 2004, the IRS had a 15% increase in enforcement revenue than the previous year, including a 40% increase in enforcement of individuals earning $100,000 or more, and, with the assistance of the Department of Justice, a 20% increase in recommended prosecutions, primarily from white-collar crimes (IRS, 2011). By 2006, average sentences increase from 19 to 22 months (IRS, 2011). This significant achievement was essentially a
response to external elements. Everson took action on the basis that public scrutiny had redefined his role. Bass defines this as “passive management by exception” (2008). Selzer, Numeroff, and Bass found that this leadership style is positively correlated with stress and burnout (Bass, 2008), which may help to explain why there was such a variance in organization characteristics of Everson’s jobs leading and following (The American Red Cross and Alliant Group) his IRS appointment.

After the Bernard Madoff Ponzi scheme the SEC faced heavy criticism. Appointed by Barrack Obama on January 20th of 2009, former Financial Industry Regulatory Authority CEO Mary L. Schapiro became the 29th Chairman of the SEC (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 2012). Schapiro had stated she would be, “reinvigorating a financial regulatory system to protect investors and vigorously enforce the rules; and working to deepen the SEC’s commitment to transparency, accountability, and disclosure while always keeping the needs and concerns of investors front and center” (Tsetsi, 2011). Schapiro could have reacted to market conditions by simply providing additional SEC oversight. Instead, Schapiro exercised Bryman’s “change-oriented leadership” (Bass, 2008) through; restructuring several operations, including enforcement and examinations, creating a flatter organization by removing an unnecessary layer of management, placing attorneys closer to the public, and adopting rules to protect investors by restricting liquidity and risk of money market funds (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 2012). Also, Schapiro is currently working with the CFTC to counter previous problems that resulted from over-the-counter derivative market failures (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 2012). This, and many additional projects, Howell, Shea, and Higgins informs is “persisting under adversity”, one of three factors of champions of innovation (Bass, 2008). While Schapiro ultimately is viewed as the responsible figurehead, she must share decisions with four additional appointed Commissioners by majority rule. Although innovations many not necessarily stem from Schapiro, she champions ideas and recommendations from subordinates and peers to respond to political pressures, allowing her strategy and vision to evolve. These examples above, and many others, mirror characteristics found in the ideal Transformational Leader.

Gini suggests that “without the active intervention of effective moral leadership, we are doomed to forever wage rear guard action” (1996, p.30). Public discontent due to rising income inequality existed before Everson and Schapiro were appointed. Unlike Everson, Schapiro intervened to alter and create a more regulatory market atmosphere and create a more horizontal organization, reducing an “unhealthy concentration of power and dictatorship by the majority” (Bass, 1996, p.174).

The organizational culture that Schapiro enhanced was reflected in SEC policy changes and a shift in the tone of SEC public messages (SEC, 2012). These systematic changes served to chip away at the inequities of income absorbed by big business (particularly banks) and elite investors, and income lost by the middle class. They amounted to more than Everson’s whack-a-mole techniques. Further, enhancing market stabilization reduced risk of another market failure that could have led to added tax transferred bailouts, additional unemployment and welfare payments, and increased borrowed money to be repaid primarily by the middle class. These actions helped to narrow the income gap.

Schapiro’s actions had aligned most internal and external stakeholders of the SEC (Bass, 1996). Politicians, investors, and citizens were content with market stabilization actions. After buy-in, SEC employees were no longer the focal point of public scrutiny.

Everson did not intervene to reduce the income gap through unfair tax advantages. His is position to protect capital gains taxes emerged later as Alliant Group’s CEO (Bloomberg, 2012; CNBC, nd). It is easy to blame the organizational hierarchy and strict bounds of the IRS, but bureaucratic leaders must at least attempt change when it is warranted. There are no indications that Everson went beyond increasing “economic efficiency and instrumentalism” (Ciulla, 1996) by way of influencing political leaders, gaining public support,
or proposing policies to increase fairness of income and capital gains taxes.

The “rhetorical persuasiveness” of Everson (Bloomberg, 2012; CNBC, nd; Holland-er, 1996, p.54; Solomon, 1996, p.96) surely resulted in followership and had led him to his appointment. This “extraordinary power” (Soloman, 1996, p.95) might have been better served toward less narcissistic tendencies of policy preservation and right-winged political appeasement.

Everson’s ethical values tended assume the role of a charismatic “taskmaster” (Bass, 2008, p.196) of the Bush Administration, rather than a leader seeking political support in the interest of the public. Since the IRS has typically been a conservative, rule-centric, hierarchical organization, followers continued down a beaten path. Weber’s philosophical view would further highlight that leadership gained on the basis of charisma is “loose and unstable” (Fry, 1998, p.27).

Everson attended Phillips Exeter Academy and Yale before he was launched into his first position at SC International Services as the finance vice president in 1988; and then several corporate officer positions followed at Pechiney Group (Yale Alumni Association, nd). After his sister was murdered in 1982, he gained employment at the Justice Department for Attorney General Ed Meece (Olsen, 2007). His affluent life leading to top government and corporate positions likely explained his inability to recognize and/or act on the unbalanced tax structure. In addition to Everson’s resume, the murder of his sister likely altered his disposition. Kets de Vries explains that this psychological damage may result in a sense of entitlement leading to narcissistic behavior (Kets de Vries, 2003).

Narcissism isn’t necessarily problematic for a bureaucratic organization. Rejai found that 23 of 32 revolutionary leaders were “egotistical, narcissistic, and searching for personal fame and glory” (Bass, 2008, p.196). Kets de Vries also recognized that some degree of narcissism is needed for a leader (2003). He warns that an overabundance of narcissism leads to an inability to self-criticize, fueling the “leader-as-mirror effect” (Kets de Vries, 2003). Surrounding by the Bush Administration and a select subordinate staff, exceeding IRS preordained goals, and shielded from the public led to further inflation of the self-aggrandizing nature of Everson’s narcissistic behavior.

Schapiro, too, was narcissistic. Without this need for “power and prestige” (Bass, 2008, p.232) she may not have decided to earn a Juris Doctor degree from George Washington University after she had attended Franklin and Marshal College (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 2012). However, public scrutiny, reorganization, and majority rule decisions reduced the “leader-as-mirror effect” (Kets de Vries, 2003, p.25).

Schapiro’s lack of self-deception may have been over-shadowed by a need to leave a legacy (Kets de Vries, 2003). Labeled as “The Edifice Complex”, Kets de Vries explains that leaders nearing retirement often have a strong desire to fulfill a vision (2003, p.34). At age 57 and Schapiro’s second appointment as Commissioner, this may be the case. If this is the driving force, do the ends justify the means? She has, after all, realized transformational changes with permanency; and her changes were to the extent that she had “limit(ed) the loss of reality based decision making” (Kets de Vries, 2003, p.66).

The outcomes of Schapiro and Everson’s appointments were entirely different. American actors and non-actors held a stake that resulted in monetary and/or political gains or losses. The examples also suggest how bureaucratic leadership can be instrumental in shaping the outcome of organizations, political decisions and society. Leaders clearly have to ability to reverse the trend of inequality, but to what extent?

**Bureaucratic Change toward Fairness**

The land of opportunity is increasingly becoming the land of limited opportunity. As the U.S. has become more globally competitive, the bulk of economic gain is going to the top one percent of income earners. The difficulty that the bottom 99% faces is that there is no single solution to solving this problem, albeit taxes and transfers is a primary source of income
inequality. This section explores beyond the specific public policy target of taxes and transfers and relative bureaucratic leader responses to examine changes in societal outlooks of equality and acquisitiveness through the lenses of a fragmented population. This paper will use fictional characters to describe social perspectives, and then offer guidelines to reverse the trend of inequality as a regime change through policy making.

Suzie is an 18 year old African-American female born into a median middle class family. At an early age her parents claimed she could accomplish anything, reaching the status of Bill Gates or the President. Although she was a top academic performer in her class, her parents are not able or willing fund further education.

First, her parents couldn’t have possibly afforded to send her to a private elite school or provide SAT tutoring. Billitteri notes that in 2008, 25% of the middle class reported that they have trouble paying their bills, 51% have trouble saving for the future, and 50% planned to reduce household spending (2009). He also points to the 80% of the middle class who felt living standards were tougher now than 5 years earlier, compared to 65% in 1985 (Billitteri, 2009).

Second, her parents were unsure that accumulating more debt would be worth the risk and payoff of college. Of 25,000 eighth grades surveyed in 1988, 66% of the middle class group claimed they planned to complete college and by 2000 24% actually had completed college, compared to 89% and 60% of the upper class respectively (Rumberger, 2010).

Finally, Suzie’s parents do not recognize the extent income inequalities (Domhoff, 2012; Bartels, 2008) nor do they have great concern (Porter, 2012), and archaically view the inequality that they do recognize “as a legitimate result of differences in individual talent” (APSA Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004).

James is an 18 year old Caucasian male born into a family that has accumulated much wealth and draws an income categorized as the top 0.1%. Valuing education, his father, who went to an Ivy League School and is currently a Republican Senator and former CEO of a multinational corporation, sent him to an exclusive private schools and “extensive SAT tutoring” (Gabler, 2012, p.1). Although James’s grades were mediocre, he scored higher on his SATs than his average peer score of 1702 (compared to 1461 for students with families earning between $40,000 and $60,000, and 1321 for students with families earning less than $20,000) (Rampell, 2009) and was accept into the college that his father attended.

Planning to follow in his father’s footsteps, as a child generally does (DeParle, 2012), James is confident that he will have limited competition. Bowels and Gintis found the offspring of parents at highest decile had a 2.4% probability of attaining earnings at the lowest decile, and parents of the lowest decile had a 1.3% probability of reaching the highest (2002). Pew research found that 36% of the mid income quintile move up, while 41% move down. Still, James has adopted his father’s conservative disposition that “everyone can climb the latter” (DeParle, 2012).

If James is able to fill his father’s shoes and political conditions remain the same, his votes would likely be biased by a ratio of three to one toward “wealthy constituents” (APSA Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004, p.14). Likewise, he could continue to resist egalitarian values in face of foreign counties that have proved to benefit from such values (Domhoff, 2012; Pickett, K. and Wilkinson, R., 2009). Egalitarian advocates question if “equality of opportunity” can exist when there are large differences in wealth and social status in society” (Hudson, 2010). Logically, there will always be a segment of the population that views economic conditions as unfair.

The concept of “fairness” itself is entirely subjective and can be view differently through separate lens; the social worker, the impoverished, the CEO, etc. However, any individual would have a difficult argument defending the extent that income inequality has shifted (Domhoff, 2012; Heathcote, Perri and Violante, 2010). The greatest difficulty that James will face is promoting fairness through the art of listening to all of his constituents equally, rather
than powerful groups primarily. Forester indicates that “failing to listen means allowing the ideology of everyday life to go unchallenged” (Fox and Miller, 1996, p.158). James’s ideology has already been shaped by the wealthy, through the schools he has attended, peers that he is exposed to, and family life that he encounters. Ignoring or staving off the needs of fragmented, ill-represented groups will come easy in the future.

James and Suzie’s situations are indeed not anomalies of American culture realities. They are trapped in a difficult web to untangle. In James situation, there is no real incentive to reverse the trend of income equality. In Suzie’s situation, there is little hope from defeating the network of injustices that she is confronted with. In seeking to limit these barriers, bureaucrats must refrain from seeking solutions for the politically powerful, less fortunate, or the majority. They must seek solutions that are equitable for all parties involved. Is this the right of the bureaucrat to seek and implement such a solution?

Richardson would say yes, based on the founders’ of the Constitution submissions that there is not separation between public administration and politics (1997). Politics includes everyone in governance (Fox and Miller, 1996). Founders indicate that “elective and appointed posts” should be created and filled by “virtuous public servants” as “disinterested governors”, seeking to limit self-interested actors that “diffuse and limit governmental powers and frustrate the tyrannical propensities of factions” (Richardson, 1997, p.108). Opposing the views of Wilson and Taylor, Richardson pointed that to remove administration from politics was “to remove questions of character and ethics from the field” (1997, p.109). Conversely, Richardson recognized that founders’ sought to limit the powers of bureaucratic control to the extent that regime values were not compromised (1997). While “virtuous public servants” were desired by founders, the quantity of virtuous citizens likely could not fill all governing positions (Richardson, 1997).

Bureaucratic leaders must go beyond the mechanistic routines of simply carrying out laws in order to meet the intentions of founders. They must recognize that they, like politicians, represent the needs of citizens, and then take action to solve the complex problem of income inequality, among other demands. They must also recognize that they themselves are not elected leaders, and therefore must adhere to limitations of “popular consent, no matter how virtuous or benevolent they might be” (Richardson, 1997, p.120).

Richardson recognized that virtuous bureaucratic leadership would naturally rise to upper positions in the form of a “natural aristocracy” (1997, P.110). Bureaucratic leaders are not merely puppets to manipulated by politicians; they share the responsibility of the hand that shapes public policy.

In former IRS Commissioner Everson’s case, he could have supported Richardson’s interpretations by promoting more of a bottom-up approach and reducing the hierarchical controls. The very nature of a centralized organization will delimit public values to emerge from within the organization. Barnard’s views support this approach on the basis that the individual opportunities for choice within an organization can be limited or expand choice itself (Fry, 1998). Decisions emanated from this opportunity to change would undergo the constitutional checks and balances in place visa-vi popular consent (Richardson, 1997). For instance, had Everson acted as an agent of the people to change the corporate tax structure within the scope of legislation, corporate entities could have challenged the constitutionality of his changes through judiciary proceedings. If Everson’s actions were deemed far too liberal for the Bush administration, he may have been removed from his appointment, supporting Weber’s view that political leaders should maintain supremacy over the bureaucracy (Fry, 1998). Everson’s removal, however, would be subject to public scrutiny and possible backlash.

American Forefathers’ realized that bureaucratic leaders could not be entirely disinterested (Richardson, 1997). Richardson recognized that private interests could conflict with virtuous agendas, preserving regime values, of bureaucratic leaders (1997). It is assumed that there is a higher degree of virtuousness in public servants. This is the underlying factor that
draws citizens from private to public service. The bureaucratic leaders that emerge must seek to reverse the trend of income inequality on several different fronts. Bureaucratic leaders, however, do not emerge to the apex of large and powerful organizations.

There is a fundamental shift in the American regime that must occur for Richardson’s views to fully reach fruition. A change from the political practices of selecting governors who are expected to be virtuous and simultaneously are concerned with their own and others wealth to selecting governors who emerge as leaders after a life of public service must occur. This is not to say that wealthy governors do not have that capacity to act virtuously. It’s a question of virtuousness on whose behalf? An individual who been rewarded by manipulation of competitive market structures has very different definition of virtuousness than an individual rewarded by a lifetime of self-sacrifice through public service.

Hart wrote, “The primary motivation for public service must be a profound commitment to the founding values of our inception, which includes an extensive and active love of others” (Richardson, 1997, p.113). Here too, the wealthy and the career public servant’s definition of “others” are skewed in opposite directions. A wealthy individual may have the capability to realize income equality exists. His/her disposition prevents him/her from truly embracing the consequences from the lens of the 99%. The career public servant most likely has a foundational viewpoint congruent with the 99%. Unlike the wealthy individual, the view of “others” is likely to have been molded from birth in an environment more in tune to public needs.

In addition to this critical change in the American regime, a plethora of additional changes must accompany political leadership’s willingness to submit to such changes. The primary concern in these changes is how to reverse evolving thought of how best to allocate resources.

Public Budgeting

The fundamental shift in organizational appointees by political leaders assumes that a reversal in income equality can be achieved by movement away from previously held capitalistic viewpoints toward a welfare state. The remainder of this paper will consider organizational and institutional shifts toward previous viewpoints in reference to Wildavsky’s The New Politics of the Budgetary Process (1988), inform why these viewpoints are no longer applicable, and then recommend an alternative approach in the form of “New Performance Budgeting” (Mikesell, 2007, p.214-232).

Wildavsky informed that the Keynesian economics applications of 1960s and 1970s required budgets to be balanced, unless during wartime or a depression (1988). Politicians reached consensus on annual budgets, and then they were adhered to throughout the year (Wildavsky, 1998). Welfare and Defense budgets were fairly fixed (Wildavsky, 1998).

This is not the case in the current economic and political climate. One needs only to recognize the growth in the national deficit to realize that budgets are no longer based on Keynesian theories. Powerful interest groups now cause budgets to result in “deadlock or delay” (Bartels, Heclo, Hero, and Jacobs, nd). This results in continuation of previous budgets and associated problems, serving to further inflate income inequality.

Also, wartime is no longer an exception to the rule; it is the rule. Since 2001, the U.S. has been engaged in conflict with Iraq and Afghanistan; only recently has the war in Iraq ended, decreasing projected government expenditure for war from $115.1 billion in FY 2012 to $88 billion in FY 2013 (Amadeo, 2012). These costs weigh heavily on American taxpayers and increase the National Deficit. These burdens represent pasted, present and future funds that could have otherwise been left in the pockets of Americans.

Wildavsky wrote, “there must be an agreement on the general direction of public policy, at least on most past policies, or Congress would be swamped with difficult choices” (1998). Republicans and Democrats are increasingly moving away from middle ground
since the 1980s (Krugman, 2007). This has led to clear delineated lines in which Republicans support conservative programs and Democrats support liberal programs (Krugman, 2007). Krugman claims that it is inequality that binds both parties (2007). This is logical, considering federal politicians are surrounded by wealthy groups, and themselves often wealthy. ABC News reported in 2011 that 47% of Congress members were millionaires, with a median net worth of $2.56 million (Shine, 2011). The resulting budgets tend to “encourage economic re-structuring through globalization, deindustrialization, and downsizing, with little attention on (policymakers) differential impact on incomes” (Hudson, 2010).

On the basis that government revenues should be equal to expenditures, Wildavsky viewed that incremental change was needed for budget changes (1998). In the 1960s and 1970s this was practical since competition for budget allocations was equivalent. Since this time, competition for resources has favored interests that secure political attention, whether from lobbying or public outcry. Mikesell wrote, “Democratic government will not treat everyone with equal deference in a world of imperfect knowledge” (2007, p.20). The result has been incremental adjustments that favor powerful interest groups. Hudson informs, “Social welfare programs ranging from food stamps to energy assistance have borne the brunt of cuts in discretionary federal spending since the 1980s” (2010). Perhaps a method to combat this issue is to separate private from public allocations. This would create greater transparency for all interested parties. This would allow for greater understanding of how and extent that incremental changes are altering income. Also, when public and private allocations are lumped together a political decision to increase the budget of one organization may directly result in an increased budget of a private organization. It can’t be assumed that the private organization will grow at the same rate as the public organization.

According to Wildavsky, governmental agencies receives a “fair share…. (that)…. reflects a convergence of expectation on roughly how much an agency receives in comparison to others” (1998, p.83). This application would serve to work against income transfer agencies. First, this assumes that all agencies are similar, and therefore should grow at the same rate. A decentralized agency, such as the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), would require additional funds at a similar rate that its population increased. A centralized agency, such as the Federal Reserve System, does not need to expand on the basis of increased revenue or population. Second, this assumed that citizens needs will remain stagnate. Naturally, the American culture changes, as should the policies and budget that they depend on. Finally, this assumes that the magnitude of agencies will remain stagnate and that additional private entities will not be added to the budget. As additional agencies and private entities are added to the budget, existing agencies must suffer the consequences of politicians who must redefine “fair share”.

This “fair share” concept combined with incremental adjustments has a direct negative impact on tax transfer organizations serving to combat income inequality. The 99% would be better off with the Gini Coefficient or income distribution measures as a metric to be used for funding for tax transfer than previous and equivalent allocations. Among other competing forces, incremental adjustment and “fair share” allocations are based on political climate, government accounting and financial reports, audits, and executive budget plans. Government reporting standards tend to create transparency of internal outcomes (Mikesell, 2007). Financial and performance audits that determine “illegality, inefficiency and, irregularity, and ineffectiveness” (Mikesell, 2007, p.54) are also focused primarily on internal measures. These measures do not represent the full scope of income inequality. For example, the SSA has increasingly been measured by internal measures of customer service goals (a measure that often resorts in reallocation of resources by the agency), such as customer wait time calls and in-office visits, application process time, and appeal decision wait time. When economic conditions are bad these times will naturally increase due to increased customer flow, indicating that the SSA programs are less effective. Both government reporting and audits are useful for the
purposes of preventing fraud, waste and abuse, and providing oversight for the Legislative and Executive bodies.

Executive budget plans are prepared for legislative consideration well over one year before the budget is executed (Mikesell, 2007). Recommended budgets of tax transfer organizations are based on information that organizational leaders had available from the previous fiscal year, representing a two year lag (Mikesell, 2007). This significantly delays the response to economic shifts reducing income equality. This can be a double-edged sword. When times are getting worse politicians may accept budget proposals on the basis of better economic conditions. When times are getting better politicians may reduce the budget requests on the basis of current economic conditions and political climate. Further, Wildavsky indicates that members of the House Appropriation Committee reach the point of resisting proposed budgets (1998) due to the bureaucratic tendency to “systematically….seek higher budgets each year” (Goodsell, 1994). This sword incrementally slices away at income equality.

Mikesell offers recommendations through “New Performance Budgeting” (2007, p.214-232) that are viable solutions to reduce income inequality. He redirects measures to recognize performance from archaic draconian outputs to societal outcomes (Mikesell, 2007). This shifts away from focus of bureaucratic decision making efforts that seek internal efficiency and effectiveness toward external intended outcomes. Seeking external performance measures does preclude bureaucratic accountability through reporting and audits, but refocuses bureaucratic efforts toward meeting legislative goals that directly benefit citizen majorities. Bureaucratic leaders and legislative decision makers are able to evaluate programs with timely data, using metrics of economic and social indicators.

Consider a legislative goal that seeks to reduce income inequality through welfare provided by DHHS in the prototype state of Michigan. Currently, emphasis is on program costs and mechanisms of implementation. A shift to new goals to reduce inequality may result in entirely new programs or reinforcement of previously existing programs. DHHS might find that diverting funds towards boosting high school achievement standards in low income areas, providing community college and trade school grants to applicant in low-income families, and linking welfare recipients with employers achieves this. Income inequality could be measured relative to surrounding states and those states’ rates of growth or decline (at the national level, the Gini coefficient). Mikesell notes that cost of implementation are less emphasized than the outcome it achieved (2007). Success in these applications may result in National application, reducing income inequality.

Wildavsky’s budget strategies, to varying degrees, shaped and are used in the process of fiscal administration. These strategies no longer address all wealth distribution stakeholders. Politicians are forced to make critical budget decisions with limited information in a rapidly changing competitive environment. These politicians would better serve their constituents by applying New Performance Budgeting. These new performance measures would assist politicians and bureaucratic leaders alike in making more informed decisions.

Conclusion

The dynamics of income inequality is a complex social problem involving many actors that play a role. A single solution to the problem does not exist. Bureaucratic leaders must be aware that every decision may alter the tide of inequality. They should examine decisions through the eyes of all stakeholders involved before taking action. They must be aware that fundamental shifts in political culture and the American regime must occur for the tide to be reversed. Finally, they must realize that they not only should have, but do have, a foundational obligation to take corrective action.
References


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Bureaucracy


“come hither”
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“under a bad moon i pass through gas fumes
past statues
attitudes mass produced like fast food
wack tunes and trash news
to incapacitate you and trap you in vacuums”
Flights in B.
By Tessa Erskine

I knock on the bathroom door in the basement of B. Tower on campus. A voice trembles, "Occupied," punctuated by a release of his undigested lunch. The elevator is at the tenth floor. Not wanting "Occupied" to discover who had interrupted his excretions, I open the door to the stairwell and slip inside.

I am enclosed in a concrete DNA spiral that snakes up the center of B. Tower, a building that once received awards for its architectural charm and functionality. Nowadays, those characteristics seem drab. The office spaces are cramped with little natural light and the rooms sit atop each other like the bricks that fashion the outside. Nonetheless, B. makes up for its inhibiting feel with a top floor view from a long spread of windows. The panorama offers a beautiful view of our city; it has an openness that clashes with the rest of the building.

I stare at the staircase and think about how babies learn to climb. First, they practice by crawling up one stair... then a few... from carpeted stairs to deck stairs and spiral staircases. As the toddler years stretch out, they erect themselves with the proper posterity: a perfect ninety-degree angle that defies the weight of gravity. Mastering the movement requires practice and determination.

Here I am as an adult, ascending for lack of a better place to go. My labored breathing reminds me that I am a smoker, but a short rest will invigorate me. (Fifth floor). I pause and look up, then down. The thrum of the furnace breathes into the rooms where professors encourage students to enrich society with their publications. The chambers are adorned with books, flyers, paintings, souvenirs and photos. These are rooms whose walls drip with knowledge. (Sixth floor). I listen to a toilet flush swirl down and a tunnel of wind whistle back up. I continue striding against the force of gravity. (Seventh floor) The stairs are less worn than they were on the first few levels. I haven't seen anyone yet, but I hear activity. (Eighth floor). B. Tower offers space for intellectual nourishment. Each day, students enter the front door and command the elevator. It guides them to a floor where their professors wait. The protégés are enlightened throughout the process of intellectual decomposition and reconstruction. It is during office hours that conversations swing to quotidian topics and where a class' thematic nuclei are digested. In turn, the monotones of academia are roiled into meaningful connections.
(Ninth floor). I imagine that I am navigating the viscera where institutional anthropophagy takes place. Professors are actors in the digestive process, like swirls of bacteria that churn the bolus and produce nutritious fodder for coprophagous species. After my doctorate degree, I will become the fertilizer that sustains the cycle; it's a liberating thought.

(Tenth floor). I grasp the handle, eager to take in the panorama, but the door is locked.

I feel defeated, as if my ascent were for nothing. The elevator is inside the door and my lungs continue to stifle me. I have no choice but to start descending on my shaky legs. After a few flights, I find that sprinting helps the pain.

I glide down the staircase as the numbered doors blur by. This is a descent into a pool of juxtaposition, like Don Draper in the opening credits to Mad-Men. I pass one story... another...

Students are littered on the knoll outside of the tower. I lay on a bed of grass and feel my muscles contract and expand, almost dissolve. B. peers over me and I smile back: I'm ready to enrich.

Works Cited


The Invisible Knife
Ellen Archey
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You don’t see it,
But it still cuts like a knife.
It chokes your thoughts from forming words,
And takes over your life.
It controls you, yet you don’t even see the chains.
Makes you want a man as your savior,
Makes you see yourself as nothing more than his wife
And makes you referred to as nothing more than his.
God becomes all male and the people “made in His image”
Are men because of only men count as people.
You’re made to feel guilty, trapped inside your own mind
And words you want to say, until silence becomes screams
And you are told to SHUT UP because you don’t matter.
But, you don’t even have to be told to shut up
To be symbolically put in “your place.”
You aren’t blind to it, you close your own eyes,
Cloak your face, your beauty, your potential,
And everything you deserve to acknowledge within yourself,
Because being a woman is enough to make you feel unworthy.
But, within this paradigm lies the true paradox:
Because your oppression is invisible you never see.
When there is nothing to smash, nothing to bend, and nothing to break,
How can you ever escape?
You can’t… until you realize you cannot feel guilty,
Guilty for speaking when you were taught to be silent,
And guilty for realizing you are more,
And that everything about you contains beauty.
Skype: An Appropriate Method of Data Collection for Qualitative Interviews?

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Qualitative research, according to Creswell, has an ever-changing definition, which is not always made clear in introductory books. He suggests that “qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006, p. 49) suggest that qualitative research seeks “to discover, explain, and generate ideas/theories about the phenomenon under investigation; [and] to understand and explain social patterns (the ‘How’ questions).” According to Berg (2007, p. 8), qualitative researchers are “most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth.” Through qualitative techniques, Berg (2007, pp. 8-9) suggests, researchers are allowed to “share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives.” What all of these have in common, according to Creswell (2007, pp. 37-39), are some common characteristics including: natural setting, researcher as key instrument, multiple sources of data, inductive data analysis, participants’ meanings, emergent design, theoretical lens, interpretive inquiry, and a holistic account. There are many ways to collect data, whether it is interviewing individuals, holding a focus group, observing as a participant or non-participant for observations, content analysis, or a combination of various methods. There are also different theoretical lens to begin with and various ways of analyzing the data once you have it.

With the vast options of research methods and the rise of technology over the last 50 years, there are more possibilities than ever to gather data in social research. With new technology and new approaches to data collection, there is the need to establish and validate such methods. One example of this is using communication programs, such as Skype, to conduct research in place of face-to-face interactions. These programs could be used for qualitative research to conduct interviews with individuals as well as groups, to hold small focus groups, and much more. With the rise of technology over the last few decades, communication over distance has become much easier and convenient with almost no end in sight. People can now communicate in real-time with others pretty much anywhere on the planet not only hearing each other but also seeing one another through the use of computers and smart phones. Videoconferencing is just one way to take advantage of this. Although videoconferencing in its early years left a lot to be desired, these programs have improved immensely and will only continue to do so.

Below is a review of literature relevant to the use of videoconferencing as a method of data collection where face-to-face interviews might have been previously used. I suggest that these interactions have the potential to mirror face-to-face interactions for those that are geographically dispersed. With virtually no research done on the use of communication programs as a method of data collection in qualitative research and very little discussion on the topic, to establish the validity of this method, there is a blending of research on virtual
communities, video recording, telephone verse face-to-face interviews, and the presentation of an authentic self. Placed in contrast to traditional face-to-face interviews, what follows is a comparison and contradiction of communication program interviews with a mode of data collection that is widely used in qualitative research in hopes of showing that this up-and-coming technology might be a viable option for interviewing.

In the only mention found on Internet interviewing, Berg (2007, pp. 112-113) discusses what he calls web-based in-depth interviews as taking place in two arenas: 

**Synchronous environments** which include real-time chat rooms, instant messenger protocols, and real-time threaded communications, [where] such environments provide the researcher and respondent an experience similar to face-to-face interaction insofar as they provide a mechanism for a back-and-forth exchange of questions and answers in what is almost real time, [and]

**Asynchronous environments** [which] include the use of e-mail, message boards, and privately hosted bulletin posting areas, [which]… are commonly used by investigators undertaking survey-based research.

Here the first environment is of concern to this paper. Berg further suggests that synchronous environments (or videoconferencing in this case), although not identical to face-to-face interviews, are definitely similar to it, especially in regards to unstructured or semi-structured interviews. Fontana and Frey (2008, p. 151) warn that with virtual interviewing (or in Berg’s terms interviewing in asynchronous environments) “establishing an interviewer-interviewee ‘relationship’ and ‘living the moment’ while gathering information (Hertz, 1997) is difficult if not impossible,” although they contend that this could possibly change in the future with technological advances. For quantitative research, some researchers have found that conducting surveys online have actually yielded similar response rates to paper surveys and have achieved better quality data in the process (Schaefer and Dillman, 1998).

Below is a discussion of issues in social research particularly pertaining to qualitative interviews, and by extension, videoconferencing interviews. These are not only issues for communication program interviews but also for face-to-face interviews, including authenticity, sampling, ethical concerns, validity, and reliability. This is followed by a discussion of the overall benefits and drawbacks of using this type of technology in place of face-to-face interactions for certain research projects.

**Authenticity**

Presentation of self and authenticity are discussed frequently in the literature on video recording and virtual communities. For Goffman, the presentation of self is the way that a person strategically conveys an impression of his or her self that is beneficial for that person. This involves impression-management of behaviors which regulates the expressions both given and given off. With face-to-face interactions, researchers are constantly participating in impression-management, showing various impressions to various individuals. In qualitative research, researchers are sometimes confronted with the question of whether or not an individual is presenting an authentic self, similarly with videoconferencing. Goffman (1959, p. 70) discusses this dichotomous relationship between a real and contrived performance:

We tend to see real performances as something not purposely put together at all, being an unintentional product of the individual’s unselfconscious response to the facts in his situation. And contrived performances we tend to see as something painstakingly pasted together, one false item on another, since there is no reality to which the items of behavior could be a direct response.

Goffman (1959, pp. 71-73) further proposes that: “While persons usually are what they appear to be, such appearances could still have been managed… The legitimate performances of everyday life are not ‘acted’ or ‘put on’ in the sense that the performer knows in advance just what he is going to do, and does this solely because of the effect it is likely to have.” It is
out of instinct that we perform and manage our impressions in everyday interactions, rather than spending our days trying to deceive others, although that does happen.

As Peterson (2005) points out, authenticity is socially constructed and therefore changing all of the time. He continues: “Issues of authenticity most often come into play when authenticity has been put in doubt” (2005, p. 1083). ‘Authenticity work,’ according to Peterson (2005, pp. 1086-1089), has various forms including: (1) “Authenticity through Ethnic/Cultural Identity,” (2) “The Elasticity of Group Membership,” (3) “Authenticity through Status Identity,” (4) “Seeking Authentic Experience,” (5) “Technologically Mediated Authenticity,” and (6) “Authenticity to Constructed Self.” Important here are technologically mediated authenticity, where individuals spend a good bit of time ‘weeding out inauthentic participants’ on the Internet versus face-to-face interactions where authenticity is maintained through a sense of cohesion and identity, and authenticity to constructed self which involves Goffman’s presentation of self and Taylor’s idea of self-reflexivity. This ‘weeding out’ process in authenticity is repeated in the research on virtual communities where presenting an unauthentic self is quite possible, but as Bargh, et al. (2002; Ellison, et al., 2006, p. 418) suggest:

In comparison to face-to-face interactions, Internet interactions allow individuals to better express aspects of their true selves—aspects of themselves that they wanted to express but felt unable to. The relative anonymity of online interactions and the lack of a shared social network online may allow for individuals to reveal potentially negative aspects of the self online.

Hamman (2004) echoes this idea when discussing virtual text-based environments. These are places where individuals can present various identities, some that are misconceptions. Some authors suggest that Internet interactions can in fact be accurate portrayals of the self, while others suggest that it is a place for a fabricated self.

The presentation of an authentic self or an accurate presentation of self are both difficult to gauge in both face-to-face and online interactions. Although the above is in relation to face-to-face interactions and those in virtual communities, it is argued that using a communication program like Skype mimics face-to-face interactions, including the presentation of self in an authentic way, almost as well as those face-to-face exchanges. There is no sure way to judge (which we really shouldn’t be doing anyways in the author’s opinion) whether or not a person is being truthful about the information they are sharing regardless of the method of data collection.

With videoconferencing and face-to-face interviews and because the researcher and interviewee are participating in an exchange relationship that is visible either through the use of video recording or one’s own eyes, gestures, shrugs, winks, smiles, frowns, and verbal cues are all a visible part of the process allowing for impression-management and, in Goffman’s eyes, a successful interaction to take place. In addition, with modern society’s dependence on technology today, especially with the younger generations, so much of our time is spent on the web that presentations of self online are potentially more accurate than they were 20 years ago. Much of society has access to recorders, computers, webcams, cellphones, and Facebook accounts. With social life being so viral, the need to fabricate an online self any more than one would fabricate an in-person self is debatable. Regardless of the environment, online or in-person, there will always be ‘posers.’

Sample

The sample in qualitative research is generally a chief concern when beginning a research project. What type of sampling frame to use, how many participants are appropriate, how will access be gained, and from which theoretical background the research will be coming from are all important questions when making sampling decisions. Lofland, et al. (2006, p. 18) suggest when gathering data from intensive interviewing, participant observation, or
priateness, access, physical and emotional risks, ethics, and personal consequences.” Barriers, like gatekeepers and those who shield protected populations (often for very good reasons), are often issues when choosing not only site locations but also those participants that you would like to interview. Distance is also an issue that can arise for economic and other reasons.

What type of sample and at what point has the researcher reached saturation depend not only on personal choice but also theory. For example, Grounded theory suggests that the point of saturation, or theoretical sampling, is reached when no new themes are emerging from the data. This tends to happen more rapidly than with other theoretical perspectives. Morse (1995, pp. 147-149; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006, p. 73) offers several principles to follow when thinking about sample size:

1. Select a cohesive sample,
2. Saturation will be achieved most quickly if theoretical sampling is used,
3. Sample all variations appearing within the data until each ‘negative case’ perspective is saturated,
4. Saturated data are rich, full, and complete, [and]
5. The more complete the saturation, the easier it is to develop a comprehensive theoretical model.

In general, most qualitative research projects involve a small and purposive sample. As Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006, p.70) propose, “the goal is to look at a ‘process’ or the ‘meanings’ individuals attribute to their given social situation, not necessarily to make generalizations.” Researchers are often left with an opportunistic sample or a convenience sample because access and availability are generally a concern. By using videoconferencing with certain populations, access and availability could greatly improve. With technological advances, some individuals in the US are connected not only through their home computers but also on their phones, iPods, laptops, reading devices, Internet cafes, and the list goes on and on.

Because videoconferencing is available almost all over the world, the sampling pool greatly increases with the use of the communication technology. We are able to communicate with geographically dispersed individuals in California, New York, and even Germany, if we would like, not only with real-time conversation but also with the ability to actually see the person on the other end of the technological device, as long as the individual has access to a program such as Skype. For most younger people, this is not a problem, but if you were interested in the elderly, for example, many might not have or want access to such a thing. That is why this method of data collection would only be useful for certain topics and certain populations. Another issue related to sampling that is present for both face-to-face and videoconferencing interviews is how to choose the sample. Will the researcher use purposeful sampling, snowball sampling, or quota sampling? This depends on the research interests and what is available. Convenience is something that is often taken into account, as discussed early. For videoconferencing interviews, the pool of possible participants could increase if, for example, the researcher found individuals who liked a page on Facebook or who belonged to a certain website, in addition to the normal modes of sampling. This, however, could raise ethical issues, depending on the topic, which is discussed next with ethical concerns.

Ethical concerns

In any type of research, there are ethical concerns that need to be faced. Despite what Babbie (1983; Berg, 2007, p. 53) states, “all of us consider ourselves ethical; not perfect perhaps, but more ethical than most of humanity,” ethics are subjective. What is an issue for one researcher might not be an issue for others, for example, Roth’s (2004) discussion of hired hand research where those who didn’t have a stake in the research found it ok over time to ‘fudge’ the data, regardless of the ethical issues it raised. Ultimately it is up to the researcher and the Institutional Review Board, if one exists at the institution where the research is being
done, to decide if the proposed research is ethical and if the potential benefits outweigh the potential risk and/or harm.

Conducting research over the Internet opens many doors for research possibilities, but with this comes questions of consent. How does a participant give consent online? It might be next to impossible to have someone physically sign a form, and if consent is given via email, it might then be possible to identify the participant in the future. Is verbal consent appropriate? In relation to videoconferencing interviews, the answer is probably yes, but that all depends on the subject matter and what IRB has to say. As Berg (2007, p. 73) states: “Although problems have been identified and various solutions have been offered, concerns about the potential use and misuse of the Internet continue to move scholars toward finding ways to maintain ethical integrity in research when using the Internet as a research tool.” As with research on communication program interviewing, there is fairly little information on ethical issues relating to the same idea. Much more has been published on whether or not content on the Internet is fair game, but even that, in the author’s opinion, is still ethically up in the air, especially if one is participating in covert research.

While the Internet does offer a sense of freedom and anonymity to the participant and the researcher, this might not actually be the case. Because qualitative researchers generally know who the participants are, anonymity in real-life settings is almost impossible. They are however quite concerned with keeping individual’s information confidential including the data. It is important to change names and locations, if necessary, to allow for privacy. As Berg (2007, p. 79) suggests: “Researchers commonly assure subjects that anything discussed between them will be kept in strict confidence, but what exactly does this mean?” Conducting research in general and during interviews on the Internet poses another problem. It is very possible to track conversations, locations, and identities on the Internet. Skype even has the right to record your conversations although they don’t make that clear when you sign up. Again, using videoconferencing would only be appropriate for certain topics. It would not be advisable to discuss someone’s illegal behavior with the slight chance that someone else is paying attention. To address these types of issues, a researcher could clearly state the possibility of this occurring, and you could also create dummy Skype accounts with dummy email addresses for the participants to use which would make it much more time consuming and difficult for others to track.

1. According to Markham (2008, p. 274), controversies and ethical issues often arise as a result of the following circumstances for Internet research:
   2. Some users perceive publically accessible discourse sites as private,
   3. Some users have a writing style that is readily identifiable in their online community, so that the researcher’s use of a pseudonym does not guarantee anonymity,
   4. Online discussion sites can be highly transient. Researchers gaining access permission in June may not be studying the same population in July,
   5. Search engines are often capable of finding statements used in research reports, making anonymity in certain venues almost impossible to guarantee,
   6. Age is difficult if not impossible to verify in certain online environments,
   7. Vulnerable persons are difficult to identify in certain online environments, [and]
   8. Informed consent of the actual participant (the person corresponding to the driver’s license) is difficult to attain in writing if the participant desires anonymity from the researcher.

Although many of these problems still pertain to communication program interviews, some are also addressed with the use of video recording. For example, the researcher would be using a space or place that is presumed private, unless Skype officials want to get involved, allowing the participants a sense of security. A researcher is also able to not only verify the individual by sight, but if conducting multiple interviews, they can be sure that they are
talking to the same person. In general, little research has been done on ethics and the Internet as it is still considered a new method of data collection. Even less research has been done on ‘face-to-face’ through a computer screen interviewing, although more research will show that this is a viable method of data collection that addresses many of the issues raised in Internet research in general thus far.

Technical problems

As mentioned previously, videoconferencing has greatly improved over the last several years. That however does not mean that it is without flaws. There are technical issues associated with using any type of technology, but it is important to take into account when planning and conduct research of any kind. Anyone who has used videoconferencing knows that there can be issues with sound quality, microphones, webcam malfunctions, and probably most common, a lag in the live feed. Things like Internet connection speeds and the quality of the computer also come into play. To conduct this type of research, a person needs to be aware of this and have backup plans prepared in advance. Technical issues, however, are not only an issue for this type of research. Recorders malfunction, batteries run out, researchers forget to hit record, computers won’t start, and the list goes on and on. With technology so far, it will only get better and better, creating a space where researchers have greater access to individuals and almost unlimited potential for further research.

Conclusion

As discussed above, our potential for data collection in social research has multiple possibilities with the use of up-and-coming technology, like Skype. As Markham (2008, p. 255) suggests with the use of the Internet for research, “a researcher’s reach is potentially global, data collection is economical, and transcribing is no more difficult than cutting and pasting.” Although the research for up-and-coming technology is a little slow to the game, this author suggests that the benefits of using Skype and other communication programs as a method of data collection, especially in place of face-to-face interviews, definitely outweigh the drawbacks.

To recap, there will always be concerns of authenticity in interactions. We can never be sure if the self being presented is the genuine thing whether it is face-to-face, over the telephone, in writing, or on the computer. Regardless, I don’t believe that we as researchers can or should question the truth in these interactions as we are in search of the meanings that the participants find and assign, aren’t we? Just as an interviewee in-person can portray a rosier picture of their life, an Internet interviewee can do the same on the Internet. Again, with our reliance on technology today, Internet interactions are more closely aligned with our in-person interactions than some might believe. The sample used in qualitative research is generally one of purpose and convenience. Through the use of communication programs, our reach is potentially limitless, at least geographically, for interviewing depending on the topic of interest. We are not only able to communicate verbally with those all around the world, but we can actually interact visually using videorecording devices in real-time, allowing for at least a mimicked face-to-face interaction.

Ethical concerns when using something like videoconferencing for interviewing, although increased on some levels, are not too far exceeding that of traditional face-to-face qualitative interviews. With programs like Skype and actually anything a person does on the Internet, people and companies can track where we go, what we say, and much more. This is something that most of us probably don’t like to think about but that doesn’t make it any less real. Companies like Skype even have the right, according to their user agreements, to record and share what you type, speak, or act while using their programs. Depending on the research topic, this can be a huge issue. For less sensitive types of projects, though, this might not be so important. As suggested previously, there are ways to at least address these types of securi-
rity risks so no one is surprised. There are also ways to make those who track us jobs a little more difficult, although if someone wants to find something bad enough there is probably a way. For the younger generations, whose privacy sometimes doesn’t appear to be as important, this might not even be a concern. Essentially, full disclosure on the possibilities of security issues with the little likelihood of it happening is important to clarify and keep in mind.

The potential for videoconferencing as a research tool is almost unlimited. We would be able to interview geographically dispersed populations with a recorded interaction that at least mimics face-to-face interactions. Although there are some drawbacks, the benefits strongly outweigh them. With all of this in mind, further research on the use of videoconferencing as a method of data collection and interviewing in particular is needed. And we should all remember that technology is our friend, most of the time.

References:
Language, desire and identity in *Shipwrecked Body*

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*Cuerpo náufrago* (*Shipwrecked Body*, 2005) is a novel by Ana Clavel, a Mexican female writer. In this work many questions about identity are explored, but gender identity is central. Questions like “¿somos lo que parecemos? ¿La identidad empieza por lo que vemos?” (Are we what we look like? Does identity start with what we look at?) permeate the narrative (*Shipwrecked* 12, translations are all mine). These questions are part of an identity discourse that is nowhere near a consensus amongst disciplines and/or academics. For generations gender identity has been thought of and studied within male parameters. The various intellectual and ideological movements of the 60’s and 70’s beget the central distinction of feminist gender theory: there is a difference between sex and gender (Alsop, Fitzsimons, and Lennon 26). Yet, even this distinction can be contested. Judith Butler argues that both sex and gender are culturally constructed according to set categories (*Gender Trouble*). One thing is for certain—language has been the medium through which we create and perform our identity, whatever *that* is. In his essay “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense” Friedrich Nietzsche discusses how the language with which we construct truth comes out of us, but also forms us. Moreover, Deborah Cameron’s book *Feminism and Linguistic Theory* explains that language is a “medium of representation” that has been used by the ones in power. In spite of language, women felt unable to communicate because of alienation from it. Patriarchal society dominates just about every sphere, creating language to describe and control each one. Women, then, need to learn such languages in order to not be left out of conversations in fields in which they find themselves. Since language, like sexuality, “is a powerful resource that the oppressor has appropriated, giving back only the shadow which women need to function in a patriarchal society” (8). Yet, in this postmodern world where “truth” and “subject” are constantly questioned, it seems that we define ourselves, and others, more by *who* we desire than anything else, including socio-economic level, race or even gender (Bennett & Royle, “Queer” 220). Even more, the narrator of this novel notes: “La identidad empieza por lo que deseamos. Secreto, persistentemente, irrevocablemente. Lo que en realidad nos desea a nosotros” (Identity starts with what we desire. Secretly, persistently, irrevocably. What in reality desires us) (13). Therefore, this essay will focus on the parallel forces that can shape identity: language and desire. *Shipwrecked Body* is a search for identity, but the protagonist giving in to desire is what shapes a sense of identity; the narrator through language and culture provides the rest. The power of language over gender identity is counterbalanced by the weight of desire.

*Shipwrecked Body* is set in contemporary Mexico City. An omniscient narrator tells the story of Antonia, a 27-year-old woman who is dreaming about being one of the three little boys she sees, the other two being her brothers. A moment later she wakes up and realizes that she now has men’s genitalia. Antonia believes that her desire to be a man transformed her into exactly that, “¿acaso explicarles lo único que se le ocurria, que alguna vez habia deseado convertirse en un hombre . . . y que de una manera insólita ese deseo habia resultado tan poderoso para realizarse y a la vez tan secreto para que no se diera cuenta que crecìa con ella?” (Perhaps
explain to all, the only thing that came to her mind, that she wanted to be a man once . . . and that somehow this desire grew to become real, and was it so secret that she did not realize that it grew within her?) (14). The reason she wanted to be male is due to a perception of completeness in males and freedom: “cierto que desde pequeña había deseado ser hombre. No porque se creyera un varón atrapado en el cuerpo de una mujer, sino porque la intrigaba la naturaleza de esos seres que, suponía, eran más completos y más libres que ella” (it is true that since she was a little girl she wished to be a man. Not because she believed herself to be a man trapped in a woman’s body, but because she was intrigued about the nature of those beings she supposed to be more complete and free than her) (13). Antonia desired to be a man because, to her, this gender identity seems “complete and free,” just like in the Bildungsroman genre where the focus is always on the intellectual, emotional and physical growth of a young man who, at the end of his acquisition of values and beliefs, productively participates in the middleclass society to which he belongs (Buckley 18). Antonia’s desire influences her outwardly; however, she needs to behave like a man now: “¿cómo se aprendía cuando una no había nacido así?” (how do you learn [to be a man] when you were not born like that?) (16). Through her new body Antón/ia frequents specifically male dominated areas in search of her male identity since the everyday activities are what construct gender (Butler, Gender Troubles 2552). Ultimately, what s/he is left with is a synthesizing of female and male cultural identities, which are created discursively, but truly formed through the exploration of desire.

At first reading, the novel could be interpreted as a way to give voice to women, gays, lesbians, and transsexuals, using the language of the people in power: heterosexual men. This is possible, according to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, because “minor literature does not come from minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language” (Kafka 1451). However, this view enacts the very thing the book is trying to get away from: inflexible restrictions and binaries. Although voicing women and sexual minorities is part of the book’s structure, the text does more than just that. It transcends gender by questioning the prescriptive social rules that define and constrict gender identity; it presents a mirror into which we look at our own identities, prejudices, fears, stereotypes, etc.

The novel first provides a mirror for the reader through the author/narrator who is fictionalized in the footnotes. In Spanish many nouns and plurals are male by default. When the reader thinks of a narrator he or she sees a male one: el narrador. It is not usually said la narradora (which specifies a female narrator) when presented with a third person narrator in a novel. The fact that the omniscient narrator is a woman in this novel confronts the readers with the possibility that we have been reading literature through a male’s perspective most of the time. Furthermore, the narrator in a novel is usually identified so the reader can question his motives, and/or the positions of authority from which he is speaking. An omniscient narrator is always ambiguous in nature, whereas in a first person narrative the audience can be certain of the gender. The third person narrative usually presents its narrative as trustworthy and contains an objective perspective. In Shipwrecked Body, the writer fictionalizes herself in order to show us that this story is being told through feminine eyes. The way this is done in the book is subtle; we are shown a picture of a urinal in the form of open red lips, a picture that Antonia supposed got from a friend. The author then states that the characters, author, and editors of the story would appreciate any information about the photograph so they can give proper credit: “los personajes, autor y editores de esta historia agradeceremos cualquier información que nos permita dar el crédito correspondiente” (the characters, author and editors of this story will be thankful for any and all information that would allow us to give proper credit). Our narrator/author finishes by adding that Antonia called her before the novel was published with the pertinent information about said picture, which was taken of a real urinal designed by Meike van Schijndel (136). This revelation comes out in the middle of the novel to a reader who perhaps has been assuming a male narrator, if so s/he is confronted with his/her own assumptions about language and social norms it constructs.
Having a female narrator in this novel is particularly important because now the reader knows this is a woman speaking and perhaps manipulating language in a different way than a male would. Male scientists have reported their findings on an array of topics in which verbiage used was never really questioned by the scientific community; however, when female scientists started to report their results in the same topics, differences in language and focus were certainly found. Basically, what is observed in science varies “according to the agendas of the investigators” (Alsop et al. 28). This is quite relevant since we are guided in texts through the narrator—we see as much, or as little—as the narrator allows, and always from a unilateral perspective. It is almost like reading the findings of a scientist (after all, literature and science have a common foundation: critical observation). Although the relationship between narrator and reader has been set, it also has been questioned because now we are aware that this narrator is not without a bias, making us think of all conventions in society through this unconventionality in literature.

Also, a female narrator changes our perspective of the story because she is not writing to promote the interests of the hegemony. This is not to say she does not have an agenda, though certainly it is not to expand patriarchy (Between Men 2468). The reader is faced with language that reflects the protagonist’s internal feelings by using male and female signifiers, thus expropriating the language, making it less alienating because of its inclusiveness. Also, this narrator is describing taboo places of male society that the protagonist visits, so they are not just being exposed, they are being subverted because a woman is describing them. Even more so since she is making us “into a kind of sex public” of Antón/ia’s quests and explorations of his/her desires, asserting the fact that identity, like sex, is public (Berlant & Wagner, Sex in Public 2614). Due to capitalism’s privatization of wealth, society sees sex as private, but in reality it is very public, “sex is everywhere present” in our lives, whether we recognize it or not, shaping us (Sex in Public 2605; 2613). The fact that our narrator frequently takes us to private men-dominated areas is an example. Especially when Antón/ia is invited to a Turkish bath, an area that men perceive as completely private and in which they can joke about taboo issues, such as incest. In this scene Carlos, Antón/ia’s male identity mentor, invites her/him to take a relaxing steam bath. In the room they hear the joke of a man who is asked by his daughter for permission to attend a party and by his son for the family’s car, the father requests sexual gratification from both in order to grant their petitions. Antonia is rather flabbergasted about the fact that everyone in the steam room celebrates the joke, she then confirms the rumor: “el mundo soez de los hombres podia ser tan ilimitado . . . entre ellos solos” (the vulgar world of man could be limitless . . . amongst themselves) (63-65). This is a clever way of showing precisely how sex is public; a taboo, private in nature, is made public through literature.

Furthermore, this scene is of particular interest due to the sensuality it exudes amongst men, reinforcing the fact that people have “nonstandard intimacies” which in this case seem to emphasize their homosocial bond (Berlant & Wagner Sex in Public 2610; Between Men 2468). It is within this erotic homosocial environment that the supremacy of the heterosexual male is reasserted through the joke, where the father, the patriarchal figure, is sexually satisfied at the expense of those in his care. Then it is delicately subverted by the presence of Antón/ia. She still feels attracted to men, and she will be naked amongst them, which makes her afraid that a look, a gesture, could render her suspicious (62). Nakedness is often linked to vulnerability, a way to remove masks. Antón/ia feels exposed since s/he was Antonia, naturally and culturally, and now is Antón, trying to learn what that means, feeling attracted to Carlos in an all-male environment. It is under this pressure that the narrator shows Antón/ia as a male/female consciousness, uses male/female pronouns and verb endings to describe what s/he desires: a man. This is shown when Ana, our narrator tells us: “estuvo a punto de acercarse pero entonces lo asaltó el miedo . . . ¿eran correctos sus deseos? . . . estaba desnudo pero el peso de la armadura que más que protegerlo aprisionaba” (just when he was
was about to get near [Carlos] he was jolted by fear . . . were these feelings correct? . . . he was naked but the weight of the [imaginary] armor did more than protect him, it imprisoned her‖ (66). It is clear that language is needed to describe what is happening, it is also trying to describe what Antón/ia is feeling, placing him/her as perceived, from the outside, as a part of the continuum of the homosocial-homosexual.

In addition, the synthesis of male and female vocabulary demonstrates that an identity is being molded through language. This, however, is also being challenged by desire. The narrator tells us while describing Antón/ia’s feelings that “somos cuerpos encarcelados por nuestras mentes. Sólo cuando el deseo se abre paso—Antonia miró con deleite la espalda y las nalgas de Carlos cubiertas por una capa de espuma—florecemos”(we are bodies trapped in our minds. Only when desire opens up a way (Antonia delightfully watched Carlos’ back and buttocks covered with foam) do we flourish) (66). Desire is represented as an indefinable characteristic that does not fit into the discourse of identity. Eva Sedgwick uses desire as analogous to libido (Between Men 2467). In this context desire can mean the force that is intrinsic and untamed in us, which can resist definition and repression. This is important because language has been a way to control sexuality since the age of Enlightenment, where the issue of sex became difficult and the way to control it was through language (Foucault 1502). So, our protagonist’s position clearly breaks with the Enlightenment ideal of reaching truth through reason; this is a postmodern position, where the “status of language” can be openly questioned, in this case through Antón/ia’s own desire (Cameron 12).

It should be noted that even though a binary has been set (external narrator/internal feelings), it is not constrictive. On the contrary, it shows precisely the fact that “gender is also a norm that can never be fully internalized . . . [since it is] impossible to embody” (Butler, Gender Trouble, 2552). This internal/external binary also questions the ways Anton/ia can be perceived by the outside world and his/her internal self, because each perception is followed by a set of expectations. For instance, according to culture and Carlos, Antón is expected to ‘hunt’ women like the male he seems to be. As Carlos points out, “va siendo hora de emprender la cacería” (it’s about time to start the hunt) which refers to the conquest of women (55).

In contrast, the narrator describes how Antonia recalls having sex with a man as a heterosexual woman, and to possess a penis now is different because she recognizes the will of it; she wonders, we are told, about the possibility of fusing her (Antonia), and it (her phal- lus) in the thunder of pleasure (53). Antón/ia is now considered the “núcleo dominante de la oración amorosa” (the dominant nucleus of the romantic sentence), this is the first difference s/he realizes after her change: “Reconoció que, aunque ella misma gozaba de cierta au- tonomía . . . siempre había esperado ser salvada, elegida, rescatada, vista, apreciada, descubierta, en un uso irracional y desmesurado de la voz pasiva” (she recognized that although she had some autonomy . . . she always expected to be saved, chosen, rescued, seen, appreciated, discovered, in an irrational and excessive use of the passive voice) (17). Language again determined where she stood and what her role was. Now that she has a penis, culture wants to tell her again, using hunting metaphors of predator and prey, where s/he should be. Once more what the outside prescribes through language goes against what Antón/ia desires. As a woman, Antonia internalized her pleasure and had always been one with her body, but as man she saw her penis as an independent entity showing a very different perspective of what society expects of a heterosexual male (Shipwrecked 54). Later on, Ana, our narrator, tells us that Antón/ia sees the sexual tensions between males and females not as a hunt, but as opponents in a jousting tournament, another departure from what societal norms stipulate (66). The narrator makes us note that when the world sees Antón/ia what they perceive is just one side: Antón. S/he is shown as Antonia in the intimacy of her thoughts, but when Antón/ia is exploring her/his desire, the language becomes a fusion to show both qualities: female and male.

1 Since our narrator happens to be the fictionalized author, we will call her Ana.
Another interesting shift is when Antón/ía examines his/her desire for Carlos and questions if it is acceptable, since s/he now has a male body and is trying to analyze what being a man is. However, when s/he is with Malva, this questioning does not happen. Moreso, the narrator shows us Antón/ía thinking about having sex with a woman as a heterosexual man and getting aroused: “Por fin sentiría lo que sienten los hombres cuando hacen el amor... Un deleitable vertigo se apoderó de ella... mientras imaginaba que metía a una mujer en el baño de hombres y que allí, después de sentarla en uno de los mingitorios, le abría las piernas para hacerla suya” (At last she will feel what men feel when making love...A delectable vertigo took over her... as she imagined sneaking a woman into the men’s room, and after sitting her in a urinal, would open the girl’s legs to make her hers) (52). As Sedgwick analyzes, many try to align the biological sex with sexual preference. As mentioned before, men do not have flexibility for how they experience gender, which has “to do with the patient labour that forms the impatience for freedom”, and, in a sense, shows what Butler means by “gender performativity” since Antón/ía is actively seeking “new possibilities of experiencing gender” (Butler “Interview” 3).

Another example of this internal/external struggle is Paula, who has biologically female sex organs, but in her mind’s eye she has a penis. Antón/ía meets Paula after two failed relationships, one with Malva and one with Raimundo (another of her/his mentors), and she immediately differentiates herself not just by her looks and the immediate attraction between them but by also saying “me llamo Paula y vengo a concederte tres deseos...” (my name is Paula and I come to grant you three wishes...) (128). They perceived each other and sent and received inarticulate messages, Antón/ía discovers that “el deseo nunca es inocente: tan pronto despierta, trama, urde, acecha” (desire is never pure: as soon as it wakes up it warps, plots, and stalks) (127). Paula soon confesses to Antón/ía, through a short story of her own: “Historia sin lobo” (Story without a Wolf), that “este hombre despierta mi hombre” (this man wakes up the man inside me) (132). Paula shortly, but concisely, conveys a sexual exchange where gender is interchangeable because she uses language that classically describes male-female normative intercourse and subverts it, making the male passive and the female active, changing the norm of power. Up until now, the narrator has been guiding us, but this is Paula’s short story; therefore, we see Paula’s ownership of language and self-perception. What the narrator does tell us from her outside perspective is that Paula “era mujer pero sabía ser hombre” (was a woman but knew how to be a man), another clear demonstration that gender is unfeasible to personify (Shipwrecked 134; Gender Trouble, 2552).

Paula is particularly important to Antón/ía because she is a clear example of a well-rounded being. At the beginning, Antonia desired to be a man; this desire defined her, poured out of her externally and she recognized that her desire derived from a perception of completeness in males. Paula is a synthesis of male and female consciousness with her own possibility of gender since she experiences it freely, proving that you do not have to be a man to be complete like Antonia thought. When Antón/ía first saw Paula, s/he had no doubt of her sex: “ella—porque no cabía duda sobre su sexo...” (her—because there was no doubt about

2 It is worth mentioning that puns are not common in Spanish. Yet, in this text the narrator/author, Ana, is using deseo as wish, but also as desire, which are the two meanings of the word. Therefore, Paula’s statement can be interpreted as “my name is Paula and I come to grant you three desires.”

3 Gender neutral possessive pronoun that reassures this synthesis.
her sex . . .), showing the external appearance of Paula. Later, she shows us Paula’s internal
perception (an active woman with an imaginary phallus), which Antón/ia accepts (127).
Moreover, the narrator shows Antón/ia again in amalgamated male-female terms, but now
Paula herself “era un cuerpo provocadoramente resuelto en sus ambigüedades” (was a body
provocatively resolved in its ambiguities) (134). Paula is a sort of mirror for Antón/ia, who is
searching for validation and for her/his place in life and love. Paula is not just represented
ambiguously through inner reflections, like Antón/ia, but also through her body and personali-

Throughout the novel, the narrator has shown an Antón/ia that wears an imaginary
armor that protects him/her from anyone or anything that can out her as a once-female. Al-
though we read of her/his discoveries in female signifiers that are followed by female-male
integrated language that happens when s/he is probing his/her desires, Antón/ia does not want
people to know her past. It is with Paula that she is able to embrace her past and think of a
future as s/he is: “en su interior, el capullo de magnolia había abierto sus pétalos rotundos y
comenzaba a exhalar su aroma acidulado y penetrante. —Antes fui mujer….— exhaló también
Antonia rotunda e irrefrenable‖ (in her/his interior, the magnolia bud had opened its absolute-
ly round petals and started to exhale its bittersweet, penetrating aroma. — I was a woman be-
fore…— Antonia exhaled as well, utterly and unstoppably (161). Finally, Antón/ia is able to
express through language what she was physically and part of who s/he is internally. Besides,
as s/he already recognized, there is no change without memory; Antón/ia should not forget
who s/he was and move on (29).

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that throughout the novel a series of urinal pic-
tures are shown and these are relevant as signs, as part of an identity discourse. As part of the
narrative, Antón/ia photographs different urinals. S/he gets entranced with urinals because
they exist for males only, outside of the home (Shipwrecked Body 103-4), and besides s/he
sees a shadow of a female form in them, as later Raimundo notes: “Tenías razón Antón, es un
hallazgo haber pensado en el mingitorio como las suaves caderas de una mujer‖ (You were
right, Antón, thinking about the urinal as the soft contours of the hips of a woman it is quite
the discovery) (86). The reason s/he decides to photograph them is because, according to
Raimundo: “tú crees tomar las fotos, pero es el ojo de la cámara el que en verdad percibe y
capa. En las buenas fotografías, se descubren cosas inquietantes…como en los sueños‖ (you
think you take the pictures, but it is the eye of the camera that truly perceives and grasps. In
good pictures, unsettling things are discovered… just like in dreams) (40). Antón/ia wants to
find the true nature of these devices that puzzle her/him so much, and maybe by doing so find
something about her/him self. Roland Barthes thinks of the photograph as a mirror, and eluci-
dates, “the conventions of [photographs] are full of signs‖ (1320-1). Although Barthes was
talking about pictures used as blackmail in political campaigns, his analysis is very much per-
tinent here in the sense of them being signs and mirrors. Photographs speak, they have their
own conventions; they are a way to convey a message and to explore intimate desires, like
Antón/ia does. The pictures play with this external image/language/internal feelings and de-
sires; they are a way to analyze the amalgam s/he perceives her/his self as.

The pictures also serve as a mirror for the reader, who, along with Antón/ia is discov-
ering his/her political, social and/or emotional position regarding language, desire and identi-
ty. Through a conversation with Carlos, Antón/ia reflects that desire can be a house of mirrors
where you can see a pleasurable reflection of yourself (61). The pictures s/he likes to take of
urinals, serve as a mirror into which s/he can find her/him self since they reflect male and fe-
male attributes. At the same time, the reader is invited to reflect on this and find his/her own
desires, prejudices, identities, fears, stereotypes, ignorance, etc. As Butler mentions, we are
responsible for others, “[w]e should think about what kind of political structures we need to
sustain life and minimize those forms of violence that extinguish it‖ (“Interview” 6). This is
particularly important because in the story the narrator confronts the reader with Antón/ia’s
fear of being beaten by the men in the steam bath: “¿qué pensarían aquellos tipos si supieran que antes había sido una mujer? ¿La golpearían, la insultarían, gritarían indignados o simplemente abandonarían el lugar consternados?” (what would those men think if they knew that he had been a woman? Would they hit her, insult her, yell indignantly or simply abandon the place appalled?) (63). The reader now has to ask him/her self many questions, some political, many related to language. When we read of this synthesis in the language, what do we think? Some of us do not like the female-specific language. For instance, a female doctor would be doctora, which is acceptable since many are in the profession, but if you call a female poet poetisa, or a female engineer ingeniera it is not taken lightly. It is actually seen as a way of patronizing the work females do in these areas, a way of saying that they are less than their male counterparts. Yet, the Spanish language is very male-dominated, we do not have language for Antón/ia, and it does seem like a form of oppression. For instance, if a group of women has one male in it, the whole group has to be referred to in male-specific language, even amongst the group itself. This usage of language creates stereotypes that are deeply ingrained, and in some ways remained entwined in the very fabric of society. Therefore, we unknowingly perpetuate ideas that are incorrect, for instance, the fact that a male and his needs come first.

Additionally and powerfully, this novel presents language and desire as parallels that can shape identity. However, identity is not a fixed inorganic thing, on the contrary it is fluid and ever evolving. Having a female narrator describing a male world is subversive enough, but then she describes the search of Antón/ia who is her/his self a deviant of the social norm because s/he will not accept the identity that has been set for either gender. Instead of taking the language that oppresses who s/he is, Antón/ia decides to follow her/his desires, challenging essentialism and finally emerging as pure light, beyond the shadow of language: “Tan pronto tocó la orilla y pudo reponerse, se miró las manos y la piel translúcidas como si hubiera emergido de una pileta de químicos reveladores. Un cuerpo naufrago, una sombra iluminada al fin” (as soon as s/he arrived at the beach [after her/his plunge in the sea] and composed her/his self, s/he looked at her/his translucent hands and skin as if s/he had emerged from developing chemicals. A Shipwrecked body, an illuminated shadow at last) (185). On the other side, Paula has a clear understanding of who s/he is. Maybe our narrator keeps Anton/ia as Antonia with no slash (suggesting a split in gender) most of the time because the homosocial-homosexual continuum is much more flexible for women, showing us that there is still homophobia to avoid. (I keep a slash when I talk about Antón/ia because I am still working on my prejudices and stereotypes, I do not yet know how to address her/him, how to integrate her into my life, my language). Yet, at the same time, when the narrator exposes herself, questioning patriarchal narrators, we cannot help but question her agenda and objectivity as well. Finally, Oscar Wilde wrote in De Profundis that “…every little action of the common day makes or unmakes character, and that therefore what one has done in the secret chamber one has some day to cry aloud on the housetops” (1928). Clearly, public performances come from private identities; however, the public also forms us, and in that struggle we can find an identity of freedom.
Works Cited


Not only did Max Steiner not like the song, he thought that it was not appropriate for the film. Nevertheless, as every film buff knows, “As Time Goes By” stayed in the film Casablanca, and the song has almost become emblematic of the film itself. However, it is but one song in a very musical film that proved challenging for veteran film composer Max Steiner. It was not the amount of material that he had to compose (as with Gone with the Wind), but rather the music that was already built into the drama that he had to incorporate into a meaningful score. Steiner, one of the most thoughtful of film composers, masterfully wove the diegetic music (music that functions as part of the story and that the characters onscreen can hear) and nondiegetic music (music that functions outside of the story that the characters do not hear) of Casablanca into an evocative score that illuminates and connects the political and romantic conflicts in the film.

Since much of Casablanca is set in a rather typical nightclub, Rick’s Café Americain, where music is played almost constantly, Steiner had to deal with an incredible amount of diegetic music, composing a score around the musical numbers in the nightclub. “As conspirators, refugees, Fascists, patriots, and desperate gamblers take the foreground, those songs, subliminally, make the café an outpost of America, an oasis in a foreign land.” As one would expect in a nightclub owned by an American, the music is “up-tempo, easy-going, and nostalgic.” The blanket of background music includes titles such as “Crazy Rhythm,” “Baby Face,” “I’m Just Wild About Harry,” “Heaven Can Wait,” “Love for Sale,” and “Avalon.” This music “was familiar to an audience and spoke to that audience about America—an America of the past as well as of the future.”

Often these songs underscore the dramatic content on the screen. For example, “Tango della Rose” makes viewers “aware of the multicultural milieu at Rick’s: probably, too, the Spanish flavor is meant to be symbolic, as [viewers] learned only a few minutes previously that Rick fought in Spain against the Fascists.” Another example includes the band playing “Speak to Me of Love” when Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) enters Café Americain for the first time. On other occasions, the association between the source music and the action on the screen is ironic, as when the audience is introduced to Rick (Humphrey Bogart): while he stands in the inner doorway to his casino and refuses admittance to a pompous German banker, the energetic music heard on the background piano is “Crazy Rhythm,” whose chorus begins “Crazy rhythm, here’s the doorway, I’ll go my way, you’ll go your way.”

The one original source song, “Knock on Wood,” written by M. K. Jerome and Jack Scholl, sounds like it could have been written any year between 1919 and 1943. The song unfolds through a series of brief eight-bar choruses (with no verse-chorus structure). The song is not constructed to climax at all, but rather to move along like an unrushed conversation among friends. In the onscreen performance, the African American leader Sam (Dooley Wilson) coolly poses a series of questions to which his white band mates respond in unison. The partly sung and partly spoken melody creates an antiphonal chorus of questions and answers between Sam and the band. The lyrics of the first chorus establish the eight-bar pattern of antiphony:

Sam: Say, who got trouble?
Band: We got trouble.
Sam: How much trouble?
Band: Too much trouble.
Sam: Well now don’t you frown. Just knuckle down, and knock on wood.

The song’s tempo, neither brisk nor crawling, provides a suitable accompaniment to the lighthearted discussion of how to manage mounting troubles through a discourse of luck rather than the grander talk of destiny and certainty, enabling the crowd to make light of their troubles.

A second challenge for Steiner was that song that he did not like—“As Time Goes By.” When playwrights Murray Bennett and Joan Allison collaborated on a play, Everybody Comes to Rick’s, they made “As Time Goes By” the song that Rick and Ilsa loved when they met in Paris before the war. Since it was already in their catalogue, Warner Brothers kept the song when they bought the screen rights to the play. Steiner pleaded with producer Hal Wallis to let him write a replacement, and Wallis finally agreed. However, before they could substitute a different song, shooting was complete; and when Wallis tried to bring back the cast for a reshoot with a new song, he found that Ingrid Bergman had cut her hair short to play Maria in For Whom the Bell Tolls.

Since Steiner was stuck with “As Time Goes By,” he “did more than give in graciously. He proceeded to make “As Time Goes By” the centerpiece of his score. The song was not only Rick and Ilsa’s love theme but Steiner’s main connecting device. The song linked Rick and Ilsa, [the] present and past, the source music to the underscoring, and the audience to the characters in the movie.” Being permanently entwined with Casablanca, “As Time Goes By” has “increased the fame and longevity of the movie that, in turn, ensured the fame and longevity of the song.”

Nevertheless, “As Time Goes By” works both musically and lyrically in the film. Even though the song had not achieved its status as of 1941, the song had been around for years. Consequently, audiences would have known it, lending authenticity to Rick and Ilsa’s romance (as the song could have been a song that they made their own in the past). Lyrically, the song helps create and connect the overarching themes of the film, helping viewers understand the purpose or meaning. Specifically, “As Time Goes By” speaks of romance and eternal love. “It reminds us that in matters of the heart, ‘fundamental things apply’ and that there is one thing ‘that no one can deny’: The world will always ‘welcome lovers / As time goes by.’” The lyrics also prophetically anticipate and smoothly reinforce both the private and political romances in Casablanca. “It’s still the same old story / A fight for love and glory / A case of do or die / The world will always welcome lovers / As time goes by.”

Steiner first briefly incorporates “As Time Goes By” early in the film when Rick and local police captain Louis Renault (Claude Rains) sit outside Rick’s Café and see a Lisbon plane flying over. However, it is not until later, when Ilsa arrives at the nightclub and insists that Sam “Play it,” that this song becomes central.

Once Ilsa presses Sam to sing, the generic text of the song points to the secret it holds: an old romance. The music makes Ilsa see, but as we see her, we cannot see what she is seeing. We know that the song is a carrier, but we don’t know the cargo. In a brilliant stroke, this lack is compensated by showing the music’s effect on Ilsa—perhaps the most beautiful shot of a woman’s face ever.

This extended and immobile close-up of a tearful Ilsa lasts no less than twenty seconds. “[I]t is the triple counterpoint of words, music, and photography—the soft lighting that perfectly captures the gleams of her hair and jewelry, her beautiful face a frozen, introspective mask—that makes for such a powerful effect.” Moreover, viewers “never hear the song played all the way

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The closest that viewers get to hearing “As Time Goes By” played straight through is a little later during Rick’s flashback sequence. The theme’s appearance in this segment helps to move the film from the present to the past. The flashback sequence begins with Rick sitting in his darkened Café Americain, drinking himself into a stupor and demanding Sam, “You played it for her and you can play it for me…If she can stand it, I can. Play it!” As Sam starts to play “As Time Goes By,” the “camera closes in on Rick. From his expression [viewers] know that he is thinking of the past. Slowly the sounds of an orchestra join into Sam’s playing as the scene dissolves.” Now the audience sees in an extended flashback what the music makes Rick see and made Ilsa see before. Viewers see snapshots of Rick and Ilsa in the past: a happy Rick driving around Paris with Ilsa close beside him, the two on an excursion boat on the Seine River, and the couple inside Rick’s Paris apartment with flowers and champagne. This entire sequence is accompanied by the score’s happiest transformations of the song; and it makes sense that the song would be the happiest and most complete during this sequence—this was the time in Rick and Ilsa’s relationship when they were the happiest.

Of course, what finally makes the song work in the film is Steiner’s masterful handling of it. It really becomes the theme of the film and part of his score—as opposed to just being a popular standard that pops up every once in a while…In his hands, it became a symbol of fulfillment, a melody expressing the happiness that comes with love. But because Rick and Ilsa’s love is unfulfilled, it is a melody that is fragmentary and unfinished, at times sad, at times brooding, and at times angry. It is also a connecting link to the past in which that sense of fulfillment was at hand but had slipped away.

To further complicate matters, Steiner also had to incorporate two other non-original songs: “Wacht am Rhein” (a German patriotic anthem), and “The Marseillaise” (France’s national anthem). One of the most dramatic and dynamic musical sequences in the film is the famous contest of anthems in Rick’s Café, when a group of German soldiers gathers around the piano and attempts to sing “Wacht am Rhein,” only to be drowned out by the café’s international crowd of refugees singing a stirring rendition of “The Marseillaise.”

Up to this point in the film, the source music from Rick’s has reflected a breezy, non-involved attitude; it is definitely music played in a place owned by a man who sticks his neck out for nobody. As Laszlo talks to Rick about the letters of transit, we hear the Germans breaking into a stirring version of “Watch on the Rhine.” Laszlo immediately jumps into action. He goes to the band and orders it to play “The Marseillaise.” The orchestra leader looks around nervously, and the camera finally settles on Rick, who gives him the nod. The band breaks into the song, and eventually the French partisans drown out the Nazis.
This is an extremely powerful and dramatic scene because it communicates the patriotic fervor of those seeking freedom. When the employees and clientele of Rick’s Café American spontaneously sing “The Marseillaise,” this political sing-along functions to unite the multi-national crowd at the café. Their tribute to French republicanism makes a symbolic stand against the German soldiers seated nearby and the Vichy collaborators who accommodate them. As a result, this musical battle causes German Major Strasser (Conrad Veidt) to close up Rick’s Café, and it is not until the final scene at the foggy airport that these national tunes reappear.

One important function of film music, which Steiner effectively employs, is its ability to suspend reality for the audience. “When movie-goers sit in a theatre and hear the opening strains of the title theme, they have been conditioned to accept the music as part of the cinematic experience; indeed, many films use opening music to situate the story in a time, place, or context that will help the audience more readily accept the film.” This feature is apparent at the outset of Casablanca during the main title. The music “contains six distinct bits of music smoothly linked, ranging in length from a few seconds to more than a minute. Each new section is cued by an important change in what is seen onscreen, and each works in musical code, designed to indicate something about the setting and other particulars of the narrative.”

The first short bit of the main title (lasting about twenty seconds) is the fanfare for the Warner Brothers logo. Steiner composed this “noisy, memorable signal” for the 1937 film Tovaritch, and by 1938 it quickly became the signature of Steiner (and Warner Brothers). Its sequence of rapid harmonic motion without a tonal center can be manipulated to lead to any key one wishes, making it very functional. As the fanfare reaches the dissonant chord, the Warner Brothers logo dissolves to an image of a map of Africa. While the music vamps, the names of the three primary cast members (Bogart, Bergman, and Henreid) appear. Precisely as those names dissolve to the film’s title, a flourish sweeps the music to a new key; and, after four measures, while the credits continue, the next theme begins.

The frenzied exotic dance, or second section of the main title, is very rhythmic and has lots of tom-tom in addition to bells and xylophone. The instrumentation and the unyielding ostinato accompaniment can be interpreted as symbols of the African setting, just as the fluid stepwise melody, colored by triplets and augmented seconds, is pseudo-Arabian. “[T]he flailing theme and pounding rhythm work to prepare [viewers] for a breakneck story of desperate people trapped in a dangerous locale.” Fittingly, this segment moves ahead in urgent fashion: “there is one eight-bar phrase, that is repeated and then extended in a modulating phrase of six more bars. In this way Steiner makes another seamless musical link, parallel to the continuing credits on screen.”

“The Marseillaise” is first heard in the third segment of the main title. After the previous material, this evocative melody in a major key sounds particularly bright and introduces the instrumental leitmotif of political unity and virtuous resistance. Steiner also gave a surprising twist: whereas normally the producer’s name would appear onscreen with a new fanfare, this segment heralds Steiner’s own name: “Music by Max Steiner.” Scored primarily for brass and evoking the march of soldiers, this initial reference to “The Marseillaise” ends with an ominous tritone that does not resolve into a major chord. “For two bars the dissonance holds, while the march beat…carries forward through the director’s credit, a fade to black, then into a new image. Thus, the avoidance of closure is deliberate and obtrusive: [viewers] are alerted to understand that the struggle for freedom is still in doubt.”

Now the credits have ended, but, before the story begins, a lengthy prologue comes, marking the start of the fourth section, an impassioned lament. The narrator eloquently begins, “With the coming of the Second World War, many eyes in imprisoned Europe turned hopefully, or desperately, toward the freedom of the Americas.” As he speaks, the first image is that of a spinning globe, suggesting the story’s worldwide significance. While the narrator contin-
continues, another map tracks the movement of refugees toward Casablanca before the audience sees a frozen, aerial view of the city. While this happens onscreen, Steiner’s music moves viewers completely into the film’s world.

[The music] is lyrical and clearly expresses sympathy for the refugees: a string melody of two broad phrases...It also depicts their weary trek: each phrase begins high in range, meanders more or less chromatically, and ends at a low point; and every two bars the melody pauses, while the march rhythm pushes forward in dissonant chords.

The fifth section, very brief pseudo-Arabian source music, marks the opening scene in the city. Here the first sounds of the film’s diegetic world emerge from the bustling street scene: the clamor of voices from the crowd in the marketplace. Steiner returns to the melodic style of his African dance music with “serpentine oboes,” but the feeling is more relaxed: “the melody winds about in triplets, the pulse is weak, the harmony unchanging...and the orchestration [is] dominated by oboes, with soft cymbals for color. If [viewers] consciously hear this music at all, [they] are meant to perceive it as a kind of Arabian source music, emanating from the city...”

The sixth and final segment of the main title begins as the police station comes on-screen. In a final dramatic gesture (contrasting “The Marseillaise”), Steiner incorporates the German anthem “Deutschland uber alles” into the score, played loudly by brass. But there is only time for the tune’s ominous opening (corresponding to the words “Germany, Germany”) because Steiner knows that the music must give way to the action onscreen. So Steiner prepares the viewers for action by making a suspenseful pause in mid-phrase and then resorting to a favorite melodramatic device: a rumble of timpani continuing until the action begins. As a police officer takes a paper from the typewriter, he turns to the microphone and announces the murder of two German couriers carrying important official documents. “Important!” he concludes. Viewers are directed to sit up and take notice as the action begins.

Thus, throughout the film Casablanca, Steiner seeks to be a helpful subordinate to the images onscreen. “[H]e shows a keen understanding of the narrative’s overall design and music’s ability to enhance it.” It is to Steiner’s credit that, despite having so much of the score determined by diegetic music, he was able to create a score that masterfully adds to the political and romantic conflicts and themes in the film.
Bibliography


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