July 31, 2013

Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume IX
Issue 3

Cultures of Narrative and Narratives of Culture

by

Antony J. Puddephatt, Steven Kleinknecht
& Carrie B. Sanders

&

Special Summer Edition

Available Online
www.qualitativesociologyreview.org

QSR Qualitative Sociology Review

©2013 QSR • ISSN: 1733-8077

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Krzysztof T. Konecki, University of Lodz

EXECUTIVE EDITORS
Łukasz T. Marciniak, University of Lodz
Magdalena Wojciechowska, University of Lodz

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Anna Kacperczyk, University of Lodz
Sławomir Magala, Erasmus University

APPROVING EDITORS
Steven Kleinknecht, Brescia University College
Geraldine Leydon, Southampton University
Antony J. Puddephatt, Lakehead University

BOOK REVIEWS EDITOR
Dominika Byczkowska, University of Lodz

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Anna Kubczak, University of Lodz

ONLINE CONTENT EDITOR
Edyta Mianowska, Zielona Gora University

LINGUISTIC EDITOR
Jonathan Lilly

STATISTICAL EDITOR
Piotr Chomczyński, University of Lodz

MANAGING EDITOR, DTP
Magdalena Chudzik

COVER DESIGNER
Anna Kacperczyk, University of Lodz

QSR Editorial Office
University of Lodz
Faculty of Economics and Sociology
Institute of Sociology
The Sociology of Organization
& Management Department
Rewolucji 1905 r. 41/43
90-214 Lodz, Poland
tel. (4842) 635 52 63
email: office@qualitativesociologyreview.org
www.qualitativesociologyreview.org

Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume IX
Issue 3

Cultures of Narrative and Narratives of Culture

by Antony J. Puddephatt,
Steven Kleinknecht & Carrie B. Sanders

&

Special Summer Edition

Note

The journal and all published articles are a contribution to the contemporary social sciences. They are available without special permission to everyone who would like to use them for non-commercial, scientific, educational, or other cognitive purposes. Making use of resources included in this journal for commercial or marketing aims requires a special permission from publisher. Possible commercial use of any published article will be consulted with the author beforehand.

It is forbidden to charge for access to this journal or to put any limitations on the accessibility of published papers. The authors are responsible for obtaining the necessary permissions for publication of materials which are protected by a copyrights owned by other persons.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Patricia A. Adler
Peter Adler
Mahbub Ahmed
Michael Atkinson
Kate Bacon
Howard S. Becker
Laura Bisaillon
Nicolette Bramley
Attila Bruni
Marie Buscatto
Tanya Cassidy
Kathy Charmaz
Catherine A. Chesla
Cesar A. Cisneros Puebla
Adele E. Clarke
Jan K. Coetzee
Juliet Corbin
Michael Dellwing
Norman K. Denzin
Robert Dingwall
Agata Dziuban
Rosalind Edwards
Peter Eglin
Gary Alan Fine
Silvia Gherardi
Barney Glaser
Giampietro Gobo
Jaber F. Gubrium
Tony Hak
Scott R. Harris
Paul ten Have
Stephen Hester
Judith Holton
Domenico Jervolino
Benjamin Kelly
Robert A. Kenedy
Steven Kleinknecht
Hubert Knoblauch
Joseph A. Kotarba
Ireneusz Krzemiński
Margarethe Kusenbach
Riitta Kyllonen
Staffan Larsson
Geraldine Leydon
Lyn H. Lofland
Jordi Lopez Sintas
Michael Lynch
Christoph Maeder
Barbara Misztal
Setsuo Mizuno
Lorenza Mondada
Janusz Mucha
Elena Neiterman
Peter Nugus
Tony O'Connor
Sandi Michele de Oliveira
Dorothy Pawluch
Eleni Petraki
Constantinos N. Phellas
Susan Pickard
Jason L. Powell
Andrea Press
Robert Prus
George Psathas
Antony J. Puddephatt
Anne Warfield Rawls
Johanna Rendle-Short
Brian Roberts
Roberto Rodríguez-Gomez
Bernt Schnettler
William Shaffir
Phyllis N. Stern
Antonio Strati
Joerg Struebing
Andrzej Szklarski
Massimiliano Tarozzi
Roland Terborg
Victor Thiessen
Jan Trost
Jonathan H. Turner
Dennis D. Waskul
Shalva Weil
Fred Wester
Ingrid Westlund
Patrick Williams
Ruth Wodak
Kiyomitsu Yui

CONTENTS

Cultures of Narrative and Narratives of Culture

by Antony J. Puddephatt, Steven Kleinknecht & Carrie B. Sanders

Editorial

Antony J. Puddephatt, Steven Kleinknecht, Carrie B. Sanders
Introduction to the Special Issue.
Qualitative Analysis Conference 2012: Cultures of Narrative and Narratives of Culture 8

Articles

Donileen R. Loseke
Keynote Address: Empirically Exploring Narrative Productions of Meaning in Public Life 12

Deborah K. van den Hoonaard
Telling the Collective Story: Symbolic Interactionism in Narrative Research 32

Elizabeth Krahn
Transcending the "Black Raven": An Autoethnographic and Intergenerational Exploration of Stalinist Oppression 46

Behi (Behrokh) Nikaiin, Tam Donnelly, Nahrida Nazir, Roqaia Ahmed Dorri, Ambreen Mohammad, Nish Petal
Contextual Factors Influencing Breastfeeding Practices Among Arab Women in the State of Qatar 74

Rosemary Ricciardelli, Amber Gazso
Investigating Threat Perception Among Correctional Officers in the Canadian Provincial Correctional System 96

Special Summer Edition

Articles

Robert Prus
Love, Despair, and Resiliency: Ovid's Contributions to an Interactionist Analysis of Intimate Relations 124

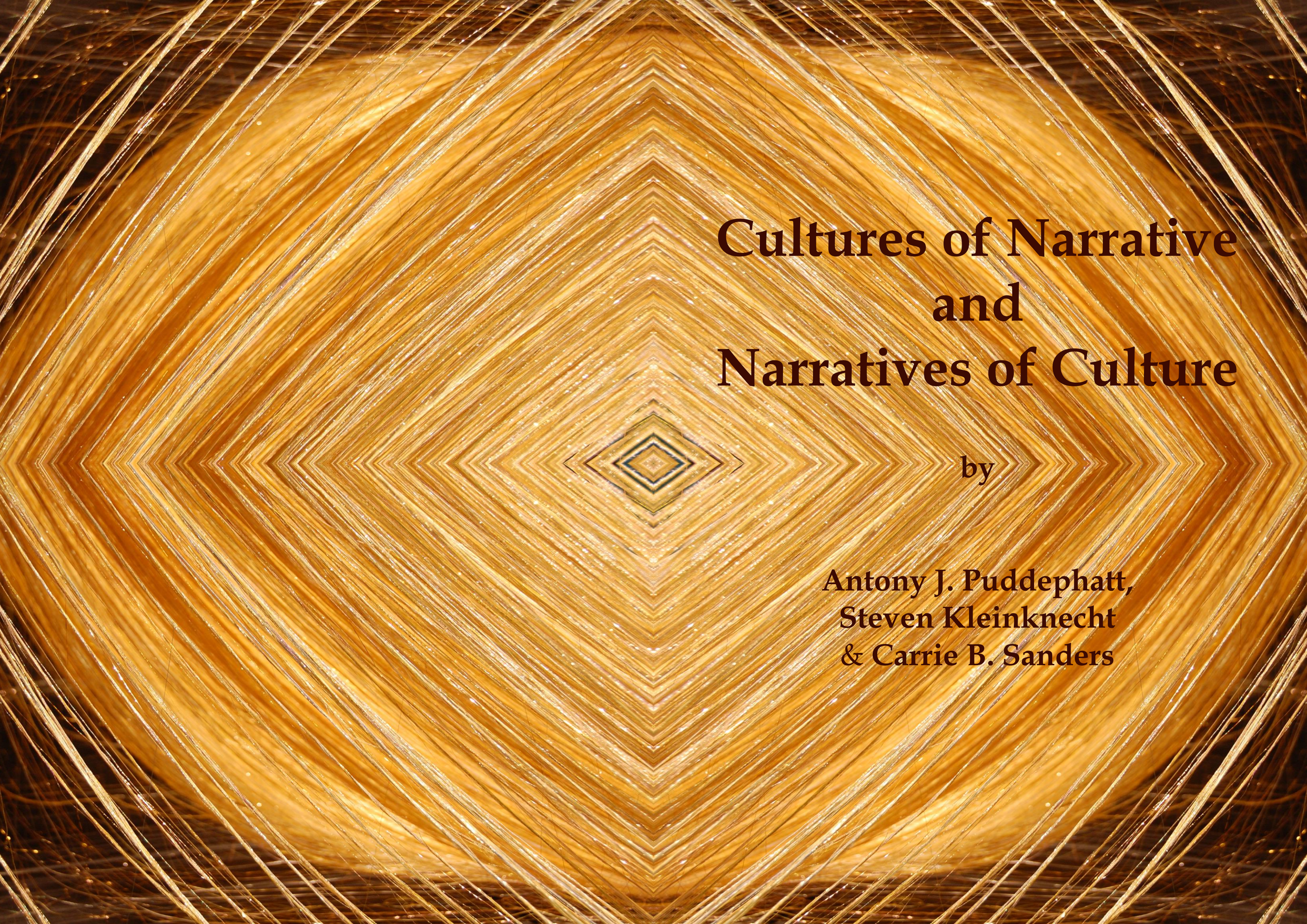
Michael Salter
Through a Glass, Darkly: Representation and Power in Research on Organized Abuse 152

Nicholas A. Guittar
The Meaning of Coming Out: From Self-Affirmation to Full Disclosure 168

Paul Sargent
Reluctant Role Models: Men Teachers and The Reproduction of Hegemonic Masculinity 188

Nina Veetnisha Gunnarsson, Helena Hemmingsson, Lars-Christer Hydén, Lena Borell
Managing Family Relations and Controlling Information While Supporting an Allergic Child 204

Paula Sequeiros
Reading in Public Libraries: Space, Reading Activities, and User Profiles 220



Cultures of Narrative and Narratives of Culture

by

Antony J. Puddephatt,
Steven Kleinknecht
& Carrie B. Sanders

Antony J. Puddephatt,
Lakehead University, Canada

Steven Kleinknecht,
Brescia University College, Canada

Carrie B. Sanders,
Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

Introduction to the Special Issue

Qualitative Analysis Conference 2012: Cultures of Narrative and Narratives of Culture

Antony J. Puddephatt is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, Lakehead University, Canada. His main research interest is in the philosophy of George Herbert Mead, and its relevance for contemporary debates in social theory. He has also studied the competitive culture of amateur chess, as well as various issues facing the discipline of sociology in Canada. With Steven Kleinknecht and William Shaffir, he is the Editor of the volume *Ethnographies Revisited: Constructing Theory in the Field* (Routledge 2009), which centers on first-hand reflections about ethnographic "theory-work" from top qualitative researchers, including Norman Denzin, Loïc Wacquant, Harry Collins, Kathy Charmaz, Trevor Pinch, Donileen Loseke, Patricia and Peter Adler, and Laurel Richardson, among many others.

email address: apuddeph@lakeheadu.ca

Steven Kleinknecht is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Brescia University College in Canada. His research interests lie in the study of deviance, subcultures, online interaction, and cultural continuity. He has researched computer hackers and Old Order Mennonites. With Antony Puddephatt and William Shaffir, he has co-edited *Ethnographies Revisited: Constructing Theory in the Field*.

email address: skleinkn@uwo.ca

Carrie B. Sanders is an Associate Professor of Criminology at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her theoretical areas of interest are social constructionism, symbolic interactionism, social shaping of technology, and critical criminology. Her research interests include qualitative methodologies (specifically, the role of emotionality in the research process) and policing, with a specific interest in intelligence-led policing practices. Her ethnographic research on police information technologies and the shift toward intelligence-led policing in Canada is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Councils of Canada. Her research has appeared in journals such as *Sociology*, *International Journal of Policing and Society*, *Canadian Review of Sociology*, *Social Science and Medicine*, *Qualitative Health Review*, and *Science and Public Policy*.

email address: csanders@wlu.ca

This conference marks the 29th year of a growing tradition of qualitative research and analysis in Canada. As well as drawing several Canadian ethnographic and qualitative scholars, both junior and senior, we attract more and more international researchers each year. We have also enjoyed excellent funding support from the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council* (Canada's national funding body), as well as a number of partnering universities from across Canada (see www.qualitatives.ca for more information). This past year, we held workshops on practical considerations in qualitative research, narrative methodology, actor-network theory, and autoethnography. We also welcomed featured speakers who discussed different issues related to qualitative research. These included Beverley Diamond on the problematic silencing and censoring of First Nations collaborators, Andrea Doucet on the concept of reflexivity, and Deborah van den Hoonaard on combining narrative inquiry and symbolic interaction in research designs. We were pleased to welcome Donileen Loseke as our keynote speaker, who gave an enlightening talk about how to study and analyze narrative patterns in social life.

The editors of the *Qualitative Sociology Review* (QSR) were again most gracious in permitting their journal to serve as a forum for some of the research presented at our 2012 conference. Readers may be directed to volume VIII, issue I, of the QSR for another feature in this journal, which showcased papers from our conference in the previous year. We certainly extend our thanks to the editorial team here for what is growing to be a journal for qualitative research with a truly international reputation, endorsed by the contributions of some world renowned scholars. The *Qualitative Sociology Review* remains committed to publishing important qualitative research from a wide range of perspectives, is completely free and open-access, and maintains solid standards of peer review. Indeed, this should be a model for other journals to follow in the growing future of electronically mediated scholarly publishing.

This special issue features two papers that are based on our keynote and featured presentations from the 2012 conference, as well as three excellent papers from the regular sessions. This issue, much like the conference, contains a strong narrative theme, considering the potential of this for building on existing qualitative traditions. We also include other papers that did not correspond to this theme but were very strong qualitative research papers and hence, excellent contributions to this issue. As usual, we received many papers for consideration, but we were only able to select these five for inclusion in the special issue.

Our first paper is based on the keynote address by Donileen Loseke, entitled "Empirically Exploring Narrative Productions of Meaning in Public Life," and asks how to best interpret and decode narrative meanings in the context of our increasingly diverse and fragmented modern society. Building on her research about stories of family violence, this paper puts forth a methodology for narrative inquiry, and uses the concepts of emotion codes and symbolic codes to think about how characters, plots, morals, and stories are interpreted by different social groups according to specific logics. The result is a truly inspiring agenda for those interested in pursuing narrative inquiry with qualitative research, but from an analytical and empirical framework, that strives to make the complex become clear rather than vice-versa.

Our second paper is based on a featured presentation by Deborah K. van den Hoonaard, entitled "Telling the Collective Story: Symbolic Interactionism in Narrative Research." Building on her research on the contrasting experiences and stories of widows and widowers, as well as the tales from Iranian Bahá'í refugees to Canada, van den Hoonaard considers how narrative inquiry might be adopted from a specifically symbolic interactionist standpoint. She aims to take the seemingly idiosyncratic stories individuals tell, and, using sensitizing concepts and hunting for latent meanings, consider their patterning across cases, eventually "telling the collective story" of the marginalized populations she studies. This paper is as fascinating as it is emotionally gripping, providing deep insights not only into her research strategy but also the touching personal reflections of her respondents.

Third, Elizabeth Krahn has provided an informative research paper entitled "Transcending the 'Black Raven': An Autoethnographic and Intergenerational Exploration of Stalinist Oppression." Her study focused on Russian Mennonite women and their sons and daughters who lost male family members to Stalin's oppressive regime, and fled Russia in WWII to settle in Canada. Bringing together narratives from 16 individuals, she builds a collective narrative for each generation, exploring how they deal with the trauma of these past events. The narrative work they do in the present matters for how they remember and give meaning to the past, for example, emphasizing resilience during the events while downplaying emotions and weakness. But, the pain and insecurity that was not talked about in this history had damaging long-term effects, and the second generation experienced a certain emotional unavailability on the part of their mothers. Krahn argues convincingly that instead of dealing with trauma on an individual basis, these intergenerational narratives can help bring *collectively experienced* trauma to the surface, and allow for greater understanding and emotional healing. This paper is a true model for both the importance of autoethnographic research that is rigorously grounded in the narrative experiences of multiple others, and for the advantages and practical gains made possible by intergenerational research strategies like this one.

The fourth article, by Behrokh Nikaiin, Tam Donnelly, Nahrida Nazir, Roqaia Ahmed Dorri, Ambreen Mohammad, and Nish Petal, is entitled "Contextual Factors Influencing Breastfeeding Practices Among Arab Women in the State of Qatar." Noting the significant health benefits of breastfeeding, Nikaiin and her colleagues consider how social factors and women's knowledge of breastfeeding affect the choice to breastfeed. In-depth interviews with 32 Arab mothers provide insight into how these factors operate in the social context of Qatar. Supportive parents, husbands, healthcare professionals, and work schedules are particularly influential. In considering their findings, the authors offer suggestions for promoting breastfeeding. For instance, they argue for increased education of mothers and employers on the benefits of breastfeeding and the need for government to oversee the development and implementation of supportive workplace policies. In carefully situating women's perspectives on breastfeeding within the local context of Qatar, Nikaiin and her colleagues have developed a study that is demonstrative of how qualitative research can help inform state, cultural, and individual practices pertaining to healthcare provision and decision-making.

Finally, Rosemary Ricciardelli and Amber Gazso's piece, entitled "Investigating Threat Perception Among Correctional Officers in the Canadian Provincial Correctional System," provides an insightful analysis of the ways in which violence, or threats of violence, shape correctional officers' sense of self and self concept over time. In this account, Ricciardelli and Gazso draw attention to a social world in flux – a space where correctional officers serve as protectors to others (such as the general public and offenders), as well as to self. Through in-depth interviews with correctional officers, the researchers illuminate how threats extend beyond physical and mental victimization to one's ever evolving self concept. Finally, through their analysis, they uncover the strategies correctional officers employ to mitigate victimization and threat, such as presenting a confident and authoritative self-presentation, building positive relationships with colleagues, and maintaining respectful relationships with the prisoners.

We had a fun time working as guest editors, overseeing the development of the diverse papers that make up this special issue. We thank our peer reviewers and the authors for their hard work throughout the revision process, as well as the editorial staff at *Qualitative Sociology Review*. We invite the readership of QSR to consider joining us in Canada for a future *Qualitative Analysis Conference*, and until then, we hope you enjoy this special issue.

Kind regards,

Antony J. Puddephatt

Steven Kleinknecht

Carrie B. Sanders

Puddephatt, Antony J., Steven Kleinknecht, and Carrie B. Sanders. 2013. "Introduction to the Special Issue. Qualitative Analysis Conference 2012: Cultures of Narrative and Narratives of Culture." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):8-11. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Donileen R. Loseke
University of South Florida, U.S.A.

Keynote Address: Empirically Exploring Narrative Productions of Meaning in Public Life

Abstract Because socially circulating stories are key vehicles producing shared meaning in globalized, mass-mediated, and heterogeneous social orders, it is important to understand how some stories – and only some stories – can be evaluated by large numbers of people as believable and important. How do stories achieve widespread cognitive and emotional persuasiveness? I argue that understanding narrative persuasiveness requires a cultural-level analysis examining relationships between story characteristics and two kinds of meaning: *Symbolic codes* which are systems of cognitive meaning and *emotion codes* which are systems of emotional meaning. Persuasiveness of narratives is achieved by using the most widely and deeply held meanings of these codes to build narrative scenes, characters, plots, and morals. I demonstrate my argument using the example of the codes embedded in the social problem story of "family violence," and I conclude with some thoughts about how sociologists might approach the production of socially circulating stories as topics of qualitative research and why there are practical and theoretical reasons to do so. My central argument is that examining relationships between cultural systems of meaning and the characteristics of narratives is a route to understanding a key method of public persuasion in heterogeneous, mass-mediated social orders.

Keywords Narrative; Symbolic Code; Public Communication; Emotion; Persuasion

Donileen R. Loseke is a Professor of Sociology at the University of South Florida. Her books include *The Battered Woman and Shelters: The Social Construction of Wife Abuse* (recipient of the Charles Horton Cooley Award from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction), *Thinking About Social Problems: An Introduction to Constructionist Perspectives*, and *Methodological Thinking: Basic Principles of Social Research Design*. She has served as chair of the Theory division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems and President of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. Her long-term interests have been in exploring relationships among culture, narrative, and emotion from social constructionist perspectives.

email address: dloseke@usf.edu

December, 2012: A 20-year-old walks into an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, U.S.A. and guns down 20 six- and seven-year-old children and six teachers. There is a united definition of the event throughout the Western world: This is unthinkable, it is grotesque, it is a "massacre of the innocent." Many Americans and Canadians having no personal ties to the people of Newtown nonetheless travel great distances to attend the funerals of the young children, the *Wall Street Journal* reports that this event was so emotionally devastating that it decreased Christmas shopping throughout the United States.

Consider this event as evidence of a puzzle: From time to time enormous numbers of people sharing little in the way of practical experiences or world views unite in cognitive and emotional evaluations of events that lie outside their own lives. Such events are not personally experienced and they involve strangers, so meanings must be based on some form of public communication. How can public communication encourage particular ways of *thinking* and *feeling* among mass audiences?

My focus is on the persuasive work of socially circulating narratives. These narratives – stories – about particular people or about types of people are used by politicians to sell themselves and their policies, by advertisers to sell products, by preachers and teachers to demonstrate moral principles, by social activists to inspire moral outrage, by textbook writers and journalists to generate attention. My interest is in understanding how such stories work and the work these stories do in encouraging shared meaning in globalized, cyber-mediated worlds characterized by extraordinary social, political, and economic heterogeneity and moral fragmentation.[1]

The topic of relationships between socially circulating stories and shared meaning has two central dimensions: There are questions about how stories create meanings, and there are questions about how practical actors use their understandings of these meanings as sensemaking tools in their own lives. While questions about meaning constructions and consumptions are inextricably related; here, I will primarily focus on the *production* of stories and bracket questions about their consumption. My basic questions are practical and straightforward: While many stories are told, only some circulate widely, and very few achieve widespread evaluations that they are believable and important. How is it that some stories – and only some stories – are cognitively and emotionally persuasive to more than a few people?

I will begin with briefly summarizing the consequences of socially circulating stories. This justifies my claim that such stories do important work in both private and public life so researchers should examine questions about their production. I will continue by exploring how systems of ideas, called symbolic codes and emotion codes, furnish the building blocks to construct narrative scenes, plots, characters, and morals. Then, using the exemplary social problems story of "family violence," I will demonstrate my claims that cognitive and emotional persuasiveness are encouraged when the story contents reflect how audience members make sense of the world around them. My central argument is that the more story elements reflect widely and deeply held systems of cognitive and emotional meanings, the more stories have potential to be widely evaluated as believable and important and, therefore, to go on to do important work in private and public life. I continue by outlining some possible questions for sociological, qualitative researchers about the productions of meaning in socially circulating stories, and I end with reflecting upon some practical and theoretical reasons why such studies are needed.

The Importance of Socially Circulating Stories in Private and Public Lives

Public life is awash with stories. There are those of particular people, the individual heroes and villains and victims, and there are those types

[1] I benefited enormously from the comments and suggestions of Antony Puddephatt on an earlier draft of this paper.

of people, such as "the alcoholic," "the terrorist," "the soldier." Stories circulating in the media, in courts, speeches, textbooks, sermons, and advertisements do a great deal of work in both private and public life.

Socially circulating stories are important in private life. For example, individuals in modern environments must craft their own stories to create a sense of a coherent self (Gergen 1994; McAdams 1996), and, to be evaluated as believable, these stories must "at least partially reflect the kinds of stories that prevail in…culture" (McAdams 1996:301). Further, it is not uncommon for people experiencing troubles, such as illness or divorce, to scan the social environment for stories to help them make sense of their experiences, to offer images of who they are, of who they might become (Plummer 1995). Still further, there is evidence that socially circulating stories function in the background of thinking in daily life. For example, women who are raped sometimes categorize their own experiences based on their understandings of the archetypical story of "rape" (Wood and Rennie 1994), battered women sometimes refuse to define their own experiences as those of "wife abuse" because they believe their own experiences do not match that socially circulating story (Baker 1996). Still further, women relying on welfare (Seccombe, James, and Battle Walters 1998) and mothers who are teens (Kirkman et al. 2001) believe others respond to them not as unique individuals but as instances of the narrative characters found in socially circulating stories about "welfare queens" and "teen mothers." While here I am bracketing questions about how social actors understand the meanings of particular stories, it is clear that socially circulating stories have multiple consequences for practical actors in their private lives.

Socially circulating stories also do considerable work in public life. It is stories, not statistics, that sustain war as culturally and morally acceptable (Smith 2005), and stories define the meaning of "national identity" (Shenhav 2009). Stories told in public policy hearings define moral landscapes of problems (Whittle and Mueller 2012), and these stories justify social policy (Schneider and Ingram 1993) and the institutional arrangements that result (Alexander 1992). Because stories mobilize social activists (Polletta 1997), and activists use stories to persuade the public to support social causes (Loseke 2003), narratives have been called a foundational characteristic of movements for social change (Davis 2002). Socially circulating stories of types of people with different types of problems also serve as templates for social service workers to make sense of the unique people using service agencies (Santiago-Irizarry 2001; Rains, Davies, and McKinnon 2004), pattern the work of courts of law (Amsterdam and Bruner 2000), and shape political campaigns and presidential communications (Smith 2005). Critically, while the narrative form is apolitical in its structure, stories can be very political in their consequences: Stories can be used to support *or* challenge the *status quo*, to support *or* challenge calls for social change, to support *or* challenge political agendas, laws, organizational procedures, and so on (Ewick and Silbey 1995).

Academics claim that the narrative form is pervasive throughout social life because it is persuasive, and this form is persuasive because it has potential to appeal to both thinking and to feeling. *How can stories in public spaces achieve cognitive and/or emotional persuasiveness?* This is an especially important question within modern environments where social, political, and economic heterogeneity and moral fragmentation discourage widespread agreement about the cognitive or emotional meanings of particular events and people. Yet, we know that social life – especially within democracies – depends upon shared meaning. If stories encourage shared meaning, it is important to understand how they do so.

The Cultural Contexts of Narrative Production: Symbolic Codes and Emotion Codes

Much is known about the characteristics of stories that tend to be evaluated by relatively large audiences as believable and important (see Loseke 2007 for a review). For example, in the not-so-distant past, before the so-called "new media," the most common way for a story to become widely known was for it to circulate through mass media (television, radio, newspapers, magazines) and this required conforming to a certain *media logic*, which privileges stories characterized by drama and flash (Altheide 2002). In addition, observers traditionally have argued that *storytellers* matter: Stories told by experts or other advantaged people tend to be evaluated as more believable and more important than stories told by people who are socially, politically, economically, or sexually marginalized (Loseke 2003).

Behind these often mentioned factors influencing audience evaluations of narrative believability and importance lies something much less discussed: Story flash and story tellers do not matter if the story does not make sense given what audience members "think they know, what they value, and what they regard as appropriate and promising" (Davis 2002:17-18). This leads to questions about relationships between *culture* and the productions and contents of narrative meanings.

"Culture" comprises a range of ideas and objects, including norms, myths, traditions, rituals, material artifacts, and so on. Socially circulating systems of meaning that are used by story authors to compose story scenes, characters, plots, and morals are of particular interest in understanding the persuasive possibilities of stories. Symbolic codes are systems of meaning surrounding cultural ways of *thinking*; emotion codes are about cultural ways of *feeling*. The more widely shared, the more these systems of meaning can be understood as an important aspect of the "collective consciousness" (Durkheim 1961), or as an "impersonal archipelagos of meaning…shared in common" (Zerubavel 1996:428).

Symbolic codes

I will follow Jeffrey Alexander (1992) and call the first type of meaning system "symbolic codes," although this concept has much in common with similar ideas such as discursive formations (Foucault 1980), semiotic codes (Swidler 1995), interpretive codes (Cerulo 2000), cultural coherence systems (Linde 1993), cultural themes (Gamson 1988), and symbolic repertoires (Williams 2002). While larger theoretical frameworks lead to different kinds of questions and assumptions about these systems of meaning, all share a basic conceptualization of these codes as densely packed, complex, and interlocking visions of how the world

works, how the world should work, and of rights and responsibilities of people in this world. Observers have de-constructed the contents of many symbolic codes, among the most central are the "Standard North American Family" (Smith 1999), mothering (Gazso 2012), family values (Williams 2002), individualism (Bellah et al. 1985), American values (Hutcheson et al. 2004), the American way of life (Johnson 2002), citizens and enemies (Alexander 1992), victims (Holstein and Miller 1990; Best 1997; Lamb 1999), violence (Cerulo 1998), the deserving poor (Loseke and Fawcett 1995), good health (Edgley and Brissett 1990), the Stockholm Syndrome (Adorjan et al. 2012), and emotion (Lutz 1986).

Considerable research has shown how symbolic codes are consequential. For example, the codes of "welfare recipient" (Gring-Pemble 2001) and "deserving poor" (Small, Harding, and Lamont 2010) shape public policy toward poor people in the United States, and the justification of the civil rights clause in the Violence against Women's Act drew on the "victimhood" code (Picart 2003). In addition, the code of "romance" discourages young women from using condoms to prevent disease (Kirkman, Rosenthal, and Smith 1998), and media in the United States constructed the meanings of the events of September 11, 2001 in terms of the codes of "victims," "villains," and "heroes" (Anker 2005).

Symbolic codes are systems of thinking. As such they can be useful in constructing narrative scenes, plots, characters, and morals that persuade through appeals to logic. While important, observers note that characteristics of the modern social order, such as loss of faith in institutions, rapid change, moral fragmentation, and resulting personal insecurities, have led to more emphasis on emotional consciousness where what we feel can be judged as more important than what we think (McCarthy 1989). Not surprisingly, observers note increasing appeals to emotion in public communication (Waddell 1990; Altheide 2002; Richards 2004). This brings me to a second type of cultural meaning system, "emotion codes."

Emotion Codes

What I am calling emotion codes goes by other names such as emotion schemas (White 1990), emotional cultures (Gordon 1990; Stearns 2010), emotionologies (Stearns and Stearns 1985), and feeling rules, framing rules, and expression rules (Hochschild 1979). These codes are complexes of expectations, standards, and ideals surrounding emotion; they are cognitive models about which emotions are expected when, where, and toward whom or what, as well as about how emotions should be inwardly experienced, outwardly expressed, and morally evaluated. These systems of meaning are the "structuring and constituting resources which we utilize in expressing our own emotional states and in responding to those of others" (Tudor 2003:241). Although there has been far more interest in examining the contents of symbolic codes, some emotion codes have been deconstructed. Among them are codes surrounding jealousy (Stearns 1989), sympathy (Clark 1997), love (Swidler 2001), fear (Altheide 2002), and closure to grief (Berns 2011).

There are many empirical examples demonstrating the importance of emotion codes in public communication. For example, from the beginning of the United States to the present, American presidents have used "war rhetoric," a particular type of communication whose goal is persuading citizens that war is necessary. Historians and others have found that, throughout all eras, such communication blends appeals to logic justifying the practicality and expediency of war with appeals to emotions such as national pride (Murphy 2003), the joys of victory (Moerk and Pincus 2000), anger toward and/or fear of the enemy (Burkitt 2005), and sympathy for American casualties (Coles 2002). Others have argued that the narrative ability to appeal to emotion is critical in social problems advocacy (see Loseke 2003 for a review) and in encouraging support for public policy (Waddell 1990). For example, the 1996 welfare reform hearings in the United States can be understood as reflecting the "politics of disgust" toward women welfare recipients (Hancock 2004).

General Characteristics of Symbolic and Emotion Codes

As analytic concepts, symbolic codes and emotion codes have several characteristics that define their usefulness, as well as their limitations. First, although symbolic codes and emotion codes are analytically distinct, they are *inextricably intertwined* in practice. Although Western scholars traditionally argued for a body-mind dualism, relegating emotion to the body and cognition to the mind, observers now argue that it is not possible to separate thinking from feeling in embodied experience (see Loseke and Kusenbach 2008 for a review). Furthermore, thinking and feeling cannot be separated in their discursive formations because symbolic codes – systems of thinking – invariably are accompanied by emotion codes – systems of feeling. Particular cognitive images of people (such as victims, mothers), events (such as war, floods), places (such as home, country) are associated with expectable emotional reactions toward such people, events, and places. We feel about family every bit as much as we think about family, we feel about war every bit as much as we think about war, and so on (see Irvine 1997 for an example of how "co-dependency" is both a symbolic code and an emotion code).

Second, there are multiple variations in *code contents*. There are predictable *national* variations (see Safdar et. al. 2009 for an example) and contents tend to vary over *time*. For an example, the symbolic code of "mothering" has changed in the recent past with consequences for social policy (Gazso 2012), and there have been important historical changes in the code of jealousy (Stearns 1989). Third, there are differences in the social *strength* and *importance* of codes. Some codes are known by relatively small numbers of people (tipping etiquette in New York City apartment buildings), while others are known to much larger audiences (individualism, patriotism). Some codes are centrally important (the innocence of young children, freedom), while others are superficial (Christmas gift giving, weddings). Finally, there are major variations in how the contents, meanings, and importance of codes are *understood* by individuals. In addition to unpredictable individual differences, there are predictable variations in how people understand codes associated with *places* (national, regional, and urban/rural differences), as well as with *social* and *demographic* characteristics: Consequences of race/ethnicity, class, gender, and religiosity can encourage people to see the world in very different ways (see Karasz

2005 for an example of variability in understandings of "depression" and how these influence help-seeking). In brief, when I claim that codes can be "shared," this is a shorthand of saying "more or less shared by a greater or lesser" number of people.

Emphasizing variability is important in order to avoid conceptualizing practical actors as "cultural robots" who somehow "apply" codes to whatever needs evaluating. That image cannot be correct because an important characteristic of our modern world is the presence of many, often contradictory, meanings. Stories that present gay marriage as a simple civil right circulate alongside stories of gay marriage as a sin; stories containing a "poor person" character who seems a victim of an unjust economic system circulate with other stories containing a "poor person" character who seems lazy and morally suspect.

Because symbolic codes and emotion codes are macro-level concepts, they neither explain nor predict how *particular* people cognitively and emotionally evaluate socially circulating stories. Yet, these codes nonetheless are important because they are aspects of a "cultural toolkit" (Swidler 1986), a "scheme of interpretation" (Schütz 1970), "interpretive structure" (Miller and Holstein 1989), or a "membership categorization device" (Sacks 1972). The more widely circulating, the more codes are available for social actors to use – or decide to reject or to modify – to serve practical purposes. As an obvious example, we have multiple examples of how codes, what Hochschild (1979) calls feeling rules, framing rules, and expression rules (what I call emotion codes), actually shape individual experiences and understandings (see Abiala 1999; McCoyd 2009; Keys 2010 for examples).

Thus, while the concepts of symbolic code and emotion code cannot predict individual subjectivity, they are a part of the cultural context that provides the material from which actors shape their own understandings of the meanings of objects, experiences, events, and people. The more widely shared and the more deeply held these codes are, the more available and potentially important they can be in shaping evaluations of meaning and experience. This leads to a prediction that the persuasiveness of socially circulating stories will be encouraged when story elements – scenes, plots, characters, and morals – more-or-less reflect audience members' understandings of the symbolic codes and emotion codes that shape story contents. I will demonstrate this with a story of my experience teaching a course about "family violence."

The Scenes, Characters, Plots, and Morals of the Story of "Family Violence"

For many years I have taught an undergraduate course called "family violence." What I have found is that students are not very interested in many violent behaviors – they do not care if adult couples slap, push, or shove one another, nor do they care if parents spank their children or if siblings fight or throw toys at one another. Critically, what is not interesting is, simultaneously, not morally troubling. What *is* interesting, what *is* morally troubling is extreme violence experienced by the most morally exemplary victims, especially when this violence is done by morally reprehensible offenders. This evaluation tendency is not just about my students: As reflected in opinion polls, the understandings and decisions of police, judges, juries, child protective service workers, and shelter workers, only some stories cognitively and emotionally persuade audience members to evaluate violence as morally intolerable and therefore, as something that must be condemned and eliminated.

Understanding how stories of family violence do – or do not achieve – cognitive or emotional persuasiveness requires examining four principal symbolic codes that shape story contents: violence, family, victims, and villains, which, in turn, are associated with a variety of emotion codes including anger, hate, and disgust toward villains and violence, compassion and sympathy toward victims.

First, stories of family violence feature particular plots that revolve around *violence*. While dictionaries define "violence" as a synonym of "force," these behavioral descriptions are morally neutral while courses in family violence – as well as public concern with violence – is about violence evaluated as *abuse*, a term that is a moral evaluation rather than a behavioral description. Not all violence or force is typically evaluated as abusive. Indeed, Karen Cerulo (1998) found that very few Americans are true pacifists who condemn all violence. Most people tend to approve of – or at least are willing to tolerate – some kinds of violence with some kinds of consequences on some kinds of occasions by some kinds of people. A specific instance of violence tends to be labeled as abusive when – and only when – it is evaluated as intentionally done *and* as done for no "good reason" *and* as involving behaviors that sound severe *and* as creating serious injuries (Cerulo 1998). Hence, my students' lack of concern with violence that does not seem too severe (such as slaps, pushes, or shoves), or with violence that might be evaluated as done for a good reason (such as self-defense), as not intentional (accidental), or as yielding no injury is predictable: Their lack of concern reflects the cultural code surrounding the meanings and evaluations of *all* violence.

On a case-by-case basis, individuals evaluate the moral meanings of particular instances of violence and they do this by drawing from commonsense assumptions about what is and what is not intentional, justified, and excessive, and about what does and what does not constitute serious injury. Therefore, it is to be expected that there can be major differences in individual evaluations of the moral status of any particular instance of violence. What is a "good reason" to one person might not be a "good reason" to another, what is "serious injury" to one person might not be a "serious injury" to another, and so on. As a consequence, stories that are successful in encouraging a widespread evaluation of violence as morally intolerable abuse rather than morally tolerable violence tend to *emphasize* its intentionality, unreasonableness, excessiveness, and harmful consequences (Loseke 2003).

Second, stories of family violence take place within a particular scene – the family. At first glance, the juxtaposition of the codes "family" and "violence" seem contradictory within industrialized Western countries where family and childbearing are increasingly less understood as mandatory obligations and are more embraced as voluntary relationships valued for their emotional support (Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001). Although

the symbolic code of family is incompatible with the morally pejorative behaviors of *abuse*, expectations about family relationships allow for, and might even predict, the presence of the non-pejorative behaviors of *violence*.

For example, while not as pronounced as in earlier eras, many Americans continue to believe that parents have the right – indeed, the obligation – to "socialize" their children and that this might require "punishment." Within this symbolic code of parenting behaviors known as "spanking" become morally tolerable because they are done for a "good reason." Stories encouraging evaluating violence as abusive must circumvent the tendency to evaluate parents' violence toward children as morally neutral "punishment," and a common way to do this is to construct plots containing the most *extreme* violence yielding the most *extreme* consequences. Stories of such extreme behaviors and extreme consequences – particularly when victims are infants – lead my students to the strong emotions of moral outrage.

Our images of family as people whose lives are physically and emotionally intertwined can also lead to expectations that family relationships should include deep emotional attachments, expectations, and experiences that, from time to time, might be experienced as emotionally overwhelming. In popular understandings – and in practical experience – the emotions of family can overpower logic. This assumption is so common that there is a term for violence evaluated as resulting from unplanned, unintended, and uncontrollable emotional overload: "expressive violence." This type of violence is often evaluated as unfortunate, yet understandable, and therefore – forgivable. The kind of violence that is *not* tolerated is "instrumental violence" which is violence judged as intended and done in order to achieve a goal (Cerulo 1998). Given these ideas, it is understandable that stories encouraging audience members to evaluate violence as abusive often tend to emphasize that, while victimizers often *claim* they "lost control," in reality they use violence in order to terrorize their victims into submission.

Third, for a story of violence to be evaluated as important and persuasive it must contain a *victim* story character. The code of victim has been much examined (Holstein and Miller 1990; Best 1997; Lamb 1999), and observers agree that being evaluated as experiencing harm is necessary, but *not* sufficient, to be accorded the status of victim. Victim is a designation for a person evaluated as a (1) good person (2) who has been greatly harmed (3) for no good reason and (4) from no fault of their own. Again, because individuals have very different standards for judging moral worth, extent of harm and responsibility, and the adequacy of reason, stories that achieve widespread persuasiveness will tend to *dramatize* victim morality, lack of responsibility, extent of harm, and lack of reason for the harm. The most persuasive stories of child abuse tend to feature babies and toddlers rather than teens, and stories of wife abuse tend to feature women who are portrayed as saintly in their characteristics, motivations, and behaviors. It is abusive violence *on these types of characters* that leads to moral outrage.

The symbolic code of victim is inextricably linked to the emotion code of sympathy. According to Candace Clark (1997), sympathy is the expected emotional response toward people evaluated as

good people who are greatly harmed through no fault and for no good reason. Therefore, to evaluate a person as a victim is, simultaneously, to evaluate the person as worthy of sympathy. Furthermore, Clark maintains that the code of sympathy includes the expectation that sympathy should be accompanied by the behavior of "help": Good people who are greatly harmed through no fault of their own should be helped. Therefore, social services help women leave their abusive partners, they help abusive children by taking them away from abusive parents, and so on. This is a very practical reason why stories containing persuasive victims are especially important: Linking victim to sympathy and sympathy to help is the justification for social intervention.

Fourth and finally, persuasive stories of family violence must have a *villain*, a type of character evaluated as an (1) immoral person who (2) intentionally (3) does great harm and (4) who does this harm for no good reason. The cultural code of villain is associated with particular emotional reactions and behaviors: A villain can be hated or despised, and, within the logic of emotion codes, if villains are condemnation worthy then they also deserve the behavior of punishment. Not surprisingly, just as persuasive stories of the social problem of family violence contain the purest of victims, they contain villains who are most clearly evil. One of the intriguing characteristics of common stories of family violence is that the villainy of villains often is dramatized by describing it as hidden; to outsiders, family violence villains often seem to be morally exemplary people. Their atrocious behavior toward their family members is unexpected. This common twist in villain characters makes these stories particularly interesting.

All of this is quite complicated. On a case-by-case basis in daily life we accomplish categorizations of violence, victims, and villains – *and all else*. In so doing, we simultaneously evoke systems of ideas about expectable emotional responses. Symbolic and emotion codes link victim characters with sympathy, and sympathy with help; they link villain characters with condemnation, and condemnation with punishment. Likewise, evaluating violence as abuse simultaneously leads to a range of emotions, from disdain to anger to disgust, and so on.

In summary, my claim is that symbolic codes and emotion codes are the building blocks to construct story scenes, plots, characters, and morals. The more stories incorporate the most widely held and centrally important codes, the more they have the potential to be cognitively and emotionally persuasive to large audiences. Conversely, the more stories contain contentious, debated codes, the more likely they will not receive widespread support. Under these generalities lie countless empirical questions, to which I now turn.

Empirically Examining Productions of Narrative Meanings in Public Life

Because publicly circulating stories are an important source of meaning creation, they are worthy of empirical examination. I will start with some observations about stories as a topic of research, and conclude with some types of questions that might be asked.

Narratives as Topics for Qualitative Research

People interested in stories as topics of research agree that such studies require *qualitative data* and

analytic techniques (Stalker 2009). However, my interest in developing methodologies for such examinations is *not* a project supported by all members of the community of narrative scholars: Some people believe that analysis must be so inductive and allow for so much variation and creativity that efforts to specify, much less codify, methods are counter-productive (Josselson 2003). My own beliefs are with others who argue that the potential for narrative research to yield useful insights about social life will not be realized without analyses that are more systematic than what now is common (Atkinson and Delamont 2006). Stated bluntly, while a hallmark of qualitative, interpretive research is its insistence on the importance of context, this leads to an inability to generalize and hence, to continued accumulation of case studies that are not easily combined. While remaining true to our understanding of the importance of context, we nonetheless need to move away from the "relativism, subjectivism, and fetishization of the uniqueness of each setting" (Smith 2005:35).

Within this contested terrain, methodologies for examining *personal* narratives, the stories people tell about themselves, have been the topic of considerable attention (see Riessman 2008; Gubrium and Holstein 2009; Holstein and Gubrium 2012). Yet, there has been little interest in developing methods for examining questions about socially circulating stories. As a consequence, published works on these topics tend to include only the thinnest of descriptions of the data, as well as little or no attention to the techniques used to analyze data. My project is to develop qualitative methodologies that, while recognizing the value of creativity, nonetheless, promote the value of systematic explorations (Loseke 2012). Here, I will only briefly explore some of the potential types of questions that might be asked about the production of socially circulating stories.

Questions about Story Production

The first questions in examining *any* particular socially circulating story must be about context: Who authored the story? Why was the story authored? Where is the story located? Who is the intended audience? What consequences would be expected from these story characteristics? Within our mass mediated world these can be difficult questions because the sources – authors – of stories can be hidden, stories often have multiple authors, these authors often tell stories that seem only slightly different, but which lead to major differences in their morals, stories can be repeatedly transmitted from one site to another, they can be mis-attributed, maliciously or unintentionally modified, taken out of the original context of their telling, and so on. While locating answers to questions about the contexts of story production can require considerable detective work, establishing story background is critical because without context it is not possible to say anything about the possible or probable processes behind the creation of stories.

Once context is established questions about story contents can be asked: What is the scene? Who are the primary characters and what types of people are they? Are there victims, villains, and/or heroes? Are story characters particular people or are they types of people? Where is agency and what can it do? What is the story plot? What is central to the plot and what is mere detail? What are the morals of the story? What kind of a world does this story promote? A careful examination of the contents of stories – scenes, plots, characters, morals – often can show the subtle meanings and moral evaluations that are being carried by the story. In other words, this kind of analysis cannot be done by "coding" words or phrases in the story; it is not about what is obvious in the story. At times, whole systems of moral values and moral evaluations lurk under explicit story contents, at times, it is more important to examine what is *not* in the story than what *is* in it (see Loseke 2012 for an example of how a story of the "teen mother" contains such subtle lessons).

Questions about Story Persuasiveness

Here, I have focused on the importance of understanding persuasiveness for the obvious reason that persuasive stories can go on to do a great deal of work in private and public life. Because symbolic codes and emotion codes are the social structures of meaning that allow stories to be evaluated as believable and important by more than a few people, unpacking the contents of codes contained in stories is an especially important task. Yet, most certainly, this is very difficult work. There are obvious problems when analysts and story authors do *not* share meaning systems, particularly when meaning systems structuring particular stories are antagonistic to those of the analyst. The more systems of meanings contained in stories challenge those held by analysts, the more difficult it is to grasp the internal logics of these systems. Any project of de-constructing systems of ideas requires sustained attention to these predictable problems when analysts do not share a belief in the meaning systems encoded in the stories being examined.

Just as problematic is when analysts *do* share codes of the story's author, there is a tendency to not recognize systems of meaning as systems of meaning but rather to gloss over them as if they were simple "factual" statements about the world. Codes such as race/ethnicity and gender are particularly prone to be unanalyzed. Codes that are not recognized as codes are particularly powerful precisely because they are invisible and do their work outside of conscious awareness (Hall 1999).

Consider, for example, the American obsession with "good health." When de-constructed (Edgley and Brissett 1990), what sounds so positive – good health – is a system of ideas that has multiple negative consequences. This includes assuming that "health" is under individual control, which implies that people are responsible for any "bad health" they suffer. "Good health" also leads to expectations about lifestyles – such as the necessity to eat high quality food and to engage in formal exercise programs – that can be met only by people with considerable money and leisure time. Further, "good health" is both a symbolic code and an emotion code because good health is taken as a sign of moral goodness which should be praised, while bad health is taken as a sign of moral weakness that should be condemned. My point here is because the goodness of "health" seems obvious, analysts might well not even see this as a code, as a system of ideas containing multiple layers meaning, not all of which have uniformly positive consequences.

While I have been focusing on how *analysts* can examine systems of meaning embedded in socially circulating stories, it is critical to distinguish between analysts' understandings and those of

audiences. We know a great deal about narrative consumption – how stories are used by social actors to justify policy, sell politicians and products, mobilize publics, and so on. We need more attention to how audience members *understand* narrative meaning. All too often sociological analysts focus on understanding what is most common and therefore, questions about "outliers," the less common, are not in sharp focus.

Consider, for example, the story of "September 11, 2001" told by American President George W. Bush. Public opinion polls show that Bush's speeches about the events of September 11 were remarkably effective in both calming the great majority of Americans, as well as in encouraging them to support what was to become known as the "war on terror" (see Loseke 2009 for a review of this literature). However, not all Americans were persuaded by this melodramatic story featuring morally pure Americans as victims who now had the opportunity to become heroes and save the civilized world from the evil terrorists. Cheryl Mattingly and her colleagues (Mattingly, Lawlor, and Jaccobs-Huey 2002) talked with poor minority mothers and found that the poverty and racism patterning these women's lives led them to reject the truthfulness of the "America as victim" story. The daily harshness and deprivation these women faced because of their race and poverty led them to find it amusing that the events of September 11 had led privileged, pampered middle-class Americans to experience "psychological trauma." In brief, the general persuasiveness of Bush's speeches was accomplished by constructing a story reflecting the underlying assumptions of the politically central portion of the total population in the United States. Yet, these are not necessarily understandings shared by disadvantaged segments of the population.

While qualitative researchers often have the skills to recognize subtle meanings contained in socially circulating stories, it is nonetheless critical to explore and understand narrative meaning as perceived by *audience members*. Who is persuaded by particular stories? Who is not persuaded? What are the social and political implications of patterns of persuasion? Important projects about the production of meaning should be in the form of audience reception studies: How do different groups of people make sense of socially circulating stories? How does story persuasiveness vary by race/ethnicity, social class, immigration status, political identification, and so on? How do important stories – those justifying policy, social arrangements, and so on – reflect or ignore the understandings and needs of various sub-populations? How are the meanings of these important stories understood by particular groups of immigrants? Given the social and political work that stories do it is critical to understand *whose* meanings are embedded in stories and how stories are understood by those whose meaning is *not* reflected in them.

Finally, stories are built from symbolic and emotion codes, and these codes are culturally situated. Given the rapid, worldwide circulation of stories, it should be expected that stories of all kinds will be associated with mis-communications and misunderstandings. While cross-cultural communication *always* involves such potentials, stories are especially prone to be misunderstood because so much of what is conveyed in them is in subtle images rather than in explicit statements. Consider how my examples here have been focused on stories and codes circulating in the United States. Portions of my rendition of the social problems story of family violence might make little or no sense to those embracing different understandings of the symbolic codes of violence, victim, villain, and family. How much of what I claimed is particularly American and therefore, limited to one country? This is a demonstration of what has been called the primary need for direct cross--cultural and historical comparisons (Stearns 2010). The problem of cross-cultural communication, that traditionally was a concern primarily for academics, tourists, and foreign diplomats, has been transformed into a global problem created by global communication, global economics, and global politics. Understanding the internal logic of meaning systems is a necessary step in achieving cross-cultural understandings.

Conclusions

I have focused on one question in this manuscript: How is it possible for socially circulating stories to achieve cognitive and emotional persuasiveness in large, heterogeneous, and morally fragmented audiences? I argued that persuasiveness can be encouraged when story scenes, plots, characters, and morals reflect the world views and moral reasoning of audience members who evaluate story believability and importance. The more stories are built from the systems of meaning contained in the most widely circulating and the most deeply held symbolic codes and emotion codes, the more persuasive the story potential is. Conversely, the more stories are built upon contested codes, the smaller the approving audience for that story likely will be.

While my question about apparent persuasive abilities of socially circulating stories is only one of several questions about the interrelated processes of the productions and consumptions of narrative meaning, this is an important question for practical and theoretical reasons.

Understanding the organization and work of vehicles of public persuasion is of *practical* importance in our world increasingly characterized as globalized and cyber-mediated, where vast differences in experiences and life chances yield extreme heterogeneity and moral fragmentation, even when people are sharing space and engaging in joint activities. Under these conditions, *meaning* becomes a problem: The meaning of events, objects, or people is not given; meaning can rapidly change. When meaning is a problem, shared meaning is particularly difficult: The meanings of any particular object, event, or person are often multiple and highly contested. What is the meaning of abortion? What is the meaning of Islamic head scarves? What is the meaning of immigration? The problems with meaning become particularly important in democracies which require debate and compromise. Consider the current political condition in the United States where divisions between Democrats and Republicans are so great that the federal government has been all but paralyzed for over the last two years. While this is a continuing source of material for comedians, it is serious: The work of governing is not being done. Consider also the social problems throughout Europe that are being created by vast immigrations of people who do not necessarily share a Western, Christian/Jewish vision of the world, and who do not perceive they are being treated fairly, and so on. These are the problems of meaning in our modern world.

Although questions about meaning are important for very practical reasons, these questions are also theoretically important. Indeed, sociologists argue that questions about the cultural productions and consumptions of meaning must be central in explorations about the organization and structures of the social world (Lamont 2000). Concerns about the process of meaning making and the contents of this meaning are visible in several lines of research.

For example, observers interested in the workings of culture have been examining how social actors go about categorizing people, objects, and events and how these conceptual distinctions can become objectified as forms of unequal access to and unequal distribution of social resources (Lamont and Molnár 2002). Observers of public policy argue that understanding the process and contents of social policy require examining how policies are also stories embedded in particular sets of social meaning (Stone 1997; Fisher 2003). Likewise, observers note that politicians must justify war by constructing a "cultural mandate" (Smith 2005), that we cannot understand political speech without knowing the underlying structures of meaning from which this speech draws (Alexander 2010), and that if we want to understand political divisions, we must explore relationships between political platforms and underlying visions of morality upon which these platforms are built (Lakoff 1996).

These examples are merely instances of the general point: We cannot take meaning in our modern world for granted. We know that a common vehicle for meaning making is socially circulating stories and we know a great deal about the work these stories do in public and private lives. Now, we need to pay more attention to how these stories work.

References

Abiala, Kristina. 1999. "Customer Orientation and Sales Situations: Variations in Interactive Service Work." *Acta Sociologica* 42(3):207-222.

Adorjan, Michael et al. 2012. "Stockholm Syndrome as Vernacular Resource." *The Sociological Quarterly* 53(3):454-474.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 1992. "Citizen and Enemy as Symbolic Classification: On the Polarizing Discourse of Civil Society." Pp. 289-308 in *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*, edited by Michèle Lamont and Marcel Fournier. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2010. *The Performance of Politics: Obama's Victory and the Democratic Struggle for Power*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Altheide, David L. 2002. *Creating Fear*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Amsterdam, Anthony G. and Jerome Bruner. 2000. *Minding the Law: How Courts Rely on Storytelling, and How their Stories Change the Ways we Understand the Law—and Ourselves*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Anker, Elisabeth. 2005. "Villains, Victims and Heroes: Melodrama, Media, and September 11." *Journal of Communication* 55(1):22-37.

Atkinson, Paul and Sara Delamont. 2006. "Rescuing Narrative from Qualitative Research." *Narrative Inquiry* 16(1):164-172.

Baker, Phyllis L. 1996. "'Doin' What it Takes to Survive': Battered Women and the Consequences of Compliance to a Cultural Script." *Studies in Symbolic Interaction* 20(1):73-98.

Bellah, Robert N. et al. 1985. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Berns, Nancy. 2011. *Closure: The Rush to End Grief and What it Costs Us*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Best, Joel. 1997. "Victimization and the Victim Industry." *Society* 34(4):9-17.

Burkitt, Ian. 2005. "Powerful Emotions: Power, Government and Opposition in the 'War on Terror'". *Sociology* 39(4):679-695.

Cerulo, Karen A. 1998. *Deciphering Violence: The Cognitive Structure of Right and Wrong*. New York: Routledge.

Cerulo, Karen A. 2000. "The Rest of the Story: Sociocultural Patterns of Story Elaboration." *Poetics* 28(1):21-45.

Clark, Candace. 1997. *Misery and Company: Sympathy in Everyday Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Coles, Roberta. 2002. "War and the Contest Over National Identity." *The Sociological Review* 28(1):586-609.

Davis, Joseph E. 2002. "Narrative and Social Movements: The Power of Stories." Pp. 3-30 in *Stories of Change: Narrative and Social Movements*, edited by Joseph E. Davis. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Durkheim, Emile. 1961. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Collier MacMillan.

Edgley, Charles and Dennis Brissett. 1990. "Health Nazis and the Cult of the Perfect Body: Some Polemical Observations." *Symbolic Interaction* 13(2):257-279.

Ewick, Patricia and Susan S. Silbey. 1995. "Subversive Stories and Hegemonic Tales: Toward a Sociology of Narrative." *Law & Society Review* 29:197-226.

Fisher, Frank. 2003. *Reframing Public Policy: Discursive Politics and Deliberative Practices*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Foucault, Michael. 1980. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Gamson, William A. 1988. "Political Discourse and Collective Action." Pp. 219-244 in *International Social Movement Research* (volume 1), edited by Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi and Sidney Tarrow. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Gazso, Amber. 2012. "Moral Codes of Mothering and the Introduction of Welfare-to-Work in Ontario." *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 49(1):26-49.

Gergen, Kenneth J. 1994. *Realities and Relationships: Soundings in Social Construction*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Gordon, Stephen L. 1990. "Social Structural Effects on Emotions." Pp. 134-179 in *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*, edited by Theodore D. Kemper. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Gring-Pemble, Lisa M. 2001. "'Are We Going to Now Govern by Anecdote?' Rhetorical Constructions of Welfare Recipients in Congressional Hearings, Debates, and Legislation, 1992-1996." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 87(4):341-365.

Gubrium, Jaber F. and James Holstein. 2009. *Analyzing Narrative Reality*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hall, Stuart. 1999. "The Whites of Their Eyes." Pp. 396-406 in *The Discourse Reader, Second Edition*, edited by Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland. NY: Routledge.

Hancock, Ange-Marie. 2004. *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen*. New York: New York University Press.

Hochschild, Arlie R. 1979. "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 85(3):551-575.

Holstein, James A. and Jaber F. Gubrium, (eds.). 2012. *Varieties of Narrative Analysis*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Holstein, James A. and Gale Miller. 1990. "Rethinking Victimization: An Interactional Approach to Victimology." *Symbolic Interaction* 13(1):103-122.

Hutcheson, John et al. 2004. "U.S. National Identity, Political Elites, and a Patriotic Press Following September 11." *Political Communication* 21(1):27-50.

Irvine, Leslie. 1997. "Reconsidering the American Emotional Culture: Co-dependency and Emotion Management." *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 10:345-359.

Johnson, Richard. 2002. "Defending Ways of Life: The (Anti-)Terrorist Rhetorics of Bush and Blair." *Theory, Culture & Society* 19(4):211-231.

Josselson, Ruth. 2003. "Introduction." Pp. 3-12 in *Up Close and Personal: The Teaching and Learning of Narrative Research*, edited by Ruth Josselson, Amia Lieblich, and Don P. McAdams. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Karasz, Alison. 2005. "Culture Differences in Conceptual Models of Depression." *Social Science and Medicine* 60:1625-1635.

Keys, Jennifer. 2010. "Running the Gauntlet: Women's Use of Emotion Management Techniques in the Abortion Experience." *Symbolic Interaction* 33(1):41-70.

Kirkman, Maggie, Doreen Rosenthal, and Anthony Smith. 1998. "Adolescent Sex and the Romantic Narrative: Why Some Young Heterosexuals Use Condoms to Prevent Pregnancy but not Disease." *Psychology, Health & Medicine* 3(4):355-370.

Kirkman, Maggie et al. 2001. "'I Know I'm Doing a Good Job': Canonical and Autobiographical Narratives of Teenage Mothers." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 3(3):279-294.

Lakoff, George. 1996. *Moral Politics: What Conservatives Know that Liberals Don't*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lamb, Sharon, (ed.). 1999. "Constructing the Victim: Popular Images and Lasting Labels." Pp. 108-138 in *New Visions of Victims: Feminists Struggle with the Concept*. New York: New York University Press.

Lamont, Michèle. 2000. "Meaning-making in Cultural Sociology: Broadening our Agenda." *Contemporary Sociology* 29:602-607.

Lamont, Michèle and Virág Molnár. 2002. "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28:167-195.

Linde, Charlotte. 1993. *Life Stories: The Creation of Coherence*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Loseke, Donileen R. 2003. *Thinking About Social Problems: An Introduction to Constructionist Perspectives, 2nd edition*. Avenel, NJ: Transaction Books.

Loseke, Donileen R. 2007. "The Study of Identity as Cultural, Institutional, Organizational, and Personal Narratives: Theoretical and Empirical Integrations." *The Sociological Quarterly* 48(4):661-688.

Loseke, Donileen R. 2009. "Examining Emotion as Discourse: Emotion Codes and Presidential Speeches Justifying War." *The Sociological Quarterly* 50(3):497-524.

Loseke, Donileen R. 2012. "The Empirical Analysis of Formula Stories." Pp. 251-272 in *Varieties of Narrative Analysis*, edited by James A. Holstein and Jaber F. Gubrium. Los Angeles: Sage.

Loseke, Donileen R. and Kirsten Fawcett. 1995. "Appealing Appeals: Constructing Moral Worthiness, 1912-1917." *Sociological Quarterly* 36(1):61-78.

Loseke, Donileen R. and Margarethe Kusenbach. 2008. "The Social Construction of Emotion." Pp. 511-530 in *Handbook of Social Construction*, edited by Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein. New York: Guilford Press.

Lutz, Catherine. 1986. "Emotion, Thought, and Estrangement: Emotion as a Cultural Category." *Cultural Anthropology* 1(3):287-309.

Mattingly, Cheryl, Mary Lawlor, and Lanita Jaccobs-Huey. 2002. "Narrating September 11: Race, Gender, and the Play of Cultural Identities." *American Anthropologist* 104(3):743-753.

McAdams, Dan P. 1996. "Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self: A Contemporary Framework for Studying Persons." *Psychological Inquiry* 7(4):295-321.

McCarthy, E. Doyle. 1989. "Emotions are Social Things: An Essay in the Sociology of Emotions." Pp. 51-72 in *The Sociology of Emotions: Original Essays and Research Papers*, edited by David D. Franks and E. Doyle McCarthy. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

McCoyd, Judith L. 2009. "Discrepant Feeling Rules and Unscripted Emotion Work: Women Coping With Termination for Fetal Anomaly." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 79(4):441-451.

Miller, Gale and James A. Holstein, (eds.). 1989. "On the Sociology of Social Problems." Pp. 1-18 in *Perspectives on Social Problems, Volume 1*. Greenwich CT: JAI Press.

Moerk, Ernest L. and Faith Pincus. 2000. "How to Make Wars Acceptable." *Peace & Change* 25(1):1-22.

Murphy, John M. 2003. "Our Mission and Our Moment: George W. Bush and Septembers 11th." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6(4):607-632.

Picart, Caroline Joan (Kay) S. 2003. "Rhetorically Reconfiguring Victimhood and Agency: The Violence Against Women Act's Civil Rights Clause." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6(1):97-126.

Piscopo, Jennifer. 2011. "Rethinking Descriptive Representations: Rendering Women in Legislative Debates." *Parliamentary Affairs* 64(3):448-472.

Plummer, Ken. 1995. *Telling Sexual Stories: Power, Change, and Social Worlds*. New York: Routledge.

Polletta, Francesca. 1997. "Culture and its Discontents: Recent Theorizing on the Cultural Dimensions of Protest." *Sociological Inquiry* 67(4):431-450.

Rains, Prue, Linda Davies, and Margaret McKinnon. 2004. "Social Services Construct the Teen Mother." *Families in Society* 85(1):17-26.

Richards, Barry. 2004. "The Emotional Deficit in Political Communication." *Political Communication* 21(3):339-352.

Riessman, Catherine K. 2008. *Narrative Analysis: Qualitative Research Methods Series 30*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sacks, Harvey. 1972. "An Initial Investigation of the Usability of Conversational Data for Doing Sociology." Pp. 21-74 in *Studies in Social Interaction*, edited by David Sudnow. New York: Free Press.

Safdar, Saba et al. 2009. "Variations in Display Rules Within and Across Cultures: A Comparison Between Canada, USA, and Japan." *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science* 41(1):1-10.

Santiago-Irizarry, Vilma. 2001. *Medicalizing Ethnicity: The Construction of Latino Identity in a Psychiatric Setting*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Schneider, Anne and Helen Ingram. 1993. "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." *American Political Science Review* 87(2):334-347.

Schütz, Alfred. 1970. *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Seccombe, Karen, Delores James, and Kimberly Battle Walters. 1998. "'They Think You Ain't Much of Nothing': The Social Construction of the Welfare Mother." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60(3):849-865.

Shenhav, Shaul R. 2009. "We Have a Place in a Long History: Empowered Narratives and the Construction of Communities: The Case of US Presidential Debates." *Narrative Inquiry* 19(2):199-218.

Small, Mario Luis, David J. Harding, and Michèle Lamont. 2010. "Reconsidering Culture and Poverty." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 629(1):6-27.

Smith, Dorothy. 1999. *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Smith, Philip. 2005. *Why War? The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stalker, Lynda H. 2009. "A Tale of Two Narratives: Ontological and Epistemological Narratives." *Narrative Inquiry* 19(2):212-232.

Stearns, Peter N. 1989. *Jealousy: The Evolution of an Emotion in American History*. New York: New York University Press.

Stearns, Peter N. 2010. "Dare to Compare: The Next Challenge in Assessing Emotional Cultures." *Emotion Review* 2(3):261-264.

Stearns, Peter N. and Carol Z. Stearns. 1985. "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards." *American Historical Review* 90(4):813-836.

Stone, Deborah. 1997. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making.* New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Swidler, Ann. 1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review* 51(2):273-286.

Swidler, Ann. 1995. "Cultural Power and Social Movements." Pp. 25-40 in *Social Movements and Culture*, edited by Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Swidler, Ann. 2001. *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thornton, Arland and Linda Young-DeMarco. 2001. "Four Decades of Trends in Attitudes Toward Family Issues in the United States: The 1960s through the 1990s." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 63(4):1009-1037.

Tudor, Andrew. 2003. "A (Macro) Sociology of Fear?" *The Sociological Review* 51(2):238-256.

Waddell, Craig. 1990. "The Role of *Pathos* in the Decision-Making Process: A Study of the Rhetoric of Science Policy." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 76(1):381-400.

White, Geoffrey M. 1990. "Moral Discourse and the Rhetoric of Emotions." Pp. 46-68 in *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, edited by Catherine A. Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Whittle, Andrea and Frank Mueller. 2012. "Bankers in the Dock: Storytelling in Action." *Human Relations* 65(1):111-139.

Williams, Rhys H. 2002. "From the 'Beloved Community' to 'Family Values': Religious Language, Symbolic Repertoires, and Democratic Culture." Pp. 247-265 in *Social Movements: Identity, Culture, and the State*, edited by Davis S. Mayer, Nancy Whitter, and Robnet Belinda. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wood, Linda and Heather Rennie. 1994. "Formulating Rape: The Discursive Construction of Victims and Villains." *Discourse and Society* 5(1):125-148.

Zerubavel, Eviatar. 1996. "Lumping and Splitting: Notes on Social Classification." *Sociological Forum* 11(3):421-433.

Loseke, Donileen R. 2013. "Keynote Address: Empirically Exploring Narrative Productions of Meaning in Public Life." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):12-30. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Deborah K. van den Hoonaard
St. Thomas University, Canada

Telling the Collective Story: Symbolic Interactionism in Narrative Research

Abstract Recent years have seen tremendous growth of interest in narrative approaches to research in both the social sciences and the humanities. Much of this research focuses on the stories of individuals and how they tell them. This article addresses the contribution of a symbolic interactionist approach to develop the "collective story" (Richardson 1990) through the use of sensitizing concepts. It focuses on research on the experience of widows, widowers, and Iranian Bahá'í refugees to Canada to demonstrate how one can use sensitizing concepts to craft a collective story of members of marginalized populations that sit at the bottom of the "hierarchy of credibility" (Becker 1967).

Keywords Narrative Research; Symbolic Interaction; Sensitizing Concepts; Widowhood; Bahá'í; Marginalized Populations

Deborah K. van den Hoonaard is Canada Research Chair in Qualitative Research and Analysis and a Professor in the Gerontology Department at St. Thomas University in New Brunswick, Canada. Her research interests lie in studies of members of marginalized social groups, such as old widows, widowers, and non-European immigrants to Atlantic Canada, as well as how they interact as research participants. She is the author of *The Widowed Self: The Older Woman's Journey through Widowhood* (2001), *By Himself: The Older Man's Experience of Widowhood* (2010), and *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer* (2012). With Will C. van den Hoonaard, she has co-authored *The Equality of Women and Men: The Experience of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (2006) and *Essentials of Thinking Ethically in Qualitative Research* (2013).

email address: dkvdh@stu.ca

I work in a Gerontology Department with two of the best internationally known writers on narrative gerontology. Both work in a theoretical realm and a practice realm (narrative therapy) (e.g., Kenyon, Bohlmeijer, and Randall 2011) rather than a sociological arena. Their approach centers more upon individual life stories and narratives and how to use the process of life-story telling in a therapeutic setting than mine as a sociologist. My first impression of narrative was that it was too individualistic to be useful for a sociologist, that it did not encompass an understanding of community and social forces. It turned out I was wrong. Catherine Kohler Reissman has written about narrative: "[t]o the sociologically oriented … studying narratives is … useful for what they reveal about social life-culture 'speaks itself' through an individual's story" (1993:5).

As a symbolic interactionist and student of Howard S. Becker (1967), I have been heavily influenced by the concept of the hierarchy of credibility that acknowledges that there is a tendency to consider that those with higher status have the right to define the situation. I also use the concept of generic social processes (Prus 2005), which suggests that social processes may be consistent across different social settings. These approaches have informed my decision to study members of socially marginalized groups whose voices are often silent and silenced. Hence, I have focused most of my research on widowhood among older people, older women, and Iranian Bahá'í refugees who live in Atlantic Canada.

I would like to start this discussion of telling the collective story with a story of my own. This story starts when a student in my Sociology of Aging class lent me *When Things Get Back to Normal* by M. T. Dohaney (1989). This short book was comprised of the author's personal journal that she had kept for the first year after her husband's sudden death following a game of senior hockey. I took the book home and spent two hours engrossed and deeply moved. Having studied with Helena Z. Lopata, the first sociologist to study widowhood (1973; 1979), I had focused on the experiences of widowed persons in a Florida retirement community for my PhD. I already had an interest in widows. The power of this woman's narrative was striking. The literature on widowhood up to that point tended to be quite dry, and no widow would see herself in it. By the time I had put the book down, I knew that my first post-PhD study would be an analysis of published autobiographical accounts by widows about their experience with losing their husband. In other words, even though in 1993 I did not have the vocabulary to describe it, I had been captured by the widows' narratives.

People "narrativize particular experiences in their lives, often where there has been a breach between the ideal and the real, self and society" (Reissman 1993:3). These breaches encompass the day-to-day experiences of those who inhabit socially marginalized spaces (Reissman 2001). My analysis of widows' personal narratives allowed me to study systematically the social meaning, as well as the enormity of the disjuncture and emotional side of becoming a widow. I came to refer to the "breach between the ideal and real self" for new widows as "identity foreclosure" (van den Hoonaard, D. K. 1997):

> [i]t is almost as if [the widows'] identity were composed of a pyramid of elements, and their husband's death has resulted in a bottom block's being removed – the other elements may still remain, but they need to be reassembled in a new way on a new foundation. It is the recognition of identity foreclosure that has allowed these women to construct a new identity brick by brick. (p. 547)

Further, telling a "collective story" allows one to bring in a more critical understanding. Laurel Richardson explains that a collective story "displays an individual's story by narrativizing the experiences of the social category to which the individual belongs rather than by telling the particular individual's story or by simply retelling the cultural story" (1990:25).

In this way, she argues we can "give voice to those whose narratives have been excluded from the public domain and civic discourse … we convert private problems into public issues, thereby making collective identity, and collective solutions possible" (1990:28).

Since Laurel Richardson introduced the idea of collective stories, researchers across a variety of disciplines have used collective stories to communicate the experiences of individuals who inhabit a variety of social categories. Ayala Aylyn (2010) developed a collective story to communicate the experiences of individuals who had undergone trauma in their lives and who identified themselves as resilient. Richard Pringle (2008) used collective stories of men's experience with a rugby union in New Zealand, where rugby is ubiquitous and dominates the formation of masculinities, as a pedagogical tool to communicate to his students the link between masculinities and rugby. Although Richardson conceived of the collective story to address the situation of people in socially marginal positions, Middleton, Anderson, and Banning (2009) developed a collective story of how members of socially dominant groups encountered and were transformed by recognizing their own privilege.

Using the model of a collective story responds to Howard Becker's classic question: "Whose side are we on?" (1967). We are on the side of those who belong to social categories that are marginalized or stigmatized in some way.

One way to make collective stories meaningful is to identify sensitizing concepts within them. Sensitizing concepts are constructs "derived from the research participants' perspective, use their language or expressions [that] sensitize the researcher to possible lines of inquiry" (van den Hoonaard, W. C. 1997:1). In other words, sensitizing concepts help researchers to understand their participants' worldview (van den Hoonaard 2012). The next sections explain a number of sensitizing concepts that I developed to write the collective stories of widows, widowers, and Iranian Bahá'í refugees to Atlantic Canada.

Sensitizing Concepts in Widow's Narratives

In much of the literature on widows (even today) and in much of their portrayal in the public domain, widows are depicted as sad, lonely, and the victims of life's problems. Their collective story recognizes the challenges they face but also depicts them as creative, resilient, and courageous. The following is a sample of the sensitizing concepts I "found" in my data and developed: "identifying moments," "keeping up appearances," "couples' world," "making do," and "my children have their own lives."

I start with "identifying moments" because it is a sensitizing concept that I adopted from Kathy Charmaz's work on chronic illness. She defines identifying moments as "telling moments filled with new self-images … telling because they spark sudden realizations [and] reveal hidden images of self" (1991:207). Having read *Good Days, Bad Days*, I immediately recognized the concept of identifying moments in the autobiographical accounts I read for my first study of widows. For example, M. T. Dohaney wrote in her journal:

> I was called a widow today. "Sign here" the girl in the office of vital statistics said when I went to pick up a copy of your death certificate … "Right here. In the block that says widow of the deceased." The word pierced me like a lance and my sharp intake of breath was audible … Later, as I walked home, I tried to give voice to my new label. Widow! Widow! I mouthed the word over and over and although I could hear it thundering in my head, no sound would leave my lips … Until two weeks ago, widow was only a word in the English language. Now it was me… (1989:6-7 as cited in van den Hoonaard 1997)

In interviews with widows, the intensity of the identifying moment is a central part of the narrative:

> All of a sudden it occurred to me, "I am a widow." Even though my mail may come to me as Mrs. _____, I am a widow… And it was like all of a sudden I realized it… It hadn't occurred to me…at the time of death or at the funeral… Just all of a sudden, it hit me, "Hey, I am a widow." (van den Hoonaard 2001:37)[1]

> It hit me so hard, it almost turned me sick for the moment. Somebody said, "You're a widow." And, it almost made me feel sick to my stomach. That was the first time – I had never thought of myself as a widow. (p. 38)

These stories of the discovery of a new identity, the identifying moment, carry a power in the telling that far exceeds a third-person description. Through the shock and sudden recognition described almost like being punched in the stomach, the story demonstrates that being a widow is an unwelcome identity that carries with it stigma and lower status. In fact, most widows say that they dislike the term. Even one of the reviewers of my article entitled "Identity Foreclosure," herself a widow, commented on her discomfort with the term.

As all research has shown, when a woman becomes a widow, she loses many of her friends. The women I interviewed concurred. They also knew that they had lower status as single women and particular responsibilities, one of which was "keeping up appearances." This sensitizing concept refers to widows' understanding that if they want to keep their friends, they have to "be fairly cheerful and upbeat" and not talk about their husbands too much:

> Well, you're going to go away from here thinking that I'm fine and I feel fine. Maybe you won't be at the end of the road 'til I'll be weeping, but that's all right. (p. 65)

> If I'd have wept and wailed and howled [in my friend's] soup for the last six months…[my husband] would be very upset with me… Very disapproving… ashamed of me. (p. 64)

Part of "keeping up appearances" is conforming to feeling rules by doing the emotion work (Hochschild 1979) necessary to succeed:

> I just decided I have to pull myself together, you know, take the bull by the horns. I have always tried to be very cheerful about the whole thing. (van den Hoonaard 2001:65)

The way widows talk about the importance of keeping up appearances communicates their lower status. If they do not succeed, they will lose any friends who did not desert them at the start.

A related sensitizing concept is "couples' world" which refers to the widows' feeling of not fitting into society in a comfortable way. When friends invite them out:

> And much as they say, "Well you're welcome to come with us," you always feel like the third person out. (p. 73)

> I know that there's always going to be parties…that we used to go to that I'm not going to be included… I tell you, it's a couples' world. (p. 74)

Another aspect of widows' collective story relates to their relationship with money. For most, "making

[1] All quotations in this section, unless otherwise noted, are from van den Hoonaard (2001).

do" or "getting by" is the concept that captures how they interpret their financial situation either because they are "on a strict budget" or "don't care about money" (p. 104). This sensitizing concept demonstrates older widows' reluctance to appear to feel entitled to more than the minimal income many of them receive. They compare themselves favorably to women who do not know how to handle money through narratives of the inability to write a check[2]:

> Like I have a friend whose husband died suddenly, she'd never written a check. She didn't have a clue… and it was dreadful for her. She had no idea how much money there was available, where it was, and on top of having all the emotional things to deal with is really, really too much. (p.106)

This situation of not being able to write a check came up in many of the stories women told about their friends or acquaintances even though they, themselves, knew how to write checks. It symbolized the relationship (or lack thereof) that women of their generation often had with money while they were married. The reference to not being able to write a check allowed the women to compare themselves positively to women who were not as well prepared. In fact, learning about finances while their husbands were still alive is the most common advice these widows had for other women.

The last sensitizing concept in the widows' stories is "they have their own lives." The women used this phrase to describe their place in their children's lives. It recognizes that although most widows expect their children to be aware of and sensitive to their needs, their adult children have "their own lives." These mothers need to make sure they do not overstep an invisible boundary that would result in invading privacy, crowding, or expecting too much. Several women demonstrated much creativity in establishing a new relationship characterized by reciprocity.

One story of a successful negotiations comes from one of the very few women who go south for the winter. She started by explaining:

> And my family, well, they're just wonderful; they're friends, as well as family. If I need anything, I only have to make a phone call. And if I don't want them around, they don't crowd me. (p. 55)

In return, this woman feels comfortable calling on her children if there's something she needs help with, but she usually tries to fix things herself. She told the story of installing window blinds. She put up one set of venetian blinds, which took her over an hour to accomplish. Her son came to visit, and she went into another room for just a few minutes, and when she returned, he said:

> "Your blind's up." He said, "I could have done that the first time, but I knew you wanted to do it." So he let me try it. (p. 56)

This same woman needed someone to pay her bills while she was in Florida and to keep an eye on her house in the winter. Her daughter pays her bills, and her son checks on her house. She developed a novel system of reciprocity:

> Yeah, well, my son is very fond of ice cream, and he can't get cable [TV]…and he loves TV. So, I fill the freezer downstairs with ice cream, and I know he'll be down to watch TV. And he watches the house… He checks to make sure everything's all right. (p. 56)

This widow's story of her relationship with her children exemplifies successful negotiations of a reciprocal relationship that protects an older widow's sense of herself as a competent adult and recognizes that her children have their own lives.

Not all stories are of equal importance. Kenyon and Randall (1997:46-47) have developed the concept of "signature story," a tale people like to tell about themselves or situations that they like to narrate. Similarly, a collective story may include a signature story. In the study of widows, the signature story communicates challenge, perseverance, and the development of a sense of competence and confidence, all of which characterize the accomplishments of widows and are a central part of their collective story:

> Well, there's one thing, for instance, and it's so simple…when the hydro goes out on the VCR and the clock…it's blinking, twelve o'clock, twelve o'clock. I never, now this is so simple, I never adjusted that thing, and I just didn't even know how to open this little box there… I left it for about…a week, blinking. Well, I put up a book so I wouldn't see it… Yeah, I put a book up and said [to myself], "I don't know how to do it." So, one day, I went downstairs and I took my glasses and I said, "I'm going to fix this thing or it's going to be unplugged." So, I sat down and I got the instructions out and I just went step by step and I thought this was a major, oh did a major job. Finally, I got it. And it was just the idea, I had never done it, and I had never even looked at the instructions. And a child, of course, could do it. But, it was a big achievement there. (van den Hoonaard 2012:123)

The collective story of older widows makes visible their lower status, and the sensitizing concepts that are central to the story highlight that they must "keep up appearances," adapt to living as a single woman in a "couples' world," find pride in "making do" with little money, and accept that their children "have their own lives." Nonetheless, the collective story also reflects creativity, resilience, and strength that belie the stereotype of older widows as helpless.

Sensitizing Concepts in Widowers' Narratives

For older men who become widowed, the collective story is different.[3] One of the first questions people ask when they find out that I've studied both widows and widowers is whether women's and men's experiences are very different from one another. And how! When asked to describe in a very general way what it is like to become a widow, many women talked about how they met their husbands and what their marriages were like. They could not tell their story without including information about what was lost, as well as what had happened. In response to a similar question, men often talked about whether or not they wanted to get married again or observed that women are "after them" as widowers.[4] It is not surprising, then, that the sensitizing concepts that construct widowers' collective story are different.

The story, for men, revolves around the challenges widowhood presents to their identity as masculine, adult men. I had not expected to approach the widowers' collective story in terms of masculinity, but

[2] The interviews took place in the mid 1990s. Today, widows would more likely talk about ATM's or internet banking. I am currently doing a new study to see how the collective story of older widows has changed in the last 20 years.

[3] Unless otherwise specified, all quotations in this section come from van den Hoonaard (2010).

[4] In fact, while I was working on the widower study, I was interviewed by Anne Kingston for an article she was writing about widowers for *Maclean's Magazine* entitled: "The Sexiest Man Alive" (2007).

the theme of being a real man was ubiquitous in the data. Instead of looking at the men's style of interaction as a problem, I used Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) active-interview approach and used the interaction as data. I went back and listened to all the recordings again to be sure that then men were "doing gender" throughout the interviews.[5] The following is a sample of the sensitizing concepts that emerged from an analysis of the data: "casserole brigade," "nothing fancy," "all downhill from there," "one thing led to another," and "getting out of the house."

The most obvious example is the "casserole brigade" which is comprised of single women who are lonely and seem almost predatory to the men in their attempts to attract a widower to a romantic relationship. This response came from a man who lived in a small town. He was replying to a question about whether or not anything had surprised him as a widower.

> Yes, about a month after my wife passed away. [The town I lived in]…is a small village of about 350 people, and I swear, 200 of them are widows – all living alone. So the "casserole brigade" started, and I hate casseroles. So, I had…a commercial freezer full of casseroles… And [they] would start pounding on the door. That kind of frightened me. (p. 95)

In an earlier study, a widow who lived in a Florida retirement community remarked that if you showed up with a casserole while a widower is sitting *shiva*,[6] it is too early. But, if you wait until *shiva* is over, you will be too late – some other woman will have already gotten the man. Alinde Moore and Dorothy Stratton (2002) report a similar phenomenon, the "casserole ladies" who also turn up in John Bayley's book about his experience as a widower. Bayley, widower of author Iris Murdoch, opens his memoire with: "'[n]ow, eat it while it's nice and hot,' ordered Margot, putting a lump of casserole on my plate" (2001:3). Bayley (2001) writes about his own sense of being pursued by women as a "fantasy":

> [t]here was really no need to feel threatened and disquieted. No doubt widowers' weakness, as it might be called, was a well-known phenomenon in circles which widowers…frequented. They misunderstood the kindness women bestowed on them in their trouble. (p. 45-46)

A telling counterpoint in this collective story is the reaction of the widowers to the question about whether they knew how to cook and clean before their wife died. The concept of "nothing fancy" characterizes their story. Most of the men explained that their cooking was quite simple; they did not know how to make casseroles or desserts. Here, the men used their story to distance themselves from women and their traditional tasks by claiming not to make the very kind of dish that women make when they are in pursuit of men as romantic partners.

Men who could cook often listed masculine dishes, such as steak cooked on a George Foreman Grill, or associated their cooking with masculine activities. This man provided a list of sporting activities as part of his discussion about cooking. The story of cooking steak for other athletes is an important part of the story:

> I enjoyed cooking, enjoyed it, really. And yet, despite the fact, and I used to tell a lot of people, you know. I've played senior hockey; I've played senior basketball; I've played volleyball; I've played softball. Now, of course, I spent nine years coaching hockey at all the provincial levels; I coached baseball, you name it, and got involved with it, and I'd say, "Hey, come on home, I'll cook you a steak." So that to me was enjoyable, it still is enjoyable. (van den Hoonaard 2010:151)

The need to claim their masculinity was also evident in the way the widowers told the story of their wife's death. Notably, the men appear as central actors in these narratives. These stories have a particular trajectory that includes: the woman's hiding or downplaying symptoms, an initial misdiagnosis or minimizing of the ailment on the part of the doctor, a great deal of detail in the descriptions of the wife's symptoms, and a truncated description of what happened after the diagnosis into the phrase "it was all downhill from there."

The men appear as central characters in the stories of what happened when their wife first became ill. For example, this man explained that the doctor initially thought his wife had an allergy. He recounted:

> After a time, I didn't think so. And I had a conversation with the doctor… I told him why…because of what I said, he sent her for some X-rays. [Later when his wife had severe headaches] I thought it was connected because they'd found a spot on her lungs… I thought it has spread… So, I talked to the doctor about that. (p. 99)

This type of agentic speech – in which the narrator portrays himself as an independent actor (Kirsi, Hervonen, and Jylhä 2000) – characterized many of the stories the men told of their wife's death (van den Hoonaard, Bennett, and Evans 2012).

In these widowers' narratives, the terminal diagnosis was a singular moment in the story. Once they knew what was wrong, things simply progressed until their wife died. They summarized this process as "downhill from there." The inevitability of the final outcome stands out as a crucial aspect of the story.

There is a similar lack of details in the stories the Atlantic Canadian widowers who were repartnered told about how they got together with their new wife or permanent girlfriend. In this situation, the sensitizing concept is "one thing led to another." This man from Atlantic Canada told how he met his girlfriend:

> And there's this lady next to me, and I asked her how long the boardwalk was… And she was kind of chatty, got talking to her…it sounded like her husband was something like my wife… So, one thing led to another. (p. 36)

Compare his story to this American widower's. In this story, he initially approached his "friend," but then:

> After, she decided that she liked me… She came over a lot more than I realized. I didn't mean to make a regular routine of it. I just asked her out once, and before I knew it, here she's coming in like she's my girlfriend… Actually, she pushed herself into it. (p. 98)

As noted in the introduction, narratives often reflect the culture of the teller. This potential is realized in the widowers' stories about developing relationships with women, which reflected strong cultural differences between Atlantic Canadians and big-city, Jewish Americans. The Canadians' stories have a fatalistic flavor captured in the concept, "one thing led to another." The Jewish American stories also involve a lack of agency on the men's part, but, in contrast, they emphasized their friend's assertiveness in establishing a relationship. There were some assertive women in the Canadian widowers' stories,

[5] For an in-depth discussion of widowers' strategies of self-representation, see van den Hoonaard (2009).

[6] During this week of confinement from routine duties, the widow or widower allows herself or himself to be cared for by family and close friends (Marcus 2004:216). At the end of the mourning period, the person rejoins society with the new status.

but in these stories, the men rebuffed or were frightened by the women's forwardness. These differences reflect very different, culturally-based definitions of the situation.

The last sensitizing concept in the widowers' collective story is "getting out of the house." The absence of their wife as a companion was a frequent theme, and being busy was a notable antidote for loneliness and being alone, which the widowers talked about as if they were synonymous. The solution for these widowers was "getting out of the house." This sensitizing concept encompasses how uncomfortable the men felt when they were alone in their house and the imperative to keep busy that is often seen as a panacea to life's problems for older people (Ekerdt 1986).

When the widowers' wife died, the meaning of being at home changed. They found it challenging to spend time in their empty house. For example, one man told the story of the first time he entered his house after his wife's death:

> From a home point of view, for the first few months after her death, and particularly the first time I opened the door. I looked in to see if she was playing Solitaire at the table…and she wasn't there. And so, the house was like a big, empty cavern, canyon, cave, anything you want to express is. There was an emptiness there, and I was looking for her, and I couldn't find her. And then, gradually, I accepted the fact… I got this storey and a half house all to myself, and I've got to live with it. (p. 126-127)

This man's alliterative description captures the discomfort of being home alone. The only solution is to "get out of the house."

For the widowers, getting out was also the alternative to wallowing in one's misery. Hence, the mirror image of the concept of getting out is sitting around. The men equated staying home with sitting around, with giving up on life:

> I'm not just sitting around the house, moping. It's better to be busy than sitting around doing nothing, sitting around and thinking. Now, I don't sit around, kind of, "What am I going to do with myself?" (p. 127)

According to this widower, having nothing to do is equivalent to not getting out:

> [Were there any times that were more difficult than others?] [When] you've got nothing to do… Like an old dog, you go out [to] the road and look up and down the road and say, "Which way am I going to go today?" … Like I say, you just have to pick up and go somewhere… Just get in the truck, head for town. (p. 128)

Put succinctly:

> I go out as frequently as I can… So, what I do is go out – get the hell out of the house. (p. 128)

The importance of "getting out" is related to the men's reluctance to have guests in their home. Their collective story of keeping socially connected by going out suggests that they are not likely to invite guests in:

> I rattle around this house like a pea in a box. I get out quite a lot. Try to mix and socialize. (p. 128)

> I like to have people around. I hate being alone. That's why I'm gone all the time. (p. 129)

"Getting out" is also a mechanism for informal and unplanned socializing. It reflects many widowers' reluctance to have too many commitments, freedom and independence are two things that they appreciate about being single. These quotes communicate the spontaneous nature of the men's activities:

> We usually call one another up and "Meet you on the river," or something like that. Usually ski up and down the river and go across the road there. Don't have to drive anywhere. Just put on my skis and go. (p. 133)

> Like I say, the pool [in the retirement community] is a meeting place. You meet everybody there, eventually. So, if I want…people, I go down to the pool in the morning. If I want to be left alone, I just stay away. (p. 132)

Finally, community events provide opportunities for some widowers to maintain a full social life:

> I got to quite a few concerts… Meet friends there… I keep myself busy… Everybody asks me where the church suppers are for the weekend. So, I start looking about Wednesday…and I'll go to a church supper on Saturday… And, you meet a lot of friends there… So, it almost got to the point where people go to the supper and say, "Oh, I wonder if Patrick will be here." (p. 132)

Just as there was a signature story for the collective story of widows, there is also one that communicates the challenge of older widowers to preserve their masculinity. This story involves a widower's attempt to get customer loyalty points from two different stores:

> Like I went to [the store]; I knew she used to have [their] credit card. And she had [their customer-loyalty card]. So, I went in one day…to transfer her…points to my name. No way in hell. No, they wanted a copy of her will… They wanted her death certificate… So, that kind of ticked me off… They say, "Well, maybe you kicked her out, and you're trying to take all her stuff." … And I said, "Well, does she owe you any money?" They wouldn't tell me that either. So finally, I said to the girl, "Well, I hope she does… You're going to have to find her to get it." And I never heard from them about that. (p. 59)

This and other stories the men recounted have the theme of "winning" that is familiar in stories which portray a man as a "lone hero pitted against the odds" (Coates 2003:196).

The collective story of older widowers illustrates the challenges around masculinity for older men. The sensitizing concepts that fill out the story bring attention to areas that challenge widowers' masculinity, such as lack of control and developing new skills that were traditionally done by women. If there was one statement that sums up the men's collective story, it is: "I was the man."

Iranian Bahá'í Refugees in Atlantic Canada

The last collective story is that of Iranian Bahá'í refugees who settled in Atlantic Canada. The Bahá'í faith originated in Persia (now Iran) in the mid-19th century when a young man, the Báb, announced himself a prophet of God and the Harbinger of a Manifestation of God who would bring in a new era in human history. Baha'u'lláh proclaimed himself to be this messenger and spent the last 39 years of his life as a prisoner and exile.[7] Bahá'ís have been persecuted in Iran since that time. After the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the persecution became a severe and systematic attempt to strangle the community.

[7] Bahá'í social teachings include the unity of humanity, the equality of women and men, and the elimination of racial and other prejudices, among others.

The Bahá'í community of Canada has existed for almost 100 years and has about 33,000 members. Many Bahá'í refugees arrived in Canada in the 1980s through a cooperative program between the Government of Canada and the National Bahá'í Community of Canada. Most of the Bahá'ís who came through that program now live in major urban centers, such as Vancouver and Toronto, but a small number have stayed in Atlantic Canada. It is the collective story of that small group, numbering about 200, that this article addresses.

The sensitizing concepts that arose in the newcomers' stories are: "not knowing what to expect," "being treated like family," and "using creativity and hospitality to neutralize blame and overcome prejudice."

The story of settlement in Canada starts with the newcomers' not knowing what to expect. They had no idea how rural Atlantic Canada is:

> Yeah, there were no tall buildings. When I came to Canada… I thought we were going to a place like New York…tall buildings, you know. And we flew into Halifax…nothing but trees. (p. 2)[8]

Nonetheless, even though they were unprepared for life in Atlantic Canada, the Canadian Bahá'ís welcomed them like family:

> And I remember, Mr. R. told me that, "You go [by train] and meet the gentleman called Bill." And that was it. No last name… So, we were supposed to stay at their home… And, when we came to the train station, the train stopped…all the Bahá'ís were there… Very exciting time… And a few minutes later we were at Bill's sitting there…it was great. We stayed at his house for two months, and that is the time I felt that being a Bahá'í was the most incredible thing in life. (p. 4)

> Like members of a family, I had no idea who they were and they didn't have any idea who I was. But, they accepted me with open arms, and we became almost like a family, and being here twenty years… we still feel like a family. (p. 5)

The warm reception from the local Bahá'ís was a contrast to the reception the Persian newcomers received from the broader community. The implicit prejudice they faced made it hard for them to find work or make friends other than Bahá'ís:

> It was really hard to get a job. And everybody was fearful, "Is this guy a good guy to work for me and is he going to be able to talk in a [way] that I can understand it? Is he going to drive my customers away?" You know, you're either white, Canadian people or you were not part of them. So, it was kind of hard to break into. (p. 6)

The newcomers chose to avoid taking the rebuffs personally:

> You know, it's very obvious [that I was being passed over for promotion]… I don't [take it] personally. If we do…we never improve ourselves. You know, don't get personal… That is life, and I've never been Canadian, even after 100 years… I am [an] immigrant. You know, I have to accept that and do my job. (p. 8)

They explain that, given the circumstances in the world, no one should be blamed for fearing strangers, especially dark-skinned ones:

> Not that I blame them because there are so many things going on in the Middle East that you don't know, "Should I trust this guy or not?" (p. 8)

[8] Unless otherwise noted, all quotations in this section are from van den Hoonaard and van den Hoonaard (2007).

The Bahá'í refugees used hospitality and creativity to address these issues:

> They're scared… But, we showed our love, we show all of it, we show all our love, and, "How are you? Good morning." (p. 8)

The collective story includes a combination of creativity and hospitality. Here is a signature story of Persian Bahá'í refugees in Atlantic Canada:

> [I heard from a neighbor that] "people think that you have a rifle in your basement, and you are waiting for some good opportunity to attack" … I said, "No [we don't have such things], you can come and visit us." Later on, they came over and, on purpose, I said, "Okay, I want to give you a tour of my house." You know, let's see the bedroom, and… I take them to the basement, and here is the laundry room, here is the workshop…just show them everything, and now they are very, very friendly. When they have any family problem they come over here, and they ask us to solve their problem. (p. 10)

The collective story of the Iranian Bahá'í newcomers includes the persecution that drove them out of their homeland and tells how they were welcomed to their new homes, the barriers they faced, and their efforts to overcome those barriers. The sensitizing concepts provide an entry to understanding how these immigrants interpreted and dealt with their situation.

Conclusion

This article has focused on three studies to demonstrate how sensitizing concepts can assist us to construct the collective story of groups who are socially marginalized. In his book, *Working with Sensitizing Concepts*, Will van den Hoonaard (1997) says that sensitizing concepts move us toward more abstract or general theorizing. This article suggests that they can also be the building blocks of a collective story.

Laurel Richardson writes that although a collective story is about a category of people rather than individuals, "the individual response to a well-told collective story is, 'That's *my* story. I am not alone'" (1990:26). She argues that the collective story should be written in language that is accessible to members of the social category it involves (1988) as a means of constructing a "consciousness of kind…a concrete recognition of sociological bondedness [which can] break down isolation [and potentially] alter the system" (Richardson 2000:336).

It appears that the widows' collective story, told in *The Widowed Self* (van den Hoonaard 2001), has met this standard. When an article about my new research on widowhood appeared in the local newspaper, one of the volunteers for the study said that she had read the book, found it very helpful, and wanted to be interviewed for the new study to help other widows.

This article has demonstrated the usefulness of sensitizing concepts in the construction and telling of a collective story. Because sociologists develop these concepts inductively and use the language of research participants to name and formulate them, they have a unique potential to contribute to collective stories that are both powerful and accessible to scholars and members of categories whose story is being told.

Acknowledgements

The study of widows was funded by a Community Researcher Award from the Seniors' Independence Research Program of Health Canada and a Grant to Small Universities from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The study of widowers was funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Standard Research Grant, and the study of Iranian Bahá'í refugees was funded by grants from the New Brunswick and Atlantic Studies Research and Development Centre and Metropolis.

References

Aylyn, Ayalah. 2010. *Resurrection Ferns: Resiliency, Art, and Meaning Constructs Among Survivors of Trauma or Difficult Life Events*. PhD dissertation, University of Alberta.

Bayley, John. 2001. *Widower's House: A Study in Bereavement or How Margo and Mella Forced me to Flee My Home*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Becker, Howard. 1967. "Whose Side are We on?" *Social Problems* 14(3):239-247.

Charmaz, Kathy. 1991. *Good Days, Bad Days: the Self in Chronic Illness and Time*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Coates, Jennifer. 2003. *Men talk. Stories in the making of masculinities*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Dohaney, Myrtis. 1989. *When Things Get Back to Normal*. Porters Lake, NS: Pottersfield Press.

Ekerdt, David. 1986. "The Busy Ethic: Moral Continuity Between Work and Retirement." *Gerontologist* 26(3):239-244.

Hochschild, Arlie. 1979. "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 85(3):551-575.

Holstein, James A. and Jaber F. Gubrium. 1995. *The Active Interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kenyon, Gary, Ernst Bohlmeijer, and William L. Randall. 2011. *Storying Later Life: Issues, Investigations, and Interventions in Narrative Gerontology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kenyon, Gary and William L. Randall. 1997. *Restorying Our Lives: Personal Growth through Autobiographical Reflection*. Westport, CN: Praeger.

Kingston, Anne. 2007. "The Sexiest Man Alive." *Maclean's*, November 22.

Kirsi, Tapio, Antti Hervonen, and Marja Jylhä. 2000. "A Man's Gotta Do What a Man's Gotta Do: Husbands as Caregivers to their Demented Wives, A Discourse Analysis." *Journal of Aging Studies* 14(2):153-169.

Lopata, Helena Z. 1973. *Widowhood in an American City*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman.

Lopata, Helena Z. 1979. *Women as Widows: Support Systems*. New York: Elsevier.

Marcus, Ivan G. 2004. *The Jewish Life Cycle: Rites of Passage from Biblical to Modern Times*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Middleton, Valerie A., Sharon K. Anderson, and James H. Banning. 2009. "The Journey to Understanding Privilege: A Meta-Narrative Approach." *Journal of Transformative Education* 7:294-311.

Moore, Alinde J. and Dorothy C. Stratton. 2002. *Resilient Widowers: Older Men Speak for Themselves*. New York: Springer.

Pringle, Richard. 2008. "No Rugby, no fear: Collective stories, masculinities, and transformative possibilities in schools." *Sports, Education & Society* 13(2):215-237.

Prus, Robert. (2005) "Studying Human Knowing and Acting: The Interactional Quest for Authenticity." Pp. 7-13 in *Doing Ethnography: Studying Everyday Life*, edited by Dorothy Pawluch, William Shaffir, and Charlene Miall. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Reissman, Catherine K. 1993. *Narrative Analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Reissman, Catherine K. 2001. "Analysis of Personal Narratives." Pp. 695-710 in *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, edited by Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Richardson, Laurel. 1988. "The Collective Story: Postmodernism and the writing of sociology." *Sociological Focus* 21(3):199-208.

Richardson, Laurel. 1990. *Writing Strategies: Reach Diverse Audiences*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Richardson, Laurel. 2000. "The Metaphor is the Message: Commentary on Arthur Frank's 'Illness and the Interactionist Vocation'." *Symbolic Interaction* 23(4):333-336.

van den Hoonaard, Deborah. K. 1997. "Identity Foreclosure: Women's Experiences of Widowhood as Expressed in Autobiographical Accounts." *Ageing & Society* 17:533-551.

van den Hoonaard, Deborah. K. 2001. *The Widowed Self: The Older Woman's Journey Through Widowhood*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

van den Hoonaard, Deborah. K. 2009. "Widowers' strategies of self-representation during research interviews: A sociological analysis." *Ageing & Society* 29:257-276.

van den Hoonaard, Deborah. K. 2010. *By Himself: The Older Man's Experience of Widowhood*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

van den Hoonaard, Deborah. K. 2012. *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

van den Hoonaard, Deborah. K., Kate M. Bennett, and Elizabeth Evans. 2012. "I was there when she passed: older widowers' narratives of the death of their wife." *Ageing & Society / FirstView Article*:1-18. Retrieved June 20, 2013 (http://www.liv.ac.uk/~kmb/MyPublishedPapers/vandenHoonaardBennettEvans2013.pdf).

van den Hoonaard, Will C. 1997. *Working with Sensitizing Concepts: Analytical Field Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

van den Hoonaard, Will C. and Deborah. K. van den Hoonaard. 2007. "The Poignant Accomplishments of Bahá'í Newcomers from Iran." Paper delivered at the New Brunswick and Atlantic Studies Research and Development Centre Conference: *Town and Country: Exploring Urban and Rural Issues in New Brunswick*. St. Thomas University, June 22-23, Fredericton, Canada.

van den Hoonaard, Deborah K. 2013. "Telling the Collective Story: Symbolic Interactionism in Narrative Research." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):32-45. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Elizabeth Krahn
University of Winnipeg, Canada

Transcending the "Black Raven": An Autoethnographic and Intergenerational Exploration of Stalinist Oppression

Abstract Many of Canada's aging immigrants were displaced persons in Europe post-WWII and have internalized psychological effects of their traumatic past within a society that tends to marginalize or pathologize them. While early *collective trauma* literature focuses on individualized, psychotherapeutic approaches, more recent literature demonstrates the importance of externalizing and contextualizing trauma and fostering validating dialogue within families and community systems to facilitate transformation on many levels. My research is an autoethnographic exploration of lifespan and intergenerational effects of trauma perceived by Russian Mennonite women who fled Stalinist Russia to Germany during WWII and migrated to Winnipeg, Canada, and adult sons or daughters of this generation of women. Sixteen individual life narratives, including my own, generated a collective narrative for each generation. Most participants lost male family members during Stalin's *Great Terror*, *verschleppt*, or *disappeared* in a vehicle dubbed the *Black Raven*. Survivors tended to privilege stories of resilience – marginalizing emotions and *mental weakness*. The signature story of many adult children involved their mother's resilience, suppressed psychological issues, and emotional unavailability. Results underline the importance of narrative exchange that validates marginalized storylines and promotes individual, intergenerational, and cultural story reconstruction within safe social and/or professional environments, thus supporting healthy attachments.

Keywords Autoethnography; Collective Trauma; Displaced Persons; Aging; Attachment; Narrative Approaches

Elizabeth Krahn completed her MSW at the University of Manitoba in 2011. In addition to private practice and independent research, she is currently also part of a research project at the Oral History Center, University of Winnipeg – her focus being on aging WWII refugees and displaced persons.

email address: ewkrahn@hotmail.com

The *Black Raven* has long been a symbol of death in certain cultures and, during the period of collectivization and political terror in Stalinist Russia, was a colloquialism used at many levels of Soviet society to refer to the vehicles driven by Stalin's state police – then known as the NKVD (Ziolkowski 1998). In the case of Russian Mennonites, it was never certain when the Black Raven (*Schwarzer Rabe*) might appear, but, when it did, it was in the dead of night and all would awaken as it made its way through the village, fearing that dreadful knock on the door which meant the arrest of a loved one, never to be seen again. My mother told me about this dark period, known by historians as the *Great Terror* (Epp 2000). She would tremble in bed as she heard the Black Raven approach, terrified that my father would be taken. He was spared that fate, but my five uncles were not as fortunate.

The earliest narratives I recall from my childhood were incomplete storylines of my mother's life, told with little coherent context or feeling. The beginning of my life coincided with the first decade of my mother's fifty-year separation from her sisters, who had all been sent to labor camps in northern Russia and Siberia. Not all survived. Only decades later did I grasp more deeply her hidden pain and how it had unconsciously affected my own mental and emotional wellbeing. I also began to recognize this in other Mennonite families.

In my role as a geriatric mental health social worker, I witnessed evidence of unresolved effects of political trauma in some clients, and its effects on family members. As emotional or mental health issues had often been left hidden or suppressed until a triggering health crisis engaged these survivors with the health care system, standard biomedical and psychiatric treatment often dominated an overall plan of care. Additionally, the needs of adult children were addressed only as they pertained to the caregiving needs of their parents (Mental health practice experience, 1998-2007).

My worlds merged when I met my mother's surviving family members for the first time in 2003 and journeyed to Russia, Siberia, and Ukraine in 2005. These experiences, juxtaposed with my mother's death, stimulated deep reflection that led to my current research focus. I was curious how Russian Mennonite survivors, particularly women, and adult sons and daughters of survivors would reflect on their personal and intergenerational life experiences and possible emotional or mental health needs.

The following central research question emerged (Krahn 2011):

> How do Russian Mennonite women who immigrated to Canada after the Second World War, and their adult children, perceive the effects of Soviet trauma on their quality of life and emotional or mental health today, and what do they identify as strengths and possible areas of emotional need that require greater understanding and support from the...[social, cultural, and/or professional communities with which they are linked]? (p. 3-4)

As both researcher and participant in this collective Russian Mennonite experience, I was drawn to an autoethnographic approach. But, first of all, let me take you through my process with the literature.

The Discourse on Collective Trauma

Research evidence from various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, social work, and neuroscience, was explored to gain an understanding of the evolving discourse on collective trauma and its lifespan and intergenerational effects.

The study of collective trauma has, to a large extent, focused on Holocaust survivors and war

veterans, although literature relating to other cultural groups has been emerging particularly within the last two decades (Danieli 1998). Much of the literature addresses lifespan effects of trauma, as well as intergenerational transmission, a very strong focus generated by the Holocaust literature as early as the 1960s (Danieli 1998). There is also a growing amount of literature on the effects of migration on mental health (e.g., Grinberg and Grinberg 1989; Berry 2001).

Cumulative Trauma: Political Oppression, War, Migration, and Displaced Persons

In her classic book, *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Herman (1992) speaks to the experience of prolonged trauma due to political oppression, war, and/or captivity, which may contribute to a host of mental health issues. Related migration or displacement is an additional crisis that compounds the entire trauma experience (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989). Drachman (1992) provides a stage-of-migration framework to contextualize three primary stages of refugee migration – pre-migration, transit, and resettlement stages – all of which tend to involve traumatic experiences and the ultimate challenges of adaptation and acculturation.

Kuwert and colleagues (2012) found that displaced persons of the WWII era, who currently reside in Germany, are significantly more affected by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and somatoform symptoms than non-displaced participants, and that symptom intensity is related to the amount of trauma experienced during displacement. Although increasing attention is being given to the mental health of recent immigrants and refugees in Canada (Khanlou 2010; Kirmayer et al. 2011) and internationally (Porter and Haslam 2005), there is little acknowledgement in the literature (corroborated by Durst 2005) of long-term mental health effects on the nearly 250,000 European displaced persons and/or refugees of the WWII era who immigrated to Canada between 1947 and 1962 (statistics from Kelley and Trebilcock 1998). There is a sense that WWII immigrants are a silent, invisible minority, assumed to have successfully assimilated into the dominant culture.

Historical, ethnographic, and/or oral history publications presenting culture specific displacement and refugee experiences of Poles, Lithuanians, Estonians, Latvians, Ukrainians, Mennonites, Ethnic Germans, and other groups (e.g., Aun 1985; Danys 1986; Plakans 1995; Werner 1996; Epp 2000; Isajiw, Boshyk, and Senkus 2002; Patalas 2003) may provide personal anecdotes but rarely refer to mental health effects. It is in presenting my research to social workers in geriatric settings that I have received professional confirmation of the potential for long-term effects of trauma and displacement on European immigrants of diverse ethnicities.

Lifespan Implications of Trauma

The literature related to lifespan implications of collective trauma suggests three main trajectories (that at times overlap): (1) *resilience* based on internal and external resources that promote the ability to go on with life despite adversity (e.g., Ayalon 2005); (2) *post-traumatic growth* which extends beyond resilience and involves reconstructing life meaning and value beyond being a victim (Janoff-Bulman 2004) and transcending pre-trauma levels of adaptation (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004); and (3) *psychological effects* ranging from non-clinical levels of stress to clinical diagnoses, including the retriggering of unresolved trauma due to significant transitions or losses in old age (e.g., King et al. 2007; Kuwert et al. 2012).

Reynolds, in her exploration of psychological effects in a non-clinical sample of 67 Russian Mennonites who fled to Canada following the Bolshevik Revolution, found that anxiety, somatic complaints, and PTSD were exhibited at "significant levels above the norm" (1997:70) over seventy years post-trauma. This quantitative study was the only research found that specifically addressed the question of lifespan effects of trauma in relation to Mennonites, although Epp (2000), in her comprehensive ethnography of Russian Mennonite female refugees of WWII, provided a rich qualitative account of women's experiences of oppression, war, and immigration.

Intergenerational Transmission

The literature affirms the experience of intergenerational transmission of collective trauma within the context of many oppressed cultural groups, though little research has been conducted with the families of displaced persons of post-WWII Europe besides Holocaust survivors. Psychological; familial; cultural and societal; and biological modes of transmission are presented (see Danieli 1998).

Psychological transmission was verified by Reynolds (1997) who reported that children and grandchildren of Russian Mennonites who immigrated to Canada in the 1920s demonstrated levels of anxiety and depression significantly higher than the national norm. She also found evidence of attachment issues. Attachment theory, which centers around the significance of the earliest attachment bonds between parent and child (Bowlby 1979), accounts for difficulties in parent-child relationships due to traumatic experiences and losses of one or both parents (Weingarten 2004). A growing body of literature acknowledges the role of early attachment in the quality of attachments over the lifespan (Merz, Schuengel, and Schulze 2007). The attachment experience can also be considered within the concept of *familial transmission*, which relates to family patterns, rules, expectations, secrets, silences, and parenting styles that contribute to issues and concerns of children of survivors (Weingarten 2004).

Societal transmission has been linked to forced or unconscious silencing of groups who can bear witness to the past (Connerton 1989; Danieli 1998; Volkan 2001). As Volkan (2001) further suggested, cultural transmission may involve the silencing of certain cultural stories and privileging of others for the purpose of protecting and repairing group identity. Rousseau and Drapeau (1998) stated that anthropological and sociological research regards society as the bearer of social trauma, contributing to change in the web of human relations and collective representations, and influencing future generations.

In the case of Russian Mennonites, Taves suggests that it was the men who disappeared or were killed that gained the "sacred status" of martyrdom, while the suffering and degradation of their surviving wives and children merely "symbolized the decline of the Soviet Mennonite people" (1998:114) due to lack of male leadership. Epp (2000), in her ethnography of Russian Mennonite women who immigrated to Canada post-WWII, also challenges

cultural and religious narratives that marginalize women's experiences.

As Mennonite history is rooted in the Radical Reformation of the 16th century (in The Netherlands) when thousands were severely persecuted, tortured, and killed by Catholic and Protestant authorities over the course of a century (Loewen 2003), Russian Mennonite suffering has been likened by some Mennonites to that of 16th century "martyrs" (Smith 1981 as cited in Loewen 2003) and the escape from Russia portrayed as a modern equivalent of Moses' exodus (Kroeker 2000). Such powerful religious metaphors and a long tradition of piety, stoicism, and pacifism have marginalized narratives not befitting of Mennonites (Kroeker 2000). In the case of women, this included stories of rape or other forms of abuse, as well as unresolved emotional or psychological issues. Epp (1997) concludes that such experiences were often internalized as a personal rather than a collective tragedy and judged by others as personal frailty or even pathology.

Regarding *biological transmission*, empirical research reveals a relationship between maternal trauma and cortisol levels in children born post-trauma, resulting in lower stress thresholds and exaggerated stress responses to environmental stimuli (Yehuda et al. 2005). Empirical research also points to the underlying neurobiology of life experience, parenting behavior, and attachment – contributing to intergenerational transmission of either healthy or insecure attachment (Strathearn et al. 2009) and thus, impacting quality of life across the lifespan. Neuroscience also informs us that our neurobiological system is constantly adapting to its internal and external environment and that genetic expression is dependent upon one's ever evolving lived experience (Lickliter 2008; Siegel 2012). Moreover, as it is a relational phenomenon (Siegel 2012), as well as a cultural one (Ivey, D'Andrea, and Ivey 2011), groups of people may be neurobiologically shaped by common lived experiences and narratives over time or generations. Thus, it is important to be cognizant of the relationship between post-traumatic growth and the quality of individual and collective experience, memory, and narratives.

Beyond Individualizing Trauma

Although various psychological perspectives regarding trauma assessment and treatment may have a place in human service, an overview of the literature demonstrates the importance of moving beyond individualizing trauma and, rather, contextualizing it, thus, working with community systems to facilitate dialogue, healing, and change on many levels (e.g., Walsh 2007; Denborough, Freedman, and White 2008). Earlier research focusing on individual traumatic memories does not account for broader social and cultural memories or the impact of social discourse on individual meaning-making, narrative, and sense of identity (Hunt and McHale 2008). This takes the process beyond the domain of individual or even group *therapy* and into that of social or community *dialogue* (e.g., Denborough et al. 2008). It has been demonstrated that adequate social support and validating witnesses to one's lived experience pre- and post-trauma on an interpersonal, family, and community level can support adaptation that transcends pre-trauma levels of functioning, and/or counter or ameliorate late-onset stress, loss of meaning, and psychological symptomatology that can arise in old age (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004; Walsh 2007). Viewing this through the lens of neuroscience, we see that authentic and validating narrative dialogue with those who have experienced trauma and insecure attachment, on an individual and a collective level, facilitates neurobiological adaptations that, in turn, support more positive human development throughout the lifespan and intergenerationally (Jordan 2008; Lickliter 2008; Ivey et al. 2011; Siegel 2012). Thus, we have a scientific explanation for the tremendous importance of qualitative, interpersonal, and narrative processes in stimulating positive individual and social change.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

There appears to be a common societal perception, reflected in social policy, of homogeneity with regard to older adults – a perception that can be insensitive to differences in ethnic origin, history, lived experience, and needs, as well as the fact that our social construction of old age blurs multiple generations of individuals ranging in age from 65 to 100 or more years (MacCourt 2004). The subject of older adults seems most often linked with the rise of Alzheimer's disease and the decline of healthcare dollars.

When older adults experience physical, emotional, and/or mental health issues related to early life trauma, this tends to be viewed within the healthcare system as a personal pathology requiring individual treatment – which often privileges a primarily biomedical approach. This research recognizes the need for greater emphasis on a *social model of health and care* (MacCourt 2004), which sees the individual within his or her social context and underlines the importance of respectful social relationships and supports, as well as structural community change to enhance wellbeing and quality of life.

I have used a *life course approach* to contextualize the multi-faceted experiences of survivors across the lifespan (Hooyman et al. 2002). Also, viewing these lived experiences through the lens of *critical gerontology* situates individual scenarios within socio-cultural and political conditions, both past and present, that point to a systemic problem rather than the sole problem and responsibility of the individual (Chambers 2004). Critical gerontology and *feminist perspectives* on aging within a life course framework suggest that early life events, such as traumatic experiences, cannot be understood merely in simple cause and effect terms. They are part of multiple, complex interacting factors across long periods of time linked to particular cultural, political, and historical contexts that often affect men and women differently (Hooyman et al. 2002).

Autoethnography provides the qualitative lens and framework for soliciting marginalized voices of women survivors and their adult children and constructing, from their individual narratives, rich collective narratives that shed light on personal, familial, socio-cultural, and political factors related to lifespan outcomes of collective trauma.

Autoethnographic Methodology

While classical ethnography interprets in-depth accounts of human social activity within particular cultural or social groups (Wolcott 2008), *native autoethnography* involves the study of one's own

culture, which integrates the researcher role with that of *insider* and, from this dual vantage point, highlights the voices of marginalized groups, often to challenge dominant oppressive discourse about their lived experience (Reed-Danahay 1997). It was Hayano (1979) who first advocated a shift from the detached *outsider* status of colonial anthropologists to a more subjective insider one. Thus, with the interpretive turn (Adler and Adler 2008) and concern about the representation of the *other* by outsiders, ethnography began to adopt a more post-modern constructivist view (O'Byrne 2007) and, in keeping with a transactional and subjectivist epistemology, findings are said to be constructed during the research process itself (Guba and Lincoln 1994), emphasizing that the other can only be understood in relation to the *self* and that meanings emerge through social interaction (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994).

Hammersley and Atkinson (2005), in *Ethnography: Principles in practice* (2nd ed.), suggested that traditional ethnography and autoethnography can exist within each of three paradigms – classical, critical, and postmodern (as cited in O'Byrne 2007). Attentiveness to research goals, personal biases and assumptions, and what is best for the cultural group under study is critical in the selection of compatible paradigms and approaches that maximize the research process. For the purposes of my research, I used the analytical autoethnographic approach proposed by Anderson (2006), which integrates classical ethnography and native autoethnography and emphasizes analytic reflexivity, narrative visibility of the researcher's self, dialogue with informants beyond the self, and commitment to the use of empirical data to develop theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena. Anderson has identified the capacity of autoethnography to facilitate self-understanding "that stands at the intersection of biography and society...self-knowledge that comes from understanding our personal lives, identities, and feelings as deeply connected to and...constituted by – and in turn helping to constitute – the sociocultural contexts in which we live" (2006:390). Having stood between two or more worlds of experience, I resonate strongly with this statement, and identify with native autoethnographers who highlight issues concerning exile, memory, and/or shifting multiple identities, which lead to ambiguous insider/outsider status (Reed-Danahay 1997). This autoethnographic process has facilitated in me a personal shift from being an island between the worlds of others to being a bridge.

Applied Methodology

This research project was endorsed by Mennonite community leaders in the city of Winnipeg. Recruitment information was provided to pastors of ten Mennonite churches, which had become home to post-WWII Russian Mennonite immigrants. Personal announcements, in both English and German, were welcomed at three churches and provided the familiarity necessary for women and adult children to approach me and feel safe to participate. Nine respondents participated as a result of my church presence – five older women and four adult children. Two additional churches were the source of three more respondents, and remaining participants learned about the research project from others who had informed them. Survivors were between the ages of 78 and 96 years old, while adult children were between 51 and 67.

Data collection involved *participant observation*, *interviewing*, and *archival research* (Wolcott 2008). Participant observation occurred within the context of scheduled interviews, and insider status provided an understanding and sense of Mennonite culture and experience. One-on-one taped interviews were conducted with six survivors and seven adult children. One survivor was apprehensive about the use of a tape recorder, while an out-of-province participant provided me with a previously taped interview (the latter approved by the Chair of the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board). Eight participants were members of mother-child dyads, and remaining participants were unrelated. Though two older women demonstrated early signs of dementia, consultation with family members provided full support of their participation.

Two one-on-one interviews (approximately two hours each) were conducted with most respondents who were invited to share their life stories in relation to the research question outlined above. Specifically, participants were asked to reflect on how their (or their mother's) Soviet experience had affected them across the lifespan physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. All participants were asked to reflect on their own and/or their mother's personal needs and how these might best be served at this time. Additional questions were asked as required for further clarification. I was interested not only in narrative content but in the subjectivity of the narrative exchange. Just as I witnessed participants' stories and their meaning-making process, they also witnessed elements of my own family story, though to a limited extent, and, particularly, early in the interview process, to establish connection and trust. Thus, data not only emerged from past experiences of participants but also from this mutual sharing (Coffey 1999).

The examination of archived documents, historical writings, and biographical literature sensitized me to the magnitude and weight of the story carried by Russian Mennonite women, but discussion of this material is beyond the scope of this paper.

Data analysis involved description, analysis, and interpretation (Wolcott 1994; 2008). *Description* involved the writing of a collective narrative account for each generation of participants, allowing their voices to stand on their own with as little interpretation as possible. In accordance with conditions specified in the *Consent to Participate*, I have used pseudonyms in the current paper in order to protect the identity of participants. Participants of each generational cohort were given the opportunity to read their collective narrative to ensure that they felt adequately represented and to provide overall feedback. *Data analysis* occurred throughout the research process and involved organizing the descriptive narrative account, as well as coding and identifying prominent themes. Although preconceived ideas and theories that emerged from the literature, to some extent, guided data gathering and description, the latter tended to be an inductive process, with themes emerging or becoming clear during the course of the research through careful observation and the privileging of participants' voices (Anderson 2006; Wolcott 2008). Dominant themes highlighted in this paper were related to matters of identity, emotional or mental health and agency, culture, religion, gender, and power (Reed-Danahay 1997; Fraser 2004). I was particularly interested in patterns and themes that

emerged within and between each generation. Although I integrate certain guiding concepts into the discussion and *interpretations* of the results, I do so only when these concepts are in resonance with what I have heard from participants. This emphasis on participants' voices counters the risks of researcher bias or the privileging of my own personal experience (Anderson 2006).

Findings

A presentation of the findings includes (1) highlights of the collective narrative account of each generation and (2) an interpretive discussion of these narratives, with a focus on the lived experience of participants. Their reflections on helpful social and/or professional supports are beyond the scope of this paper. The collective narrative of survivors includes a chronology of historical events seen through their eyes. Intra- and intergenerational themes are discussed and viewed in relation to relevant literature.

Russian Mennonite Women: The Collective Narrative

For each participant, life on Russian soil, from the moment of birth, was steeped in war, political unrest, and/or oppression. The year 1914 and WWI marked the dramatic beginning of one participant's life, a woman I will call Anna. During the Bolshevik Revolution, all males in her father's and grandfather's generations were violently killed and their families dispossessed of their land. A widespread typhus epidemic and famine followed, bringing us to 1922 and the birth of Ella. By this time, a tremendous climate of insecurity and terror had set in, stimulating a massive migration of Mennonites to Canada; no further migration was permitted after 1930, when Stalin began the exile of community leaders, collectivization, and Sovietization of the school system. The remaining six participants – Frieda, Helga, Liese, Martha, Neta, and Sara – were born between 1926 and 1932. The year 1933 brought a widespread *man-made famine* due to the forced export of all grain grown on collectives. All women experienced and spoke of the chaos of this period.

By the mid-1930s, Stalin called for mass arrests by the NKVD. Seven of the eight women interviewed had lost fathers tragically, primarily through these NKVD arrests. Anna, who had lost her father during the revolution, now lost her husband, step-father, and other extended family members. In the case of Frieda and Helga, both parents were arrested. Ella stated, "Das war *so* eine *unheimliche* Zeit, *so unheimlich*. Dann wurde bloß so geflüstert: 'Dem haben sie geholt, dem haben sie geholt, dem haben sie geholt,' *und nie mehr gesehen*." [Trans.: "That was *such* a *sinister* time, *so sinister*. You constantly heard whispers: 'So-and-so was taken, so-and-so was taken, and so-and-so was taken,' *and never seen again*."] This was one of the darkest periods experienced by these women and, for most, the fate of their fathers, and husband, has remained a mystery.

Mothers had to be very resourceful in order to survive with their children. The loss of the male head was accompanied in three instances by the family's eviction from their home or even the village – in Anna's case having resulted in a move to a large urban center post-revolution and, in the cases of Liese and Martha, finding shelter in makeshift accommodations with the help of extended family members. Ella, Liese, Martha, and Neta spoke of the intensity of the work on the collective. Liese commented: "...we were alone for days that we didn't see mom. We were in bed already when she came home from work... In the morning when we got up she was gone already." Both Liese and Martha had been given responsibility at a very tender age (seven and eight years old) to care for siblings younger than themselves. Liese further commented, "I would...pick mushrooms and fry [them], and if we had other stuff. I built me a stove outside...and so I would cook then for our brother, my two sisters, the baby, too, you know, and that's how we existed." Martha's comment appeared to cloak an underlying childhood fear about her mother's state of mind: "...the cream of wheat wasn't sweet...and we...told everybody mom wanted to poison us... *We didn't eat anything that day*."

Frieda and Helga, who had each at 11 years of age lost both parents and been taken to a Soviet orphanage, were shown images of people being killed and pushed into mass graves and informed that this was the fate of their parents. "We had to denounce our parents...say they were traitors," said Helga. Frieda recalled, "They told us...forget about your parents, [they] are enemies of the state and... Father Stalin is going to take care of you."

With the German invasion in 1941, participants came under German occupation and thus, protection from Soviet forces. However, several were separated from family members who had been relocated to eastern parts of the Soviet Union prior to the German invasion – losses still deeply mourned today. Young men, including Neta's uncle, were "herded like cattle" and sent to work camps. Anna's sister and niece also disappeared, never to be seen or heard from again. Liese and Martha were also being evacuated, but were saved from this fate because the areas they were in were already under heavy German military fire. Martha painted a heroic picture of her very anxious but resilient mother fleeing a bombed out train with four young children, no home to return to and nowhere to go; armed only with faith, she had found a home in an empty village that had already been evacuated. Frieda reported how close she had come to being shot as a Jew by German troops and expressed her empathy for the Jewish population in Ukraine during that dark period.

Women's narratives moved fairly quickly to the drama of the flight to Germany with the retreating German army, with the majority en route during the fall and early winter of 1943. Two modes of transit were used, with half of the women traveling in horse-drawn wagons and half in freight trains. Most were women, children, and elderly as many men had already been lost. The pursuing Soviet army was a constant threat. Neta's aunt, whose husband had been taken in 1941, was so emotionally distraught that she expressed the following: "Waut soll etch met [miene Tchinga]? Soll etch dei dautschlone?! [Trans.: "What should I do with [my children]? Beat them to death?!"] Great pain also resulted from the loss of loved ones to so-called natural causes exacerbated by conditions of war, and the inability to ever revisit their graves. Ella lost her 18-year-old brother to tuberculosis and Anna's mother died due to a poorly treated bowel obstruction.

In addition to the terror of bombings and survival in a war zone, several women also spoke of the

ongoing risk of remaining in East Germany or Poland during the Russian invasion, which included not only the threat of repatriation but also a high incidence of rape by Russian troops. Martha's words reflected the constant fear they lived in: "...group rape...it was traumatic, and my mother... was *so afraid*...that that would happen to us. That's why she was *very, very anxious* to get us out of, and when we were in Germany it was just touch and go, whether it would go to the Americans or the Russians." Helga described the *Angst* of these times as follows: "...displaced persons didn't want to go back to Russia; there were suicides, they just slashed their wrists...hung themselves, whatever, because the liberators weren't really sending them to their homelands, they were sending them to Siberia." Sara had suffered the fate of repatriation and, at the age of 16, had been forced to work as a logger. In 1967, she, her husband, and their children were sponsored to Canada by her mother-in-law who had lost contact with her son during the chaos of war and immigrated to Canada with her other children soon thereafter. Ella had initially immigrated to Paraguay with her family as Canadian immigration policy had rejected all applicants with health issues. As her brother was terminally ill, it fell on Ella to help her father clear twelve hectares of land, as well as produce the bricks to construct their new home!

Physical Themes

Older women tended to project an image of lifelong physical strength and resilience and provided few examples of physical repercussions of their Soviet experience. Some did acknowledge the issue of food shortages and nutritional deficiency coupled with physical over-exertion during those early years, and long-term effects involved spinal stenosis for Neta, and osteoporosis, as well as arthritis, for Sara.

Emotional Themes

Although the emotional element could be felt and was, to some extent, articulated in women's narratives, it was not given much emphasis. Several women attributed most of the emotional burden to their mothers who had lost, or had been at risk of losing, their men, and whose biggest concern had been the survival and cohesiveness of the family unit during the war that followed. Both Liese and Martha expressed that their mothers had provided little affection and emotional validation, being focused on survival. Liese's mother had minimized the loss of her husband, constantly reminding her children that "*every[one]* had experienced the same thing," as he had been one of seventeen men "taken" that night. Liese was still deeply hurt by her mother's unsympathetic parenting, and feels a degree of shame and guilt for feeling this way about her mother, now deceased.

Frieda had adapted to her circumstances and managed her emotional *Angst* by focusing on the education that was available to her in the orphanage and, later, on every opportunity that facilitated her escape to Germany. Even when she learned of her mother's survival in a labor camp, and it became possible to write letters, she remained emotionally detached; it was only after the birth of her own children in Canada that she realized how "my mother's heart must have been absolutely broken.... [I] feel more what my mother must have gone through."

Only two women – Helga and Sara – disclosed having had severe emotional distress during the post-migration period; in both cases, the absence of family of origin and an adequate support network were primary factors. Remaining women reported few emotional concerns during their period of acculturation into Canada, but, in several cases, referred to friends or family members who had unresolved emotional issues such as "bad nerves," unresolved grief and loss issues, and bitterness or resentment about the past.

Mental Themes

The majority of participants placed a high value on *mental strength* to cope with the challenges they faced. Their stories reflected incredible resourcefulness and agency – they were "doers." Liese stated matter-of-factly, "If you keep working, you eat!" The corollary of this was that women could not afford to be "*mentally weak*," too engaged with their emotions. Such women were regarded as lacking in character, will, or even faith. Liese initially described her grandmother as having been "weak," but later decided that she "*might* have been a *little bit depressed*" as "several" of her sons had been "taken." Martha referred to an extended family member – who had been sexually abused post-immigration, kept the abuse largely hidden for the duration of her life, and been diagnosed with schizophrenia – as having been mentally weak.

Some participants spoke of mothers or extended family members who had demonstrated tremendous faith and strength throughout their lives, yet, had suffered emotionally as they got older. Martha's mother had required "nerve pills" during her middle age and onward. Anna's sister and the mothers of Liese and Martha developed dementia in older age, and each of these experiences reportedly unleashed unresolved emotions, delusions linked to the past, and/or agitated behavior. As Martha said about her mother: "She would hit...kick...and bite...people – she was fighting, fighting against what had happened in her life..." Her mother would frequently pile all of her possessions onto her walker and announce it was time to leave, as if preparing to "flee."

Spiritual Themes

A universal theme among all participants was that of gratitude for having escaped the Communist regime and survived in the midst of bombing and warfare – having been "protected." As Neta put it, "[The Russians] were always behind us [during the flight]...we had no passports, nothing, we just had faith." Their faith enabled them to draw "strength and...courage to face whatever [was] coming [their] way." Neta likened the escape to the biblical Exodus and Hitler's army was accepted for its role in this great escape, though Frieda and Helga had experienced conflicting feelings about the German army because of its actions against Ukrainian Jews. In general, all women accepted their powerlessness in relation to political forces and relied on their faith in a higher power to keep them resilient.

Women also expressed gratitude for the freedom which they enjoyed in Canada – to raise and provide for their families in a safe political environment. They were grateful for the simple things in life. Ella put it this way: "Ich bin so reich wie eine Königen! Ich kann jetzt essen was ich will,

ich hab anzuziehen, ich hab ein Haus, ich brauch kein Wasser raustragen und keins rein tragen...." [Trans.: "I'm as rich as a queen! I can eat what I want, have clothes to wear, a house, I don't need to haul water..."]

In Canada, women adapted to the norms of the existing Mennonite community, which, according to some participants, had not fully grasped the depth of the traumas they had experienced, though this was not stated as a criticism. Of significance is the fact, mentioned by Ella, Liese, and Martha, that women who had lost their husbands were initially not allowed to remarry because it was not certain that their husbands had, in fact, died. Indeed, participants recounted bittersweet stories of women who had remained true to their husbands only to learn decades later that they had survived in Siberia and remarried.

The majority of participants relied almost exclusively on family and church networks to meet social needs and appeared to be secure in their religious life. However, a few comments suggested that some Mennonite women may experience guilt in later life related to childhood choices influenced by Communist propaganda. In Liese's case, this had involved the refusal to pray with her parents or to believe in God.

Adult Children: The Collective Narrative

Two sons and six daughters contributed to this narrative. Four of us were born in Canada (Lydia; Martin; Diane; Dorothy); two in South America (Edna; Darlene); one had been an infant during the escape from Ukraine in 1943 (David); and one had been born in the Soviet Union after her mother's repatriation (Susanna). Edna, Lydia, Marten, and Susanna are the children of Ella, Lena, Martha, and Sara respectively. Diane, Dorothy, Darlene, and David make reference to mothers who were not participants in this study. Adult children tended to be more introspective, actively reflecting on physical, mental, emotional, and/or spiritual effects of their mothers' experiences on their lives.

Traumatic Events Experienced by our Mothers

Adult children provided brief accounts of the family story in abbreviated snippets as the story had been imparted to us. For Lydia, Martin, Darlene, and Dorothy, this involved the arrest and permanent disappearance of grandfathers and the impact on the family. In other cases, the terror of the Black Raven had been no less palpable as women had lost extended family members. Diane lost five uncles and, in another dramatic case, Darlene's uncle had been informing on male relatives in order to protect himself; ultimately, he was also arrested, never to be seen again.

In addition to anecdotes about the loss of loved ones during the Revolution, famine, collectivization, exiles, arrests, and flight, Edna, David, and Darlene reported that their fathers had been conscripted into the German army – two having spent several years in prisoner-of-war camps. Without the protection of her husband, David's mother had been the victim of multiple rapes while on the eastern front, protecting herself from group rape by submitting herself to one Russian soldier. Efforts to avoid his advances put her children at risk; indeed, he had thrown a grenade into the children's bedroom one night when she had hidden from him. Fortunately, though injured, the children survived. Adult children also reported painful family separations due to dispersal to two or three different continents.

Intergenerational Physical Themes

Darlene, Diane, and Dorothy reported traumatic pregnancies and childrearing experiences of their mothers, in part due to malnutrition, including miscarriages, medical abortion, and physical fragility in surviving children. These physical themes are closely linked to emotional outcomes, which will be discussed further in later sections.

Intergenerational Emotional Themes

Most adult children were impacted by the emotional residue of their mothers' past traumatic experiences, reporting a range of underlying emotions mothers masked from the community around them, including fear, grief, anger, resentment, anxiety, paranoia, depression, loneliness, and/or homesickness. Edna, Diane, and Dorothy identified maternal trust issues; two mothers were quoted as saying: "You can't trust anyone outside the family." Daughters felt this may be related to the history of fear and betrayal on the collective, but that it was also likely a way of ensuring emotional safety in a religious community where they did not feel totally accepted. Edna, Lydia, David, Darlene, and Diane stressed their mothers' focus on "fitting in," "keeping up appearances," "saving face," and "avoiding gossip" within the context of the Canadian Mennonite community, which meant not disclosing innermost thoughts and emotions to their peers.

Emotional undercurrents were picked up vicariously by adult children within a context that did not provide a means of appropriately processing them. Edna recalled a family scene around the dinner table, "mother's tears coursing down her cheeks," father looking grim, and children seated around the table – invisible. "We were all in our frozen little places, nobody said a word. It was complete silence." David, who had been an infant and toddler during his mother's encounters with rape, would often tear up during the interview process – his emotions easily triggered when speaking of his mother.

Particularly traumatic for our mothers had been the loss of loved ones through exile, disappearance, death, and relocation. For the mothers of Edna, Susanna, and Diane, immigration had resulted in permanent separation from family of origin, resulting in lifelong grief, emotional isolation within the Mennonite community, and primary reliance on immediate family, particularly eldest or only daughters. Each of these three daughters described having been her mother's "confidante" since childhood, and Edna and Diane specifically used this term. Edna expressed that "emotionally, I've always felt like I've carried my mom," while Susanna felt that she had "mothered" her own mother since childhood. "The focus was more on my mother's grief and my mother's experience than it was really on my experience," Edna reflected. Although most children reported that they knew their mothers loved them, and that mothers emphasized maintenance of strong family bonds, Edna, Lydia, Susanna, and Diane found that their family experience provided little emotional support. Edna expressed it this way:

> Try to have a real conversation with her. It's really difficult to talk about real issues, to talk about what's really going on... I wanted her to be supportive of *my* feelings and...emotions [and] it was an impossible task for her... I think there's a huge disconnect in the family...and that causes me anxiety.

Lydia linked this emotional unavailability to her grandmother's stoic survival since the Revolution. The maternal lineage of strength and control was marked by the admonition: "Get over it!" "There's a hardness there... Somewhere in her experience, [my mother] developed a hardness which makes it hard for her to show compassion." Edna and Diane also perceived this lack of compassion in their mothers, but "[b]eing stoic doesn't mean they don't feel; they just can't show it easily."

Often the emotionality of the family story was grasped more deeply over time, in the case of Lydia, once she began to have her own children, but, in other cases, even more recently. "It's only become more and more clear to me within the last five [or] ten years," said Edna, "...I'm really experiencing those kind of emotions now, some kind of backlash of my [childhood] experience," which had been "a very traumatic upbringing."

Intergenerational Mental Themes

Adult children interpreted the term "mental" broadly, ranging from viewing "mental strength" as a means of managing one's life and one's emotions, to various forms of "mental illness," such as symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Also included in this continuum was the notion of "mental constructs," such as thoughts and beliefs of mothers that may have shaped those of adult children.

The majority of adult children reported their mothers had relied upon "mental strength" to cope with almost insurmountable circumstances. They were described as "mentally tough" and having "strength of mind." David stated: "When they got raped, they pulled themselves together." Another adult child indicated that "they *couldn't* give up" and would always "make the best of it." Lydia said this about women in her extended family: "Not one of them ended [up] in a mental institute, *none of them*, they all functioned."

Mental strength, faith, resilience, and resourcefulness were interrelated themes in the narratives of adult children. Edna, Lydia, Diane, and Dorothy felt that their mother's mental strength came at the expense of "the softer side." They confirmed that emotional needs and mental health issues were often perceived by their mothers as "lack of faith" and/or "weakness of character." This belief was thought to encourage women to internalize emotions and deal with them independently as best they could. Several adult children stated that, although their mothers had demonstrated resilience, this had often masked underlying emotional issues. These adult children described emotional states that one could associate with depression, anxiety, and/or PTSD, though they had no knowledge of any clinical diagnoses ever having been made. Indeed, David clearly described a phenomenon known as *night terrors*, one of many possible symptoms of PTSD, in the case of his mother after immigrating to Canada. In the case of Lydia's grandmother and the mothers of Edna, Susanna, David, and Dorothy, lifelong resilience was said to have masked emotional distress for which at least one (Lydia's grandmother) had reportedly taken "nerve pills" and another Valium (Edna's mother Ella). The former later developed dementia, during which underlying suppressed emotions had surfaced. Only Martin described both his mother and grandmother as fully resilient, applauding their strength of character and making no mention of underlying emotional or mental health issues.

Several adult children admitted to undiagnosed mental health concerns of their own over the lifespan. Darlene, Diane, and Dorothy reported having experienced what they identified as symptoms of anxiety, beginning in early childhood, which they attributed specifically to their mothers' traumatic experiences prior to and throughout their pregnancies. Symptoms and related issues included depressed mood, heightened sensitivity to light and sound, nightmares, obsessive and/or paranoid behavior (e.g., being triggered by legal documents and authority figures, particularly those in uniform; sleeping with weapons under the bed), and anorexia with extreme weight loss. Other adult children had less extreme concerns relating to self-worth, self-confidence, and questions of cultural and religious identity. Many of the above-mentioned concerns were linked by participants to the lack of emotional availability and validation experienced within their family of origin.

Intergenerational Spiritual Themes

All adult children felt that faith had been a core factor in their mother's survival. David made the following comment: "...faith was their whole way of life...and gave them the strength of mind to carry on." Martin echoed this statement, and viewed his family history entirely through the lens of faith and resilience. A foundational story for him revolved around the experience of his maternal grandmother who, during the German invasion of Ukraine, stranded with her four children "in the middle of the steppes of Russia with absolutely nothing...prayed and asked God: 'Will you really abandon us?!' and experienced that he did not." Martin provided no further storylines beyond that of faith.

However, most children also held a common belief that our mothers had struggled within the context of the Canadian Mennonite church, which had silenced subjectivity and controversial personal experiences, providing black and white options that usually involved burying one's emotional pain and submitting to a high moral code which required stoic acceptance of one's circumstances or fate. For example, Edna's mother, Ella, suffered from depression due to her husband's refusal to sponsor her parents from Paraguay. When she sought support from her pastor, he admonished her "to go home and do what your husband tells you." With no safe place to turn, she had become socially isolated, relying for many years on Valium and upon her young daughter for emotional support.

The case of fathers being conscripted into the German army was also controversial, first of all because Mennonites were traditionally pacifist and, secondly, because at least one father had served in the *SS*. David reported that his father claimed never to have killed anyone – always shooting either "up into the air or down into the ground." For Darlene's mother, her husband's choice to voluntarily join the *SS* had stirred in her tremendous moral and emotional conflict because she had

witnessed the loss of good Jewish friends at the hands of German troops during the occupation of Ukraine. Moreover, the German authorities had ordered her to have their 2-year-old son with Down syndrome euthanized, though he died of natural causes first. These inner conflicts could not be easily resolved.

It was considered "a huge shame to have mental illness." Several adult children reported that mothers internalized the rigidity of the Mennonite church doctrine along with their emotional pain, seeking to gain favor within the church community and in the eyes of God. Diane described this as the "spiritualization of suffering," while Susanna stated, "they didn't focus on the love of God, they focused on the rules." Darlene and Diane felt that this focus on following the rules sometimes resulted in women having a crisis of faith at the end of their life. At the end of her life, Darlene's mother feared that "I'm not good enough...I've done too many bad things, the Lord won't take me in!" In addition to the loss of her 2-year-old son, Darlene's mother had required a medical abortion of twins for which she felt tremendous guilt. This tragic loss of her siblings coupled with her mother's deep spiritual conflict prior to her death is deeply felt by Darlene – the replacement child.

Concern about the rules also meant that several mothers imposed high religious standards and expectations on their children to counter secular influences from the larger community as, under the scrutiny of the Mennonite community, the quality of their children's lives would reflect back on them. This included marrying within the Mennonite community, avoiding the stigma of divorce or children out of wedlock, and not adopting lifestyles or ideologies in conflict with Mennonite dogma. David's mother had resisted psychiatric care for her schizophrenic son as she felt he simply needed more faith. These stances created significant inner conflict for adult children who felt emotional distance from their mothers and/or were struggling to find their own identity in a bicultural world.

Analysis and Discussion

In-depth individual interviews have provided rich data for collective narratives, as well as a means of exploring intra- and intergenerational patterns and themes. This has revealed a multi-layered story involving the interplay of physical, emotional, mental, cultural, and religious factors that bear on individual, intergenerational, and collective experiences and narrative meaning-making. Of interest is the fact that both individual and collective marginalization of certain life experiences confined women and their offspring to rigid, and sometimes unconscious, relational patterns and emotional or psychological states that were difficult to transcend. What follows is a review of key themes, patterns, and needs (1) related to lifespan effects on older women and (2) intergenerational effects on adult children, discussed in relation to relevant literature.

Russian Mennonite Women: Narrative Analysis in Relation to Lifespan Impacts

Women tended to provide chronological accounts of their lives in which prominent themes related to *what happened* and *how they put the past behind them*. They did not actively reflect on the guiding questions concerning physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of life, though this information was embedded in their narratives and I had to sift it out.

A model of narrative analysis outlined by Spector-Mersel (2010) provides one means of exploring *how* women told their narratives. This model outlines six mechanisms of selection by which biographical information is chosen by an individual for the purpose of supporting a particular *claimed identity*. The six mechanisms are (1) *inclusion*, involving parts of the life story preferred in the narrative because they support the identity claim of the story teller; (2) *sharpening*, the act of emphasizing or exaggerating preferred aspects of the story; (3) *omission* of certain parts of the story deemed irrelevant to the claimed identity and preferred story line; (4) *silencing* parts of the story that contradict preferred story lines; (5) *flattening*, minimizing, or condensing certain facts, events, and periods of the life history to assert their insignificance; and (6) *appropriate meaning attribution*, which refers to the act of ascribing a particular meaning to a past event in order to support a claimed identity. The analysis of women's narratives was aided by the additional knowledge gained from the narratives of adult children.

In terms of inclusion, the majority of women focused on the challenges they had endured; personal losses experienced; reliance upon mental strength and faith; resilience; and their ability to reconstruct new lives in Canada. In some cases, the flattening or total omission of emotional and/or psychological storylines was only clearly recognized upon hearing the narratives of adult children. For example, Ella and Liese emphasized or sharpened life experiences that presented positive and proactive qualities and flattened and, in some instances, silenced, those reflecting personal characteristics that were inconsistent with this image. Ella was completely silent about her depression, marital discord, poor pastoral care, and twenty years of Valium, while Liese flattened the anger and resentment she continues to feel towards her mother, who had never been able to provide emotional validation. In both cases, their daughters, Edna and Lydia respectively, had suffered from their emotional unavailability and lack of compassion.

The flattening or silencing of highly emotional experiences of early childhood by several participants, particularly in relation to the emotional distance or total absence of their own mothers (for example, Frieda, one of the orphans, and several participating and non-participating mothers who had carried tremendous responsibility on the collective), resonates strongly with the literature describing insecure attachment. Lack of emotional validation from our earliest attachment figure shapes quality of attachments across the lifespan, including with our future children (Merz et al. 2007).

The literature on post-traumatic growth recommends that trauma survivors develop coherent and congruent life narratives which integrate past, present, and future, including underlying trauma-related emotional or psychological issues (Janoff-Bulman 2004; Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004). Although Frieda and Helga demonstrated integration of emotional story-lines into their life narratives, it appears that several research participants may have experienced mere resilience in

the absence of safe, validating attachments and/or environments where they could integrate and voice a more coherent life narrative.

The collective narrative of each generation points to a *claimed identity* of mental strength, faith, and resilience with regard to women survivors. In the case of Martin and his mother, Martha, each gave dramatic accounts of a terrifying incident experienced by the grandmother, where the latter had felt the protection of God in the middle of the steppes of Russia when the train she and her children were to be on was bombed during the German invasion. In each account, the *dominant meaning attributed* to this experience was that of mental strength and faith. While Martin's version completely *omitted* his grandmother's experience of emotional pain, Martha's did acknowledge her mother's anxiety though emphasized resilience. She later also admitted that unresolved anger and terror had surfaced during her mother's dementia process once mental strength and resilience were no longer available to her. Martin, on the other hand, appeared totally oblivious to the lifelong emotional suffering of his grandmother and, when describing her final years, did not identify any of the delusional behaviors or emotional outbursts mentioned by his mother. This example, as well as stories such as Neta's likening of the escape from Russia to the biblical "Exodus", demonstrate the power of preferred but incomplete meanings often attributed to life experiences, and the potential for these meanings to restrict coherence and post-traumatic growth across the lifespan and intergenerationally (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004). Moreover, we can see, by extension, the power of dominant meaning attribution of the Mennonite church to restrict coherence in cultural narratives, thus, limiting lifespan and intergenerational collective experience and memory (Volkan 2001).

It is important to note that most women appear to have internalized the claimed identity of the Mennonite church. Although many adult children noted that their mothers had struggled emotionally within the Mennonite church context, such critique was missing – *omitted* or *silenced* – in the narratives of older women.

Older women tended to minimize or flatten their suffering. One woman even felt that I may not be interested in her story because she believed she had not suffered as much as women who had grown up on a collective. This was the woman who had lost all male members of her family during the Revolution and later lost her husband during Stalin's purges. Women tended to normalize and internalize the spirituality of suffering and, in some cases, rigid, and rule-based religious practice – a perception which was held by several adult children. Moreover, women's expression of faith, strength, and resilience tended to be linked to a more silent, meek, and submissive role than that of men; they had been conditioned both under Communism and by their Mennonite upbringing to work hard and carry on without overt complaint, to successfully cope within the parameters of outside forces. Thus, silence applied not only to emotional pain but to other forms of expression, and often meant bowing to external authority, including that of husband and church.

The silencing of the *other* is sometimes an unconscious act, and may involve emotionally distancing oneself from the world of the other – the inability to relate to the deep suffering carried by women and to integrate that experience into our own (Bragin 2010). In my mind, to silence the other is to deny an experience of the whole of which we are a part. "I see a strong parallel between the experience of separation and exile, which was so common during the Stalinist era, emotional exile within the Mennonite community and family, and exile from one's deepest self" (Krahn 2011:175-176).

Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) stress the importance of crafting complete, coherent narratives that incorporate new perspectives; mutual support and narrative exchange so that stories transcend individuals; and self-disclosure in supportive social environments – all of which lead to the further revision and transformation of one's life story, as well as *post-traumatic growth* as opposed to mere *resilience*. They also apply the concept of post-traumatic growth to social change in the aftermath of trauma in order to challenge socially and/or culturally shared schemas that restrict such growth. We would do well to engage in validating narrative and relational practices in all social and professional environments that touch the oft marginalized lives of older adults.

Adult Children: Narrative Analysis in Relation to Intergenerational Legacies

Adult children tended to be quite reflective and articulate about the influence of their mother's lives on their mental-emotional development and wellbeing. However, they had not necessarily made a connection between the traumatic experiences of the past and the emotional outcomes. Indeed, some participants wondered how one can distinguish between: (1) personal characteristics that stem from past trauma; (2) inherent personality traits; and (3) familial, cultural, and religious influences on personal development. Intergenerational patterns and themes that have emerged suggest interplay between all of these factors over time in relation to past trauma. These are presented within the categories of familial, cultural, and biological modes of trauma transmission.

Familial Transmission

The concept of familial transmission has been applied to comments related to family patterns, rules, secrets, silences, parenting style, and attachment experiences that many adult children identified as contributing to intergenerational issues or concerns (Danieli 1998; Weingarten 2004). Several adult children internalized emotional undercurrents that permeated the household, such as heightened anxiety, fear, mistrust, difficulty expressing emotions, underlying anger, resentment, guilt, or grief. These undercurrents were often felt within the context of silence, including unexpressed emotions and/or storylines. At least three daughters had also become part of an unconscious pact of silence, as each had been her mother's confidante at a young age, and had been entrusted with certain family secrets. This emotional dependency upon the daughters represented unhealthy attachment relationships, which denied daughters the emotional validation that they themselves required. The fact that all mothers had experienced painful losses and separations had contributed to a strong emphasis on family cohesiveness, though family connection on a deeper level was, in several cases,

felt by adult children to be inadequate or absent. These examples clearly demonstrate the kind of family dynamics that contribute to the intergenerational transmission of insecure attachment (DeOliveira, Moran, and Pederson 2005). Many adult children also had difficulty breaking away from designated family roles, identities, and expectations, and moving into adulthood more independently.

Cultural Transmission

To be Mennonite has historically been a very insular cultural *and* religious experience – sustained over a 500-year period. As a diasporic community that has settled in many parts of the world, Mennonites have traditionally maintained a strong collective identity centered around core principles of Christian faith, pacifism, and relatively closed communities, as well as rigid cultural and religious norms strengthened by the establishment of their own schools, hospitals, professions, agriculture, and other community structures within the parameters of the dominant societies in which they live. In the case of Russian Mennonites, their communities were totally disempowered during the Stalinist era (Epp 2000). Moreover, post-WWII immigration to Canada coincided with a period of increased urbanization, in contrast to their past agrarian lifestyle, resulting in greater exposure to the modern, secular world. This also brought less control over the education of their children, though previous Russian Mennonite migrations to Manitoba had produced a strong network of churches, private schools, and other Mennonite institutions. Winnipeg currently has one of the largest urban Mennonite populations in the world (Driedger 2010).

Half of adult child participants in this study felt that their individual identities had, in their youth, been overshadowed by the family and collective history of trauma, as well as the collective theology and values of the Mennonite church. Most adult children spoke of the experience of living in two or three worlds – the old world of their parents that was left behind, but ever present; the Canadian Mennonite church community; and the world that existed beyond those parameters. Adult children had, to varying degrees, experienced difficulty understanding their identity and navigating these worlds. Indeed, Reynolds (1997) found that 62 percent of children, born to Russian Mennonite survivors who had migrated to Canada during the 1920s, perceived that conforming to Mennonite norms was more important to their parents than their individuality.

In a Manitoba study, Thiessen, Wright, and Sisler (1969) compared 204 Mennonite youth with an equal number of non-Mennonite youth and found that the Mennonite cohort was more highly motivated to interpret behavior in religious terms, more concerned about moral issues and orienting life around religious values, and more inclined to experience deep inner conflict and feelings of guilt when lines were crossed. The researchers also commented on an observation made by the psychiatric community in Winnipeg, Manitoba at that time – that Mennonite patients tended to display a unique disturbance characterized by "depressed affect, strong feelings of guilt, delusions of persecution, and emotional detachment," a cluster of symptoms dubbed "Mennonite psychosis" (Thiessen, Wright, and Sisler 1969:129-130). Jilek-Aall, Jilek, and Flynn (1978) found similar symptom formations among Mennonites in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia, namely, general anxiety and depressive mood, with underlying guilt and fear of rejection or punishment by God, low self-esteem, self-deprecation, and a host of somatic symptomatology. Although it is not my intention to essentialize or pathologize the Mennonite community, I wonder if a combination of intense historical, religious, and cultural factors, as well as incoherent meaning-making, claimed identity, and cognitive schemas, predisposed some Mennonites to the unique states described above, not the least of which is its foundational history of persecution and self-defined martyrdom at the hands of the Catholic church (Loewen 2003).

Adult children who participated in my research were youth in Winnipeg at the time of the Thiessen, Wright, and Sisler (1969) study, and our personal experiences resonate, in general, with the findings of that study. Most adult child participants voiced the challenge of breaking through limiting culturally and family imposed belief structures, as well as resolving intergenerational emotional and behavioral patterns.

In light of Volkan's (2001) comments regarding the privileging and silencing of particular cultural narratives in order to protect and repair group identity in the aftermath of trauma, we can see the power of Mennonite institutions and the collective Mennonite psyche to reinforce a claimed identity of faith and resilience and contribute to the repression of emotions and exacerbation of mental health issues across the lifespan and generations (Reynolds 1997). Narratives that were silenced or minimized within the family and/or community context included two cases of schizophrenia within the extended family; war rape; *SS* involvement; marital conflict due to husband's refusal to sponsor wife's family to Canada; lack of pastoral support to resolve marital conflict; mental health issues of anxiety, depression, and/or PTSD; inner spiritual conflict regarding a medical abortion; and life resolution issues of family members who were palliative or experiencing dementia.

Biological Transmission

The transmission of physical and psychological symptoms, including anxiety, attributed by Darlene, Diane, and Dorothy to the impact of maternal trauma on pregnancy, is verified by empirical literature demonstrating a relationship between maternal trauma and cortisol levels in children born post-trauma (Yehuda et al. 2005). Diane and Dorothy described the emotional unavailability of their mothers, while Darlene had felt *over-validated* and *over-protected* as her mother had previously lost four babies. Moreover, adult children who had experienced vicarious trauma also described the emotional unavailability of their mothers. Empirical research now also demonstrates the underlying neurobiology of insecure attachment and parenting behavior (Strathearn et al. 2009), which supports the perspective that brain and body development, and genetic expression, is primarily mediated by one's experience, particularly in utero and during early childhood, and the quality of one's attachment bonds.

In considering the Russian Mennonite history, we can also imagine the collective neurobiological imprint made over the course of almost five centuries of relatively closed community, reinforced

by stoic and pious collective theology, memory, and narrative. Thus, it makes sense that Russian Mennonites may have experienced and processed Stalinist oppression and the aftermath of war and migration in unique ways as compared to other ethnic groups who also suffered persecution during this era. This complex legacy was vicariously absorbed by adult children and contributed to attachment insecurities.

Importantly, the effects of insecure attachment are open to further change as individuals continue to interact with and adapt to their social environment over the lifespan. Dallos (2004) suggests it is possible to transcend insecure attachment histories by developing *coherent narratives* and relating to one another emotionally. It is emphasized that a coherent narrative must provide a clear structure, reflect affect, and integrate events, feelings, and meanings (Baerger and McAdams 1999 as cited in Dallos 2004). Jordan describes this as follows: "[t]hrough mutual empathy we can heal...places of fear and disconnection. Mutual empathy arises in a context of profound respect, authentic responsiveness, humility, non-defensiveness, an attitude of curiosity, mindfulness...and an appreciation of the power of learning" (2008:235). She further states that this relational transformation is then inputted into and reworks the neurobiological circuits. Thus, our biology is affected by our perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs, and the quality of our relationships with family and the larger community; and neurobiological imbalances can be effectively addressed narratively and relationally (Siegel 2012). In this way, outworn individual, family, and cultural narratives can be transformed.

Conclusion

This study provides a rich description of lifespan and intergenerational effects of trauma on aging members of a cultural group that experienced Stalinist oppression over sixty-five years ago. Multiple layers of this subjective story have emerged. There is no doubt that all women had experienced highly traumatic circumstances, often compounded by the physical or emotional absence of their mothers. Their emphasis on mental strength, faith, and resilience was reinforced by the church community and, in many cases, contributed to ongoing minimizing of emotions and potential exacerbation of psychological symptoms, including insecure attachment, across the lifespan. Narratives of adult children demonstrated the phenomena of biological, familial, and cultural modes of trauma transmission, which involved the transmission of insecure attachment and vicarious trauma.

This was striking for several adult children, as we had not clearly recognized that we *had* a story. The interview process and emergence of a coherent collective narrative, which all participants read, was cathartic for many as it became even more evident that lifelong issues were not the outcome of mere character flaws of either our mothers or ourselves. Indeed, one mother expressed her delight that her daughter now understands her better, after reading her collective story. This underlines the potential for narratives to be rewritten individually and collectively to facilitate transformation.

The voices represented in this paper carry a message for a number of audiences, and encourage us all to be more cognizant of our own cultural location and the importance of cultural sensitivity in our interactions with others. My insider/outsider status has allowed me to act as both an intergenerational and intercultural bridge, and this autoethnographic approach can be of value to professional and academic audiences who represent a variety of disciplines and cultures that touch the lives of older adults – be they long-term or recent immigrants, refugees, or visible minorities, including indigenous peoples. Trauma effects must be recognized as problems to be externalized and addressed collectively rather than individualized and treated as a pathology. Moreover, there is a need for social, professional, and spiritual structures that support inclusion, intergenerational exchange, and safe, validating places for people of all cultures and social locations to share their stories of vulnerability, strength, and resilience. Conscious attention to the narratives we internalize and construct is necessary so we are not confined by limiting storylines. It is a paradox that we are impacted by history and yet, are also its transformers and co-creators. The narratives we construct and tell are critical to our future social evolution (Freire 1973).

This research project was not without its limitations. Although I had hoped that the majority of participants would be part of mother-child dyads in order to achieve a more in-depth exploration of parent-child patterns and themes, I was pleased to have four dyads and greatly valued the contributions of non-related participants. Participant observation was limited to what I was able to see during the interview process, with regard to personal affect and participants' personal living spaces, as it was not possible to observe participants in one specific Mennonite setting. In-depth follow-up interviewing of participants after the reading of their collective narrative would have provided valuable additional data, but was not possible. My position as a child of survivors was potentially the most significant limitation as it posed the risk of projecting my own experiences onto the narratives of participants or privileging narratives that most resonated with my own experience. It was my hope that the depth and breadth of the interviews would balance that risk, as a larger sample size, which would have broadened and perhaps added more diverse storylines to the collective narrative, was not possible.

Limited Canadian research exploring the relationship between immigration, ethnicity, aging, and quality of life provides a direction for future research. Moreover, the tendency for the voices of older adults to be marginalized underlines the significance of qualitative methodologies that bring these to light. Engaging research participants in both individual and focus group interviews to witness a collective dialogical process of meaning-making within and between different cultural, generational, and gender cohorts would bring added dimensions to collective cultural narratives. In relation to the current study under discussion, it would be valuable to add the subjective narratives of Mennonite men to the collective Russian Mennonite narrative.

With increased immigration, large numbers of visible minority populations will become Canada's future seniors; thus, further qualitative research to explore the lived experiences, strengths, and needs of aging recent and long-term immigrants

and refugees would be of value. Also of interest would be research that, for instance, highlights community-based, narrative, and/or intergenerational approaches to facilitating post-traumatic growth, development of secure attachments, and end-of-life resolution.

It has been profoundly moving for me to witness the narrative accounts of survivors and adult children, which resonate so strongly with my own experience. I am equally struck by our capacity to collectively rewrite the historical narratives that have shaped our lives. I like to ask myself: "Is the story writing me or am I writing the story?" This narrative process has dispelled the power of darkness that had been vested in the Black Raven and has rewritten the outcome of that dark period of Mennonite history.

References

Adler, Patricia A. and Peter Adler. 2008. "Of Rhetoric and Representation: The Four Faces of Ethnography." *The Sociological Quarterly* 49(1):1-30.

Anderson, Leon. 2006. "Analytic Autoethnography." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35(4):373-395.

Atkinson, Paul and Martyn Hammersley. 1994. "Ethnography and Participant Observation." Pp. 248-261 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Aun, Karl. 1985. *The Political Refugees: A History of the Estonians in Canada*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

Ayalon, Liat. 2005. "Challenges Associated with the Study of Resilience to Trauma in Holocaust Survivors." *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 10(4):347-358.

Berry, John W. 2001. "A Psychology of Immigration." *Journal of Social Issues* 57(3):615-631.

Bowlby, John. 1979. *The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds*. London: Tavistock.

Bragin, Martha. 2010. "Can Anyone Here Know Who I Am? Co-constructing Narratives with Combat Veterans." *Clinical Social Work Journal* 38(3):316-326.

Chambers, Pat. 2004. "The Case for Critical Social Gerontology in Social Work Education with Older Women." *Social Work Education* 23(6):745-758.

Coffey, Amanda. 1999. *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage.

Connerton, Paul. 1989. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dallos, Rudi. 2004. "Attachment Narrative Therapy: Integrating Ideas from Narrative and Attachment Theory in Systemic Family Therapy with Eating Disorders." *Journal of Family Therapy* 26(1):40-65.

Danieli, Yael, (ed.). 1998. *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*. New York, London: Plenum Press.

Danys, Milda. 1986. *DP: Lithuanian Immigration to Canada after the Second World War*. Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario.

Denborough, David, Jill Freedman, and Cheryl White. 2008. *Strengthening Resistance: The Use of Narrative Practices in Working with Genocide Survivors*. Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Foundation.

DeOliveira, Carey Anne, Greg Moran, and David R. Pederson. 2005. "Understanding the Link between Maternal Adult Attachment Classifications and Thoughts and Feelings about Emotions." *Attachment and Human Development* 7(2):153-170.

Drachman, Diane. 1992. "A Stage-of-Migration Framework for Service to Immigrant Populations." *Social Work* 37(1):68-72.

Driedger, Leo. 2010. *At the Forks: Mennonites in Winnipeg*. Kitchener: Pandora Press.

Durst, Douglas. 2005. "Aging amongst Immigrants in Canada: Policy and Planning Implications." Retrieved August 30, 2012 (http://www.ccsd.ca/cswp/2005/durst.pdf).

Epp, Marlene. 1997. "The Memory of Violence: Soviet and East European Mennonite Refugees and Rape in the Second World War." *Journal of Women's History* 9(1):58-87.

Epp, Marlene. 2000. *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Fraser, Heather. 2004. "Doing Narrative Research: Analysing Personal Stories Line by Line." *Qualitative Social Work* 3(2):179-201.

Freire, Paulo. 1973. *Education as the Practice of Freedom* in *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Continuum.

Grinberg, León and Rebeca Grinberg. 1989. *Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Migration and Exile*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press.

Guba, Egon G. and Yvonne S. Lincoln. 1994. Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. Pp. 105-117 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. 2005. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. 2nd ed. London, New York: Routledge.

Hayano, David M. 1979. "Auto-ethnography: Paradigms, Problems, and Prospects." *Human Organization* 38(1):99-104.

Hermann, Judith. 1992. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Basic Books.

Hooyman, Nancy et al. 2002. "Feminist Gerontology and the Life Course: Policy, Research, and Teaching Issues." *Gerontology and Geriatrics Education* 22(4):3-26.

Hunt, Nigel and Sue McHale. 2008. "Memory and Meaning: Individual and Social Aspects of Memory Narratives." *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 13(1):42-58.

Isajiw, Wsevolod W., Yury Boshyk, and Roman Senkus, (eds.). 2002. *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II*. Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press.

Ivey, Allen E., Michael J. D'Andrea, and Mary B. Ivey, (eds.). 2011. "Neuroscience: The Newest Force in Counseling and Psychotherapy." Pp. 49-86 in *Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy: A Multicultural Perspective, Seventh Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Janoff-Bulman, Ronnie. 2004. "Posttraumatic Growth: Three Explanatory Models." *Psychological Inquiry* 15(1):30-34.

Jilek-Aall, Louise, Wolfgang Jilek, and Frank Flynn. 1978. "Sex Role, Culture and Psychopathology: A Comparative Study of three Ethnic Groups in Western Canada." *The Journal of Psychological Anthropology* 1(4): 473-488.

Jordan, Judith V. 2008. "Commitment to Connection in a Culture of Fear." *Women and Therapy* 31(2):235-254.

Kelley, Ninette and Michael J. Trebilcock. 1998. *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press.

Khanlou, Nazilla. 2010. "Migrant Mental Health in Canada." *Canadian Issues: Immigrant Mental Health* Summer:9-16.

King, Lynda A. et al. 2007. "Assessing Late-Onset Stress Symptomatology among Aging Male Combat Veterans." *Aging and Mental Health* 11(2):175-191.

Kirnmayer, Laurence J. et al. 2011. "Common Mental Health Problems in Immigrants and Refugees: General Approach in Primary Care." *CMAJ* 183(12):E959-E967.

Krahn, Elizabeth. 2011. *An Autoethnographic Study of the Legacies of Collective Trauma Experienced by Russian Mennonite Women who Immigrated to Canada after WWII: Implications on Aging and the Next Generation*. MSW thesis, University of Manitoba, Canada.

Kroeker, Don. 2000. *Manitoba Mennonite Archives and Canadian Mennonite Collective Memory*. Master of Arts thesis, Department of History (Archival Studies), University of Manitoba, Canada.

Kuwert, Philipp et al. 2012. "More than 60 Years Later: The Mediating Role of Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder for the Association of Forced Displacement in World War II with Somatization in Old Age." *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 200(10):911-914.

Lickliter, Robert. 2008. "Theories of Attachment: The Long and Winding Road to an Integrative Developmental Science." *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science* 42(4):397-405.

Loewen, Harry. 2003. "A Mennonite-Christian View of Suffering: The Case of Russian Mennonites in the 1930s and 1940s." *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 77(1):47-68.

MacCourt, Penny. 2004. *Seniors Mental Health Policy Lens: An Instrument for Developing Policy, Legislation, Programs and Services that Promote and Support the Mental Health of Older Adults*. British Columbia Psychogeriatric Association. Retrieved May 22, 2012 (http://www.seniorsmentalhealth.com/Promoting Seniors Well Being2.pdf).

Merz, Eva-Maria, Carlo Schuengel, and Hans-Joachim Schulze. 2007. "Intergenerational Solidarity: An Attachment Perspective." *Journal of Aging Studies* 21: 175-186.

O'Byrne, Patrick. 2007. "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Mixing Methods: An Analysis of Combining Traditional and Autoethnographic Approaches." *Qualitative Health Research* 17(10):1381-1391.

Patalas, Kazimierz, (ed.). 2003. *Providence Watching: Journeys from Wartorn Poland to the Canadian Prairies.* Translated by Zbigniew Izydorczyk. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Plakans, Andrejs. 1995. *The Latvians: A Short History*. Stanford: Hoover Institute Press Publication.

Porter, Matthew and Nick Haslam. 2005. "Predisplacement and Postdisplacement Factors Associated with Mental Health of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: A Meta-analysis." *JAMA – Journal of the American Medical Association* 294(5):602-612.

Reed-Danahay, Deborah E., (ed.). 1997. *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social*. Oxford, New York: Berg.

Reynolds, Lynda K. 1997. *The Aftermath of Trauma and Immigration Detections of Multigenerational Effects on Mennonites who Emigrated from Russia to Canada in the 1920s*. PhD dissertation, California School of Professional Psychology, U.S.A.

Rousseau, Cécile and Aline Drapeau. 1998. "The Impact of Culture on the Transmission of Trauma: Refugees' Stories and Silence Embodied in their Children's Lives." Pp. 465-486 in *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma,* edited by Yael Danieli. New York: Plenum Press.

Siegel, Daniel J. 2012. *The Developing Mind: How Relationships and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are*. 2nd ed. New York: Guilford Press.

Spector-Mersel, Gabriela. 2011. "Mechanisms of Selection in Claiming Narrative Identities: A Model for Interpreting Narratives." *Qualitative Inquiry* 17(2):172-185.

Strathearn, Lane et al. 2009. "Adult Attachment Predicts Maternal Brain and Oxytocin Response to Infant Cues." *Neuropsychopharmacology* 34:2655-2666.

Taves, Krista M. 1998. "Dividing the Righteous: Soviet Mennonites as Cultural Icons in the Canadian Russian Mennonite Narrative, 1923-1938." *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 16:101-127.

Tedeschi, Richard G. and Lawrence G. Calhoun. 2004. "Posttraumatic Growth: Conceptual Foundations and Empirical Evidence." *Psychological Inquiry* 15(1):1-18.

Thiessen, Irmgard, Morgan W. Wright, and George C. Sisler. 1969. "A Comparison of Personality Characteristics of Mennonites with Non-Mennonites." *The Canadian Psychologist* 10(2):129-137.

Volkan, Vamik D. 2001. "Transgenerational Transmission and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity." *Group Analysis* 34(1):79-97.

Walsh, Froma. 2007. "Traumatic Loss and Major Disasters: Strengthening Family and Community Resilience." *Family Process* 46(2):207-227.

Weingarten, Kaethe. 2004. "Witnessing the Effects of Political Violence in Families: Mechanisms of Intergenerational Transmission and Clinical Interventions." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 30(1): 45-59.

Werner, Hans. 1996. "Relatives and Strangers: The Identity of Post World War II Ethnic German Immigrants." Master of Arts thesis, University of Manitoba, Canada.

Wolcott, Harry F. 1994. *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: AltaMira Press.

Wolcott, Harry F. 2008. *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: AltaMiraPress.

Yehuda, Rachel et al. 2005. "Transgenerational Effects of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Babies of Mothers Exposed to the World Trade Center Attacks during Pregnancy." *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* 90(7):4115-4118.

Ziolkowski, Margaret. 1998. *Literary Exorcisms of Stalinism: Russian Writers and the Soviet Past*. Columbia, SC: Camden House.

Krahn, Elizabeth. 2013. "Transcending the 'Black Raven': An Autoethnographic and Intergenerational Exploration of Stalinist Oppression." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):46-73. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Behi (Behrokh) Nikaiin, Nahrida Nazir, Ambreen Mohammad
University of Calgary-Qatar, Qatar

Tam Donnelly, Roqaia Ahmed Dorri
University of Calgary, Canada

Nish Petal
Chief Executive Officer, Women's Hospital, Qatar

Contextual Factors Influencing Breastfeeding Practices Among Arab Women in the State of Qatar

Abstract Breastfeeding is an important source of nutrition and sustenance for infants and toddlers, and has also been linked to several aspects of emotional, physiological, and psychological developments. Benefits of breastfeeding include lower morbidity and mortality rates in infants, appropriate nutrition for early physiological development, and improved immune system development. Some studies also suggest it may enhance cognitive development and reduce the risk of diabetes. These health benefits positively influence the physiological status of the infant throughout his or her early childhood and adolescence. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that breastfeeding be initiated immediately following birth and continued until the infant is at least 6 months of age. However, according to the UNICEF report, between 2000-2007 in Qatar, only 12% of babies under 6 months were exclusively breastfed. Funded by the QNRP (Qatar Undergraduate Research Experience Program), the goal of this exploratory qualitative study was to find ways to effectively promote breastfeeding practices among Qatari women by investigating factors affecting the ways in which Qatari women (national and non-national Arab women) make decisions to engage in breastfeeding practices and their overall knowledge of breastfeeding. Purposive sampling was used to recruit 32 Arab mothers as research participants and individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. Results showed that professional support from doctors and nurses, social support from parents and spouse, cultural and religious values, economic ability work restrictions, time, as well as availability of help and care at home, personal challenges, such as perceptions of pain, body image, and body changes, were some of the major factors in making decisions to breastfeed or not.

Keywords Breastfeeding; Qatar; Arab Women; Qualitative; Social Support; Professional Support

Behi (Behrokh) Nikaiin is a Faculty member at the University of Calgary-Qatar. She is a PhD student in the Memorial University of Newfoundland in the Community Health program. Her clinical interests include Maternal-Child Health, Midwifery and Health Promotion, Primary Health Care/Community Nursing. She has been involved with organizational and academic education since 2000. Some of her research interests are: breastfeeding, postpartum depression, cerebral palsy in newborns, and governmental/institutional policies on maternal-child issues.

email address: bnikaiin@ucalgary.edu.qa

Dr. Tam Truong Donnelly is a Full Professor at the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada and Associate Dean of Research at the University of Calgary-Qatar, Doha, Qatar. Her research interests include women's health, mental health, health promotion, and disease prevention. She uses both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.

Nahrida Nazir Band is a full time student in the Master of Nursing Program at the University of Calgary-Qatar. She has worked as an RN, Case Manager, and Quality Management Reviewer. Her research interests include primary prevention and awareness about cancer related diseases and quality improvement at health care systems in the State of Qatar.

Roqaia Ahmed Dorri, student in a Master program, Faculty of Nursing at the University of Calgary, Canada. She holds a BS in nursing with distinction from the University of Calgary-Qatar. She has practiced as an RN at several adult and pediatric units in the state of Qatar. Involved in varies research including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodology. Her study and research focus include public and community health nursing.

Ambreen Mohammad is a charge nurse in a cardiology accident and emergency ward. She started her career as a diploma nurse and was passionate about doing her Bachelor's in nursing. She was successful in completing her bachelors with distinction at the University of Calgary-Qatar. Her research interests are in cardiology. She is looking forward to completing her Master in nursing in the near future.

Dr. Nish Patel has been the Chief Executive Officer of Women's Hospital, a member hospital of the Hamad Medical Corporation, Doha, Qatar since April 2008. Prior to that, he was a senior administrator at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN. He has been a consultant to many health organizations and an invited faculty to professional academic associations.

Recent research has shown that there were significant long-term benefits to both mother and child if breastfeeding were allowed to continue to a minimum of six months and up to two years. Breastfeeding, especially in the early months of infancy, has a history of multiple physiological, psychological, and emotional benefits for the developing child (Lawrence 1989; Slusser and Lange 2002; Forster, McLachlan, and Lumley 2003; Gartner 2005; Lawrence and Lawrence 2005). Comparisons of morbidity and mortality rates between infants and young children that were breastfed against those who were bottle-fed indicates that the health of breastfed children is superior to those who have received bottle-feeding (Lawrence and Lawrence 2005). These health benefits appear to influence the physiological status of the infant throughout his or her early childhood and adolescence, as longitudinal studies that followed the development of breastfed and bottle-fed infants for up to 17 years have shown that breastfed subjects had lower rates of food and respiratory allergies, fewer skin conditions, and increased resistance to atopic disease (Saarinen and Kajosaari 1995). Therefore, the World Health Organization (WHO 2005) recommended that exclusive breastfeeding be initiated immediately following birth and continue until the infant is at least 6 months of age (Saarinen and Kajosaari 1995).

Both the WHO and UNICEF demonstrate that breastfed children have at least six times greater chance of survival than others within the first six months of life (WHO and UNICEF 2003). Breastfeeding, in this respect, significantly decreases the chance of infection and death from acute respiratory diseases and diarrhea (Callen and Pinelli 2004). These statistical differentials were found to be true not only for children of women in developing countries but also in developed nations such as the United States, where UNICEF found a 25%

increase in mortality among non-breastfed infants (UNICEF 2007). In the UK, as well, six months of exclusive breastfeeding was shown to decrease hospital admissions for diarrhea by 53% and respiratory tract infections by 27% (Kramer et al. 2008).

Breastfeeding has a number of other benefits, which drastically reduce the chance of mothers and children being affected by both infectious diseases and long-term illnesses. For children, it provides protection against gastrointestinal infections, as well as a decrease in the potential for high blood pressure, diabetes and related indicators, serum cholesterol, overweight and obesity (WHO 2005). In addition, breastfed children have been shown to have higher intellectual performance over the course of their education (Kramer et al. 2007; 2008). For mothers, exclusive breastfeeding for six months or more indicates a decrease in the acquisition of type 2 diabetes and breast, uterine, and ovarian cancer (UNICEF 2007). Furthermore, some studies have also found that breastfeeding can help to prevent the onset and severity of postnatal depression in mothers (Weaver et al. 2004).

According to a recent UNICEF report, between 2000-2007 in Qatar only 12% of babies under 6 months were exclusively breastfed, 42% were breastfed with complementary food between the age of 6-9 months, and 12% breastfed for 20-23 months (UNICEF 2009); this is the only report on Qatari breastfeeding practices published in the past ten years. Similar findings are evident in other countries in the Middle East. In a recent study of breastfeeding practices in Kuwait, researchers found that less than one third of mothers (29.8%) were fully breastfeeding their infants after release from hospital, fewer than 1 in 5 infants (18.2%) received colostrum as their first feed, and only 10.5% of infants had been exclusively breastfed since birth (Dashti et al. 2010). The Kuwaiti study found that a major indicator of breastfeeding success was the interest or approval of the baby's father in breastfeeding (Dashti et al. 2010). In a similar fashion, only 10% of Turkish mothers breastfed their infants immediately, with most women (90%) breastfeeding two days after birth (Ergenekon-Ozelci et al. 2006). There is also evidence of the prevalence of prelacteal feeding, the feeding of a newborn baby with carbohydrate-electrolyte solutions to reduce initial weight loss until breastfeeding is fully established. This was reported in a Lebanese study where 49% of women used sugar water as a prelacteal feeding practice (Batal and Boulghaurjian 2005), as well as 61% in a Jordanian survey (JPFHS 2003) and 60.2% in an Iraqi study (Abdul Ameer, Al-Hadi, and Abdulla 2008). A recent Iranian study shows that, although post-hospital breastfeeding is around 57%, this rate is increasing due to promotion of breastfeeding through hospital services and through booklets, pamphlets, breastfeeding journals, CDs, workshops, and websites (Olang et al. 2009). Although the numbers of studies are increasing in the Middle East, the low prevalence and short duration of breastfeeding in the region have highlighted the need for more investigations into the problems associated with continued breastfeeding.

A large body of evidence suggests that breastfeeding has obvious benefits, but some academics are concerned about the strength of the scientific evidence behind a number of these studies. In her book, *Is Breast Best? Taking on the Breastfeeding Experts and the New High Stakes of Motherhood*, Wolf (2007) argues that the science behind some breastfeeding studies is problematic. Wolf states that in the science we trust most, we do randomized controlled trials. But, we can't do that with breastfeeding because the groups are self-selecting. Some studies, for example, argue that the association of breastfeeding with higher IQ, lower obesity, and diabetes in children is not convincing. A few scholars believe, "the observed advantage of breastfeeding on IQ is related to genetic and socioenvironmental factors rather than to the nutritional benefits of breastfeeding on neurodevelopment" (Jacobson, Chiodo, and Jacobson 1999:71). Other studies suggest that the higher level of IQ might be related to maternal behavior and the possibility that mothers who breastfeed their babies spend more time with them later in life (Krugman et al. 1999; Mortensen et al. 2002). It's been suggested that some studies that have reported benefits such as lower diabetes rates are biased. Wolf states that studies in this area "failed to point out that the decision to bottle-feed was also correlated with less exercise and more central obesity, both independent risk factors for the disease" (2007:29; see also Pettitt et al. 1997; Simmons 1997).

Even though recent research around breastfeeding has raised some controversy, particularly around the claims of higher IQ and lower rates of obesity and diabetes for breastfed babies, the health benefits of breastfeeding, particularly for respiratory and gastrointestinal health in the first few years of life, are accepted by the majority of scholars. Thus, most would agree that mothers should be supported in choosing this method of feeding. As UNICEF (2007) illustrates, there are major problems associated with the societal and commercial pressure to stop breastfeeding. This means that the provision of support for breastfeeding mothers and their children should become a priority (Weaver et al. 2004). Education around the use of and benefits to breastfeeding should be connected to social education classes for both male and female students, so that society can begin to grasp the rationale for its utilization in public and in the family home (Callen and Pinelli 2004). Thus, the aim of this qualitative study was to gain insight on how personal values, social, cultural, economical, and professional support systems influence Qatari women's breastfeeding practices and their decision to breastfeed. Also, the study was conducted to explore mothers' knowledge of breastfeeding and how this influences their breastfeeding intentions.

Qatar

Qatar is a small country in the Middle East with a population of 1.6 million. Qatar residents are from many different cultural backgrounds. The majority of them are Muslims with strong religious beliefs that influence their daily activities. There is no systematic data bank in the country and, as a result, accessing information in any area including the health care system is very difficult. Women's Hospital is the largest hospital that provides maternal-childcare to the families. The majority of births happen in this hospital. The number is close to 16,000 births per year. There is no community healthcare system in the country and public health is missing some critical components in regards to maternal-childcare, such as systematic prenatal and postnatal education, and breastfeeding education and support. The primary health care centers also provide some prenatal and postpartum care to mothers, but the data is not accessible. There is no official prenatal education service available to the public and the only breastfeeding clinic is located in a small hospital with only 1500 births a year in a city 45 kilometers away from the main Women's Hospital in Doha, the capital city. There are no official statistics available on the number of births in each hospital or even the prenatal/postpartum services that are provide by the health care agencies. The Qatar Information Exchange website is a national project run by a number of government bodies. The website offers limited information about Qatar statistics which indicates that the number of live births across the country has been 19,504, including the number of births in the private hospitals (see www.qix.gov.qa). In many cases,

a person-to-person conversation with the agencies' administration is required to obtain reliable data. Qatar is a fast developing country and despite its tremendous infrastructure and urban construction in the past 15 years, it is still working vigorously to fully develop and implement the most necessary systems to run the new establishments.

In regards to the breastfeeding promotion efforts at the hospital, the hospital policies support exclusive breastfeeding, initiation of breastfeeding within 1 hour after delivery, and not using the formula unless there is a medical indication for it. In reality, although many health care providers try to help mothers with breastfeeding, they do not receive regular training to improve their support skills. In some cases, the breastfeeding initiation is conducted within the first hour, but the use of formula is quite common and normally formula is being offered to many mothers. There are only a few lactation consultants present at the hospital. With 16,000 births per year, this makes it more difficult to provide sufficient support to mothers. There are not enough pumps on the postpartum units to help mothers with breastfeeding issues maintain their milk supply. There are also no breastfeeding clinics or postpartum clinics to support mothers with the breastfeeding problems after they get discharged. All the above is being improved as the Qatar National Health Strategy document recognized improving breastfeeding as one of the main priorities of the health care system in 2012. Women's Hospital officials are working on obtaining the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) for the hospital and efforts such as staff training, initiation of breastfeeding in the first hour after birth, and facilitating breastfeeding practices have significantly been increased.

The Qatar community's challenges are not limited to the above. The health care providers come from not only different social and geographical but also professional backgrounds. Almost all health care providers in Qatar are expatriates and do not have strong bonds with their patients' population and the community. Many of the health care providers do not have any knowledge about the social, cultural, and religious beliefs of their patients. Regardless of the institutional breastfeeding policies, the health care providers use their own professional expertise, judgment, knowledge, and attitude to provide care to the mothers and guide them with breastfeeding practices. Although similar studies have been done in other countries in the region, this research has focused on Qatar and its unique demographics and context. Although there are similarities in regards to culture and beliefs among Arabs who live in the Middle East, significant differences also can be found. For example, according to our participants, mothers in many Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia are more open to breastfeeding in front of the family members or in public as long as they are covered. Mothers in Qatar are uncomfortable with both. They require a private space for breastfeeding either at home or in the community. Recognizing these specific cultural, social, and religious beliefs can help us understand the practices better and enable the health care system authorities to develop more sustainable interventions to promote breastfeeding practices in this country.

The other reason that makes this research significant is the fact that there are only three research projects in relation to breastfeeding which have been conducted in Qatar in the past 20 years. Lack of general knowledge in this area could contribute to poor breastfeeding practices there. This study sheds light on the social, economical, cultural, and religious factors that positively or negatively influence mothers' breastfeeding practices and can help the health care providers in their future planning in this area.

Methods

Participants

A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit 32 Qatari women (national and non-national Arabic women) in the 3rd to 8th week of their postpartum period as research participants. This exploratory research was conducted in the prenatal unit of Women's Hospital. The research utilized a semi-structured questionnaire to encourage participants to explain their experiences in their own words. An interview guide was used, which included open-ended questions regarding participants' breastfeeding knowledge, attitude, beliefs, and practices, what problems the participants think they would experience and what help/service they think needs to be in place for them to engage in breastfeeding practices. Questions assessing socio-demographic information provided additional information about participants' social support networks. Each participant was interviewed once, within 3-8 weeks after birth at the hospital, conducted in either Arabic or English by four bilingual female nursing students. The participants were informed that the project has been approved by the Ethics Boards of both Hamad Medical Corporation and the University of Calgary. They were ensured no risk would be involved and the participation in the study would be completely voluntary and kept confidential by the researchers. The participants were identified by pseudonyms to protect their identities. Interview data recorded on a digital voice recorder was converted from audio to text using a transcriber, and a qualitative data analysis approach was used for the examination of narrative data. Transcripts were coded to identify preliminary themes and to formulate a list of code categories to organize subsequent data. Data codes were examined for relevance. The final outcome of this analysis is a statement about a set of complicated interrelated concepts and themes. Research team members met to review interview data during the process, and to share reflections on the process of conducting the interview, personal feelings, and analytic descriptions.

Data Collection

Female participants who met the inclusion criteria were interviewed in this study by four bilingual (Arabic and English) female research assistants from Qatar. Inclusion criteria were described as being an Arabic woman who is in between the third and eighth week postpartum period and is in stable physical and emotional condition. Research assistants involved in this study were nurses who had experience working in different units, and were also in their final year of a nursing bachelor's degree program in Qatar. The students were trained extensively prior to and throughout the research process. Detailed contextual information was obtained by using individual in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted in Arabic by using a semi-structured questionnaire with open-ended questions. The questions were about the women's past and current experience with breastfeeding. Also, investigated factors that influence their decision to engage in breastfeeding their baby, and perceived barriers and motivators to such activities. The participants were asked as well about their perception regarding the best possible strategies for promoting breastfeeding practice among Arabic women living in the state of Qatar. With the permission of the participants, the interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder. The interviews lasted between 20-50 minutes with the majority of the interviews being 30-45 minutes. The interviews were stopped when it reached data saturation and no more new information could be identified (after 32 women were interviewed). The data was translated into English by the bilingual student researchers, and then transcribed and analyzed by the research team. Selected demographic data was also obtained from the participants (Table 1).

Table 1. Participants' socio-demographic data.

Variable	Range	N	%
Age	20-30	23	72%
	31-40	9	28%
Country of Birth	Qatar	21	66%
	Oman	3	9%
	Sudan	1	3%
	Egypt	2	6.5%
	Syria	2	6.5%
	Lebanon	3	9%
Current Citizenship Status	Qatari Citizen	15	47%
	Qatari Resident	17	53%
Years in Qatar	0-10	6	19%
	11-20	5	16%
	21-30	14	43.5%
	31-40	7	21.5%
Marital Status	Married	32	100%
	Single/Never married	—	—
Having Children	Yes	32	100%
	No	—	—
Religion	Muslim	32	100%
	Other	—	—
Education Level of Participant	Primary/Junior	4	12.5%
	High School/Trade School	19	59.5%
	University	9	28%
Employment Status of Participant	Work Full-time/Part-time	8	23%
	Full-time Homemaker	16	50%
	Unemployed	1	3%
Participant's Current Occupation	Receptionist	3	9%
	Secretary	1	3%
	Teacher	3	9%
	Health Care Provider (Nurse)	1	3%
Education Level of Husband	Primary/Junior	3	9%
	High School	16	50%
	Trade School	2	6.5%
	University	8	25.5%
	Other Degrees	3	9%
Current Occupation of Husband	Management, Business, Science, Accountant	15	47%
	Service Occupations	7	21.5%
	Military Occupations	6	19%
	Office Work	4	12.5%
Annual Household Income	Less than $30,000	6	19%
	$31,000-$70,000	5	16%
	More than $71,000	6	19%
	Don't know/Chose not to answer	15	46%
Activities Involvement	Within family only	6	19%
	Within religious community only	7	21%
	Within all: family, neighborhood, religious community	13	41%
	Don't participate in community events	6	19%

Source: self-elaboration.

Data Analysis

The narrative data was analyzed using NVivo 8 software. Analyses were performed in the following four steps. (1) The student researchers translated and transcribed the collected data from Arabic into English. The students were trained by two University of Calgary-Qatar faculty members to conduct data collection and analysis. A professional translator validated the translated and transcribed information. (2) The coding process started early in the project. As data was collected, a preliminary list of code categories was developed. The categories evolved as more data were collected throughout the project. (3) Categories were compared and a list of interrelated data categories was generated. The transcripts were reviewed carefully by the student researchers and the faculty members for the purpose of developing code categories and subcategories. The codes evolved as the researchers reviewed more transcripts. (4) Similar themes and concepts emerged and were identified across data set transcripts and across research subjects as they were discussed among the researchers. The emergent themes, ideas, and concepts generated a higher level of data conceptualization. This allowed the researchers to develop a deeper understanding of the data, the cultural and religious beliefs, the social and professional support systems, and the incentives and barriers regarding breastfeeding practices.

Findings

A number of overarching themes emerged from the data, which illustrated that Qatari women's experiences of breastfeeding were similar to those of other populations in the Middle East region. Women's ability to participate in breastfeeding, and their interest in doing so, were largely determined by key factors that included (a) knowledge of breastfeeding and professional support for learning breastfeeding techniques; (b) social support including parental, spousal, cultural, and religious values regarding breastfeeding; (c) economic ability or necessity, including work and time constraints, as well as home help or care; and (d) personal challenges connected to perceptions of pain, body image, and body changes linked to breastfeeding. Participants suggested viable means to engage the Qatari female population in advancing the knowledge and promotion of breastfeeding.

Knowledge of Breastfeeding and Professional Support for Learning Breastfeeding Techniques

Qatari women, for the most part, were well-informed about breastfeeding and professional support for learning breastfeeding techniques through both personal experience and hospital information. One participant noted: "…what I know about breastfeeding has come from my personal experience. The kids who are not breastfed are more prone to getting sick. Also, I think nonbreastfed babies feel unhappy."

Respondents noted other benefits of breastfeeding, such as greater immunity from disease, lower rates of maternal cancer, better maternal health, better bone density for babies, and normalcy in infant bowel movements. Respondents also noted the necessity of maternal training and the provision of information for new mothers, especially first time mothers. One respondent recommended: "…before her delivery, there should be classes to educate mothers about the benefits of breastfeeding

and show the mother how to breastfeed her baby. This will help her to be emotionally and physically ready for that." There was a general consensus that mothers and babies were better able to connect emotionally and cognitively through breastfeeding than through formula feeding. One respondent stated:

> …when Allah gifted me breast milk, I started breastfeeding. As I started breastfeeding, [the baby] bonded with me and my breast. He felt comfortable with me and I felt the bonding became very strong between us. That is how I started breastfeeding.

The majority of respondents noted that they believed that breast milk contains vitamins and other nutrients necessary for a child at the beginning of life. Nonetheless, there were respondents who believed that formula was a viable option if it was not possible to breastfeed. Most respondents reported that because they did not know what components were included in formula milk, and whether formula would be good for the baby or not, they refrained from using it as much as possible. There were common thoughts expressed that some babies suffer from dehydration, diarrhea, constipation, and abdominal distention due to formula feeding. One mother said:

> When I go to the health care center, I talk to mothers who have babies like me. Most mothers are there because their kids have diarrhea, constipation, and other digestion issues and almost all those kids are formula fed. I see that among my family and friends too. The breastfed babies are healthier and don't get diarrhea often, the formula fed babies are often sick, it's diarrhea, cold, constipation, or other things. It seems that they are not as strong as breastfed babies.

About a third of the women interviewed presented more challenging viewpoints on breastfeeding. One respondent noted, "In Doha, they prefer formula feeding from the first day of delivery. I have seen it in the community of my friends and family," while another stated:

> My mother told me to breastfeed my baby and not to give him formula. But, I didn't listen to her. I was more influenced by my friends who told me formula and breast milk are the same. Now I know they are not the same.

The findings point to women's different levels of awareness about breastfeeding as recommended by international health organizations, with obvious gaps in certain communities. As one respondent noted, it was the professional support that she received that helped her continue with breastfeeding:

> The conversations, like ours, encourage me to breastfeed in the future. Such conversations between patients and health care professionals are really important. If someone is nicely and calmly talking and advising, it also has a positive influence on breastfeeding. Hospitals should remind mothers over and over again about the importance of breastfeeding. Also, they should remind mothers about the Qur'an sayings in order to encourage them to breastfeed.

Another respondent observed that there was a distinct lack in the ability of hospitals to provide breastfeeding information at the present time; she had to look outside of the health care system to get this information. She stated:

> One of my teachers in my school asked me if I was breastfeeding my baby or not, she told me that she was a breastfeeding specialist. Usually back in her country, health care providers are visiting mothers six weeks postdelivery to teach them about breastfeeding. She visited me at home and taught me different positions to feed my baby and how to use pillows to be more comfortable. However, I think if she saw me right after delivery, it would be easier for me to follow her instruction.

These quotes alluded to the possibility that if professional support for breastfeeding was available in hospitals, it would have been easier for this woman, as well as others, to benefit from breastfeeding instruction. Another study respondent stated:

> It was very difficult to breastfeed my first baby because I didn't know how to breastfeed and I couldn't hold my breast and feed my baby. However, the nurses in the hospital tried to help me.

> When I was putting my breast in my baby's mouth, he was not taking it. He was crying a lot and his face was becoming red as he was unable to breathe. It was scary. So, I stopped breastfeeding. I tried hard to breastfeed, but then I gave up and started bottle-feeding.

> I had milk and he took a bit of it and then he refused to take it. I think he got used to the bottle because the formula was sweeter compared to breast milk.

> During that time, I had depression and I felt that there was no milk in my breast or it was not enough for my baby. No matter how much I fed her, she still continued crying and my mother blamed me that I was not able to breastfeed my baby properly. In addition to that, my visitors always said that she was very thin and maybe the milk was not enough for her. I was not experienced and all these suggestions led me to have mild depression.

This clearly shows mothers' frustration with the challenges that exist in Qatar hospitals and community, as discussed in the introduction section.

Social Support Including Parental, Spousal, Cultural, and Religious Values Regarding Breastfeeding

On a social level, shifts in the awareness and use of breastfeeding among Qatari women are evident as most of the women in the study were clearly aware of the need to breastfeed and some felt that they had the social support to do so. Family members, especially mothers, are strong supporters of breastfeeding. Women in this study demonstrated that they felt that breastfeeding, especially in the early months of infancy, has a history of multiple physiological, psychological, and emotional benefits for the developing child (Lawrence 1989; Slusser and Lange 2002; Forster et al. 2003; Gartner 2005; Lawrence and Lawrence 2005). A participant mentioned:

> My mother encourages breastfeeding. As I have already mentioned, she had breastfed all of us. So, she is always encouraging me by saying breastfeed your baby like this, and do this and do that. Due to her encouragement and support I feel happy and relaxed while breastfeeding my baby.

According to participant responses, social support, including parental, spousal, cultural, and religious values regarding breastfeeding, was also a major factor in the choice as to whether to breastfeed or not. Many respondents noted that their mothers and mothers-in-law were pivotal forces in encouraging them to breastfeed, or to prevent them from breastfeeding. As respondents noted:

> My mother also encourages me to breastfeed, and she calls me from my home country. She texts me to ask if I breastfeed or not.

> …I mean, my mother, she really values breastfeeding. Even if I complain to my mother that I do not have enough milk, she will advise me to eat food that increases the milk production.

The husband's encouragement is another salient factor. As noted by respondents:

> My husband is 100% encouraging the breastfeeding and this encourages me more to breastfeed my babies.

> My husband provides me nutritious meals, encourages me to breastfeed and he also provides me a restful environment to breastfeed.

It was also evident that lack of social support had a negative influence on mothers:

> To be honest, my friends told me to bottle-feed my first child so I don't lose my breast firmness. I was young and wanted to stay beautiful. I listened to them.

> My husband encouraged me to breastfeed, but all my friends were formula feeding their kids. They told me it was impossible to work and breastfeed at the same time. I didn't know if I could do anything else. I thought I should have stayed home to breastfeed my child. So, I started giving him formula.

> I had to go back to work two months after delivery. I was not able to focus, everything was overwhelming. My husband had to work and we didn't have any family member around or even a maid to help us. I decided to formula fed my child so I didn't have to struggle.

Nonetheless, what was even more evident in responses was that the development of an interest in breastfeeding was aligned with social and religious norms. Although many respondents were aware of a general negativity about breastfeeding among their generation, they pointed out that older Qatari women were likely to provide them with encouragement. Many respondents noted that the practice of breastfeeding was also discussed in the Qur'an, which gave them an incentive to participate for religious reasons. As three women claimed:

> Yes, it is mentioned in the Qur'an that a lady should breastfeed her baby for 2 years. I think it has influenced me to breastfeed my child. My mother always used to remind me this.

> Allah Almighty has given women breast milk to provide health to her child and to herself. The bases of beliefs and values of Arabs have come from our religion, Islam. Allah has provided breast milk to women, which means that it is something beneficial. Breastfeeding contains necessary ingredients like vitamins and all other nutritious elements. These ingredients are not added by humans. These ingredients are inside your body and blessed by Allah Almighty. Even we don't know what breastfeeding consists of. Allah Almighty has said in the Holy Qur'an that a mother should feed her baby for two years and it is a clear indication to breastfeed babies. The things mentioned by Allah Almighty are something we can't deny and is surely beneficial for a child. I have strong believes that anything mentioned in the Holy Qur'an can't be doubted about. That is why I support breastfeeding, and I try to breastfeed all my children.

Despite these claims, there is also a clear indication from many respondents that even with the support of Allah Almighty breastfeeding is not a skill that can be learned quickly on one's own. Strong professional support and encouragement is necessary when the art of breastfeeding has been diminished within women's own families, due to the increased reliance on formula feeding in some communities in Qatar.

Economic Ability or Necessity, Including Work and Time Constraints, as well as Home Help or Care

The evidence showed that economic ability or necessity, including work and time constraints, as well as home help or care, were also factors in choosing to breastfeed or not. Participants reported that many Qatari women are constrained by having to return to work, and in that case it is not possible for them to be able to always breastfeed. One respondent stated that she was able to pump and save her milk in the refrigerator, but that it was not always possible. Most of the working women, however, did try to keep giving their babies breast milk the majority of the time. Some participants were also concerned, however, that the psychological stress of their jobs would be passed on to their infants via breastfeeding. Work also meant that many women were over-tired at the end of the day, which made breastfeeding more difficult. Nonetheless, because of time inflexibility and the necessity of breastfeeding indoors due to cultural constraints, working mothers often had to resort to a combination of breast and formula feeding. As one respondent noted:

> I had to go back to work forty days after giving birth. I was still sore, I couldn't even sit properly. I had lack of sleep; I was not able to think straight. It was so difficult to go back to work. I pumped my milk for a few days, but I didn't have much knowledge about that and I never felt I had enough for my baby. It was also difficult to come home from work when I was very tired and started thinking about pumping and restoring milk. The maternity leave is too short. I was not even recovered from the birth itself when I was back to work. I think it should be at least 6 months. I am sure many mothers will breastfeed their children if they have longer maternity leaves.

The participants also reported that the decision to breastfeed would also depend on whether or not a woman had access to servants in the home, who would more likely be responsible for childcare. Formula may, in those instances, be more prevalent. Whereas, women who could not afford home care or the cost of formula would be more likely to breastfeed.

The challenge in addressing issues linked to breastfeeding seems to point to differing belief systems based on socioeconomic values. What is evident from the respondents' answers to questions is that there is an understanding that people who have more economic resources are more likely to use formula, for the main reason that they can afford to do so. As noted by the respondents:

> With the availability of servants, mother's interest in outside activities, with comfortable lifestyle everything has become easier. So, they prefer formula feeding to breastfeeding.

> No, I don't think economic status has influence on breastfeeding, but if you ask me if the economic status has influence on artificial feeding, then I will tell you "yes." In the countries like Africa, some other Asian countries, yes, economic status may influence breastfeeding, but a country like Qatar, everything is available here and the population isn't poor.

> I can say that sometimes economic status has an influence on a few Arab women's decision to breastfeed or not. If a mother is able to buy expensive artificial feeding, which is believed to have all-important nutrition, then why should she make herself tired by breastfeeding?

What this demonstrates is that there is a higher level of social status connected with the idea of

using formula. This is because of the fact that only the wealthier in the country are able to afford formula milk and assistance, such as daycare or servants, to take care of children that would necessitate feeding children formula. In this way, there is a need to recognize the complexity of trying to change some women's minds on the value of breastfeeding since they may potentially give up social status by eliminating the practice of using formula. While this is not seen to be the case in every community in Qatar, it is noted by some respondents to be very likely in Doha and some of the other major urban centers.

As of 2007, oil and natural gas revenues had enabled Qatar to attain the highest per capita income in the world. Economic status has had huge positive influence on the community's growth and development, quality of life, and health care services. On the other hand, financial improvements have had some negative influences on the Qatar population. One of the most important and most evident is lifestyle. The Qatari population has rapidly moved toward a more modern and unhealthy lifestyle, leading to higher rates of diabetes and obesity.

Breastfeeding is another area of concern. The better financial status has enabled families to remove themselves from the traditional practices and follow the formula feeding practices. Formula feeding has been associated with being rich and fashionable and breastfeeding has been looked at as a necessity for poor families, difficult and undesirable. As breastfeeding has been somewhat of a taboo, not many efforts have been put into promoting it among the younger generation in schools and universities, public places, the media, or even health care agencies. As mentioned above, this trend is changing as breastfeeding has been recognized as one of the areas of focus for health care officials. As such, recently more open and visible promotion is being conducted in the country.

Personal Challenges Connected to Perceptions of Pain, Perceptions of Body Image and Body Changes Linked to Breastfeeding

Finally, personal challenges connected to perceptions of pain, perceptions of body image and body changes linked to breastfeeding were also factors in the breastfeeding choice. There were conflicting levels of understanding about the effects of breastfeeding on a woman's body; some women correctly asserted that breastfeeding would help women get back into physical shape after giving birth, while others were concerned that it would ruin their figures (or stated that their female relatives had told them so). Pain was a factor, in that many women had difficulty breastfeeding at first due to physical issues, but most respondents carried on nonetheless. It was noted that a fear of pain might be a factor for some women. A mother stated:

> I started breastfeeding right after birth, but it was very painful. Every time, I felt that the baby is biting me. I stopped it because I was scared of the pain. With my second baby, I learned if the baby has a proper latch, breastfeeding is not, and shouldn't be, painful. I wish someone helped me the first time.

> Many of my friends told me not to bother with breastfeeding. They told me it would damage my figure and it's difficult. I thought it was much better to get my maid to bottle-feed the baby at night instead of getting up and feeding him myself.

Discussion and Recommendations

Similarly to the findings from other studies, women in this study felt that breastfeeding, especially in the early months of infancy, has a history of multiple physiological, psychological, and emotional benefits for the developing child (Lawrence 1989; Slusser and Lang 2002; Forster et al. 2003; Gartner 2005; Lawrence and Lawrence 2005). Thus, there is an increasing interest in returning to breastfeeding after years of formula prevalence. At the same time, this does not necessarily mean that all women were actually taking on the practice of breastfeeding for themselves. Many of the women in this study were well-informed about the value of breastfeeding but they were also thoughtful about the benefits and challenges of this method of childcare. They presented the difficulties that they would face in breastfeeding, including social, professional, economic, and practice-based challenges. Social support seemed to be one of the most significant factors in choosing this route. As noted by participants, they were more likely to breastfeed, or know other women who breastfeed, if their parents, husbands, and work schedules provided them with the means to do so. Similarly to a study by Reeves and colleagues (2006), the present study found that mothers have identified the father's support as a very important factor in continuing breastfeeding, whereas the decision to discontinue breastfeeding was mainly due to the need to return to work or school. Many participants were buoyed by the fact that there is support in the Qur'an for breastfeeding, which allows women to generate support for their interest in breastfeeding among members of their community. At the same time, there were also difficulties which were noted by the respondents in taking on breastfeeding practices in their communities on a broader social level. The challenge in addressing the issues noted by the respondents were significant in specific populations and areas, and when women were confined by their job schedules. Wyatt (2002) supported this fact by reporting that due to lack of preparation and support many woman stop breastfeeding soon after they go back to work; therefore, the number of breastfeeding after returning to work is disappointingly low. The challenge these women were facing was linked to the fact that there was a distinct lack of value placed on breastfeeding when there were easier alternatives available to them. In addition, a portion of women in the study also suggested that there was a difficulty in reconciling the association between formula feeding and wealth in certain parts of Qatari society, due to the fact that only women who had the economic means were likely to formula feed.

Many working mothers suggested that short maternity leave is one of the main reasons that they could not continue breastfeeding even after initiating it at the hospital. Mothers recognized longer maternity leave, having access to daycare at the work place, and being able to use a private room to pump their milk at work would all help them breastfeed for longer. Many studies confirm the positive effects of such breastfeeding friendly policies and facilitation. According to Meek (2001), on-site childcare, pumping at work, efficiency at breast milk expression, adequate break time to nurse or pump, private place for milk expression and storage at work, flexible scheduling, and support of colleagues are all factors that can significantly increase the breastfeeding rates among working mothers. To support mothers, it is important to educate them and the employers on the benefits

of breastfeeding. It is also necessary for the governments to develop and implement breastfeeding policies at any work place.

To this end, participants suggested that the disconnection between common practice and the needs of children should be addressed within a hospital environment because this was the only way to be able to provide women with information that counters social trends and belief systems. This is because not all women will get the social support and information they need through their female relatives and friends. Participants suggested that not all women grasped the true benefits of breastfeeding either for their babies or themselves, and recommended that further communication about these should be prioritized by hospitals and health authorities. If there was no community-based discourse about breastfeeding, or tradition within women's families to make it a priority, then there was also a lack of ability which women presented in these interviews. Women expressed a need for professional support, whether directly through training at a hospital, or indirectly through information sessions or other means, in order to ensure that they had the tools they needed to be able to achieve the goal of breastfeeding on their own at home over a long term. Women wanted to feel confident in making sure that they were providing their children with the best nutrition and schedule possible, and this was not an easy task to accomplish without clear information. According to Porteous (2000), the professional support has an important role in increasing the duration of breastfeeding among the mothers who identified themselves without support.

Participants were also able to suggest to the researchers viable means by which to engage the Qatari female population in advancing their knowledge of breastfeeding. Suggestions included prenatal classes at the hospitals where doctors could provide clear and concise information, and challenge existing normative values in some communities where formula feeding is more common, including teaching extended family members about its value. Responses indicated that many women were likely to search the Internet to find answers for their questions regarding breastfeeding's importance and benefits, and demonstrated that Qatari health websites, especially those linked to hospitals and women's birth centers, would likely help improve matters. Other suggestions included magazine articles and advertising, as well as television programs and advertising. Finally, participants suggested that girls' school education programs should cover the topic of breastfeeding, especially in relation to its Qur'anic recommendation on breastfeeding.

Some women also demonstrated that on an economic level it is sometimes difficult for women to take the time they need to breastfeed, especially if they have a financial obligation to their family. Findings demonstrated that women with additional financial resources were more able to breastfeed. At the same time, the fact that more economically secure women are often better able to breastfeed has meant that it is socially desirable to be able to afford formula among some women, as indicated in the study. Culturally and religiously, however, women are more inclined to value breastfeeding, especially because of religious incentives to do so. A study reported that by understanding and supporting islamic beliefs of breastfeeding, clinicians can help mothers to initiate healthy feeding practices of infants as

breastfeeding has a religious basis in Islam and it is recommended that the mother breastfeed her offspring for 2 years if possible (Shaikh and Ahmed 2006).

Despite these positive steps towards a greater social acceptance of breastfeeding, most women feel that there are not enough professional support systems in place. Even when they are available, many women are not aware of these supports. Women who are in favor of breastfeeding because of their awareness of its need and benefit still struggle to commit to practice due to limited social support and/or professional instruction. Because there has been a decrease in breastfeeding practice among the women of Qatar, there is a lack of social support and knowledge regarding breastfeeding in many communities. One of the mothers stated:

> The important thing is to encourage women during pregnancy and prepare her for that, especially prime mother. So, before her delivery, there should be classes to educate mothers about the benefit of breastfeeding and show the mother how to breastfeed her baby. This will help her to be ready emotionally and physically for that.

One of the challenges pointed out by the participants in this study was that much depended, as well, on the woman's individual level of education and the culture in which she had been raised. For this reason, one of the suggestions which was mentioned frequently as a point of connection for all women was support in the Qur'an for breastfeeding. Because of the fact that this would be a common place in which to start the education process, it was raised as an opportunity for hospital administrators to begin the discussion with new mothers. As mentioned earlier, a study has emphasized strongly on adding Islamic teaching in encouraging mothers to initiate breastfeeding (Shaikh and Ahmed 2006).

Participants emphasized that that professional support was one of the major factors in making decisions to breastfeed or not. Therefore, they recommended:

> We should advertise about breastfeeding in hospitals. We should also advertise about the benefits of breastfeeding. We should convey the messages about breastfeeding to friends, relatives, and especially to those mothers who have delivered for the first time. We should tell them about the benefit of breastfeeding. We should encourage mothers to give maximum time to practice breastfeeding. Mothers should be informed that breastfeeding is best for her and her baby. She should think what benefit in harming the health of her child is. I was encouraged by nurses and doctors at hospital who were forcing me to breastfeed. My family members supported and encouraged me to breastfeed.

> The health care professionals, such as a doctor, can spend a few minutes during mother's antenatal visits in explaining the benefits of breastfeeding. He can give her information about why and how it is beneficial and healthy for the baby and how it can help in the child's growth and development. After knowing all this information she is the one who decides whether she wants to breastfeed or no. She is responsible for her decision afterwards.

> We can give them all the information about breastfeeding. We can discuss such topics in magazines and books. By these ways, we should convey this message that breastfeeding is beneficial for the health of baby and mother. We should distribute such magazines and books in the hospitals.

What this means is that without specific information from professional instructors, such as nurses and doctors with breastfeeding knowledge, many Qatari women are not able to gain an interest in the practice because of a lack of knowledge regarding breastfeeding techniques and its benefit for the infant's health. The result was that turning to formula was a better solution for them because of the fact that they feared that their children would starve without it. The focus of most of the respondents was a clear lack of education programs in hospitals that would provide them with specific sets of instructions and which would be able to help them practice the skills associated with breastfeeding in a safe environment where they would not have to fear for their infants' survival. It was clear that many individuals had had to learn how to breastfeed on their own and had come up with their own methods of making sure that their baby would feed, which was both frustrating and discouraging. Combined with postpartum depression, this would be a very difficult situation for many women, as indicated above. It would often mean that in the first, crucial months of life their babies were relying just as much on formula as on breast milk, even when the mother was able to breastfeed. This presents a significant level of disconnect between the recommendations of the leading global health care organizations and the actual Qatari women's practices, even when they themselves were committed to providing breast milk to their infants. The difficulty was, therefore, not in the level of commitment in many cases but instead in the ability of the women to actually put their commitment into practice due to their lack of knowledge.

What this demonstrates is that due to a lack of clear information on how to breastfeed, there is an intrinsic risk to Qatari women's children. Women in this community are aware of the benefits, but seem, in many cases, to lack the basic skill set that they need to effectively feed their children without an overt reliance on formula in the short term. This means that during the most crucial period of childcare women are likely to need assistance.

Personal challenges, such as the perception of pain and body image, also seem to significantly influence women's decision on breastfeeding. Research indicates that women with higher degree of body image satisfaction are more likely to engage in breastfeeding (Huang, Wang, and Chen 2004), and postpartum body image dissatisfaction is linked with a lower likelihood of breastfeeding (Walker and Freeland-Graves 1998). Some studies have shown that mothers who are highly concerned about their body image and weight are more likely to make a decision during pregnancy not to breastfeed their babies and follow their decision in the postpartum period (Foster, Slade, and Wilson 1996; Barnes et al. 1997; Waugh and Bulik 1999). Similar to our findings, some mothers decide to formula feed their babies because of pain, discomfort, and tiredness (Murphy 1999; Bailey and Pain 2001; Schmeid and Lupton 2001; Lee 2007a; 2007b; Miller, Bonas, and Dixon-Woods 2007; Stapleton, Fielder, and Kirkham 2008). Other studies report that mothers recognize formula feeding as a valuable, easy, and convenient method that provides them the opportunity to "get back to normal" and "having freedom" (Earle 2002; Lee 2007a; 2007b).

These issues point to the fact that there is a need for health care organizations to step in and provide support, and for public health initiatives to be initiated in order to raise awareness about breastfeeding among the population of Qatari women. This means that more work needs to be done in order to provide options for training on breastfeeding techniques to younger mothers. The study demonstrates that there are a number of options available to increase awareness of breastfeeding among mothers-to-be which could be pursued both in person through training and coaching, and through awareness-raising campaigns online, in magazines, and in hospitals. The health care providers need to be trained and knowledgeable about the mothers' opinion of breastfeeding and the influencing factors to be able to have open and non-judgmental discussions with the mothers in order to help them.

In the end, all these won't be successful if the breastfeeding and mothers' friendly legislations and policies are not established in the health care agencies and the community. The BFHI has shown positive results. Merewood and colleagues (2003) found that the BFHI has been linked to improved breastfeeding rates in U.S. hospitals. In a study of a neonatal unit, it was seen that the "breastfeeding initiation rate increased from 34.6% (1995) to 74.4% (1999)," that "[a]mong 2-week-old infants, the proportion receiving any breast milk rose from 27.9% (1995) to 65.9% (1999)," and that "the proportion receiving breast milk exclusively rose from 9.3% (1995) to 39% (1999)" (Merewood et al. 2003:166). Reasons for the improvement in breastfeeding were directly attributed to the support structure and the introduction of baby-friendly policies, which had a direct effect on a new mother's willingness to breastfeed. To achieve BFHI, the "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding" policy should be implemented in the health care agencies. The steps include: developing breastfeeding policies, training the health care staff, promoting breastfeeding by educating mothers, helping mothers to initiate breastfeeding in the first 30 minutes after birth, showing the breastfeeding methods to the mothers, promoting exclusive breastfeeding, practicing rooming-in, encouraging breastfeeding on demand, providing no artificial soothers and establishing support groups in the community for breastfeeding mothers. Although health care agencies in Qatar are working towards obtaining BFHI status, so far none of them have achieved this goal.

Some studies provide proof that BFHI policies cannot be successful by themselves and other factors should be implemented in the community, as well as in the health care agencies, to increase this strategy's success rate. Kramer and colleagues (2007) suggest that along with the BFHI, a highly centralized system of breastfeeding promotion and support should ensure that all mothers receive the necessary support for breastfeeding. This study also emphasizes that prolonged postpartum hospital stay allows mother to gain confidence in breastfeeding and establish good breastfeeding practices before leaving the hospital, which could increase breastfeeding success.

Other studies argued that particular attention should be paid to the community leadership development as a foundation for sustaining breastfeeding efforts. To be successful, an integrated and comprehensive breastfeeding support system must be constructed and measured not only through continued financial stability but also by the capacity of the community leaders, hospitals, insurance companies, and the health care providers to accept ownership for protecting, promoting,

and supporting breastfeeding (Slusser and Lange 2002). Similarly, Demirates (2012) indicates that supportive strategies for breastfeeding can influence and benefit mothers. Strategies were categorized in five groups: collaboration with community and family members, confidence building, appropriate ratio of staffing levels, development of communication skills, and "closing the gaps." He also argued that governments, hospital, and community management, key persons locally in religious and educational settings, midwives and nurses themselves should take action for policy change. A Turkish study also confirms the above finding. The study concludes that traditional beliefs should be understood by health care professionals, the community programs should be developed to explore and address such practices and incorporate them into women's education where appropriate, and women should be educated and trained in breastfeeding. Professionals also need to be trained how to establish linkages between tradition and modern health promotion messages to encourage the new ways of doing in the community (Ergenekon-Ozelci et al. 2006).

Maternity leave of only 40-60 days, not having access to breastfeeding rooms in the workplace, shopping centers and even health care centers, lack of access to day cares at the work place, and lack of support for staff to follow the existing breastfeeding policies at the hospitals and other health care agencies are some of the issues that need to be addressed and improved. The National Health Strategy (NHS) 2011-2016 has been developed in Qatar as the guideline for health care providers and other sectors. This document identifies what improvements are required in the health care sector. Qatar's ultimate goal is to improve the health care system to a comprehensive system that could provide health care services to the whole population. This document specifically emphasizes improving the preventive health care for women and children. In the women and child health section of this document, prenatal health and breastfeeding have been recognized as areas that require improvement. The goals of the women and child health section of the Qatar National Health Strategy are: exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding education, enhancement of prenatal care services, improved postpartum services, childhood vaccination coverage, domestic violence victim support services, maternity leave policy, and women's health screening and IVF regulation. This document, along with the research conducted in the area of breastfeeding, could help layout a culturally appropriate plan to develop intervention plans to improve the breastfeeding practices in the state of Qatar.

Summary and Conclusion

As mentioned above, the goal of our study was to find ways to effectively promote breastfeeding practices among Qatari women by investigating factors affecting the ways in which Qatari national and non-national Arabic women decide to engage in breastfeeding practices and their knowledge of breastfeeding. With the results of this study it is evident that, due to a rise in awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding, there is potential for the percentage of Qatari women who take on breastfeeding to go up over the long term with the proper support systems in place. Nonetheless, this will require a commitment within hospitals and other health care organizations to increase commitment to meet WHO recommendations and support for Qatari mothers to breastfeed. It is important to provide Qatari women with explicit and detailed instructions, bedside coaching and follow-up aftercare, so that they might be better prepared to take on this important role in their children's lives. Without this commitment from the Qatari health care system, it is less likely that women will be able to take on the challenge of breastfeeding. Health care professionals need to participate actively in the promotion of breastfeeding and to alleviate the current gap in social knowledge around breastfeeding practice so that it can be re-incorporated into the lives of Qatari women. Over the long term, it is hoped that once again this knowledge will be adopted by the community so that more women will be able to gain the social support they need to feed their children successfully without a need for formula.

Acknowledgments

This research and publication was funded and supported by Qatar National Research Fund/Undergraduate Research Experience Program (UREP). We would like to thank Dr. Tam Truong Donnelly for her utmost guidance and support, staff and management of Women's Hospital, especially Mr. Nish Petal, Ms. Haila Salim, and Ms. Sheika Al-Dosari, who had facilitated our research and the University of Calgary main campus and Qatar branch for the ongoing support. We also appreciate Ms. Afrah Mousa Saleh's contributions to this project. We are mostly grateful to the breastfeeding mothers who shared their experiences, knowledge, and recommendations with us. The content of this research is entirely the responsibility of the authors and do not represent the views of Qatar National Research Fund.

References

Abdul Ameer, Awad, Abdul Hussain M. Al-Hadi, and Mahmood Abdulla. 2008. "Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Iraqi Mothers and Family Child-Caring Women Regarding Breastfeeding." *East Mediterranean Health Journal* 14(5):1003-1014.

Bailey, Cathy and Rachel Pain. 2001. "Geographies of Infant Feeding and Access to Primary Health-Care." *Health and Social Care in the Community* 9(5):309-317.

Barnes, Joanne, Alexander Stein, Thomas Smith, Jon Pollock & ALSPAC Study Team. 1997. "Extreme attitudes to body shape, social and psychological factors and a reluctance to breastfeed." *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 90(10):551-559.

Batal, Malek and Choghik Boulghaurjian. 2005. "Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration in Lebanon: Are the Hospitals 'Mother Friendly?'" *Journal of Pediatric Nursing* 20(1):53-59.

Callen, Jennifer and Janet Pinelli. 2004. "Incidence and Duration of Breastfeeding for Term Infants in Canada, United States, Europe, and Australia: A Literature Review." *Birth* 31(4):285-292.

Dashti, Manal et al. 2010. "Determinants of Breastfeeding Initiation among Mothers in Kuwait." *International Breastfeeding Journal* 5(7). Retrieved March 20, 2012 (http://www.internationalbreastfeedingjournal.com/content/5/1/7).

Demirtas, Basak. 2012. "Strategies to support breastfeeding: A review." *International Nursing Review* 59(4):474-481.

Earle, Sarah. 2002. "Factors affecting the initiation of breastfeeding: implications for breastfeeding promotion." *Health Promotion International* 17(3):205-214.

Ergenekon-Ozelci, P. et al. 2006. "Breastfeeding Beliefs and Practices among Migrant Mothers in Slums of Diyarbakir, Turkey, 2001." *European Journal of Public Health* 16(2):143-148.

Forster, Della, Helen McLachlan, and Judith Lumley. 2003. "The Effect of Breastfeeding Education in the Middle of Pregnancy on the Initiation and Duration of Breastfeeding: A Randomized Controlled Trial." *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth* 3(1):1186-1194.

Foster, Susan F., Peter Slade, and Kenneth Wilson. 1996. "Body image, maternal foetal attachment and breastfeeding." *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 41(2):181-184.

Gartner, Lawrence M. 2005. "Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk." *Pediatrics* 115(2):496-506.

Huang, He-Feng, Shing-Yaw Wang, and Chung-Hey Chen. 2004. "Body image, maternal-fetal attachment, and choice of infant feeding method: A study in Taiwan." *Birth* 31(3):183-188.

Jacobson, Sandra W., Lisa M. Chiodo, and Joseph L. Jacobson. 1999. "Breastfeeding Effects on Intelligence Quotient in Four- and Eleven-Year-Old Children." *Pediatrics* 103(5):71-76.

JPFHS. 2003. *Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2002*. Amman: Departmentof Statistics.

Kramer, Michael L. et al. 2007. "Promotion of Breastfeeding Intervention Trial (PROBIT) Study Group." *British Medical Journal* 335(7624):815-822.

Kramer, Michael et al. 2008. "Breastfeeding and Child Cognitive Development." *Archives of General Psychiatry* 65(5):578-584.

Krugman, Scott et al. 1999. "Breastfeeding and IQ." *Pediatrics* 103:193-194.

Lawrence, Ruth A. 1989. *Breastfeeding: A guide for the medical profession*. St. Louis, MO: C.V. Mosby.

Lawrence, Ruth A. and Robert M. Lawrence. 2005. *Breastfeeding*. 6th ed. New York: Elsevier.

Lee, Ellie. 2007a. "Health, morality, and infant feeding: British mothers' experiences of formula milk use in the early weeks." *Sociology of health and illness* 29(7):1075-1090.

Lee, Ellie. 2007b. "Infant Feeding in Risk Society." *Health, Risk and Society* 9(3):295-309.

Meek, Joan Y. 2001. "Breastfeeding in the Workplace." *Pediatric Clinics of North America* 48(2):461-474.

Merewood, Anne et al. 2003. "The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative increases breastfeeding rates in a US neonatal intensive care unit." *Journal of Human Lactation* 19(2):166-171.

Miller, Tina, Sheila Bonas, and Mary Dixon-Woods. 2007. "Qualitative Research on Breastfeeding in the UK: A Narrative Review and Methodological Reflection." *Evidence and Policy* 3(2):197-230.

Mortensen, Erik L. et al. 2002. "The Association between Duration of Breastfeeding and Adult Intelligence." *JAMA – The Journal of the American Medical Association* 287(18):2365-2371.

Murphy, Elizabeth. 1999. "'Breast is best': Infant feeding decisions and maternal deviance." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 21(2):187-208.

Olang, Beheshteh et al. 2009. "Breastfeeding in Iran: Prevalence, Duration, and Current Recommendations." *International Breastfeeding Journal* 4(8). Retrieved May 13, 2011 (http://www.internationalbreastfeedingjournal.com/content/4/1/8).

Pettitt, David et al. 1997. "Breastfeeding and Incidence of Non-Insulin-Dependent Diabetes Mellitus in Pima Indians." *Lancet* 350(9072):166-168.

Porteous, Rory. 2000. "The Effect of Individualized Professional Support on Duration of Breastfeeding: A Randomized Controlled Trial." *Journal of Human Lactation* 16(4):303-308.

Reeves, Chelsea et al. 2006. "Social Support Indicators that Influence Breastfeeding Decisions in Mothers of North Florida." *Florida Public Health Review* 3:1-7.

Saarinen, Ulla and Merja Kajosaari. 1995. "Breast-feeding as Prophylaxis Against Atopic Disease: Prospective Follow-Up Study Until 17 Years Old." *Lancet* 346(8982):1065-1069.

Schmeid, Virginia and Deborah Lupton. 2001. "Blurring the Boundaries: Breastfeeding and Maternal Subjectivity." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 23(2):234-250.

Shaikh, Ulfat and Omar Ahmed. 2006. "Islam and Infant Feeding." *Breastfeeding Medicine* 1(3):164-167.

Simmons, David. 1997. "NIDDM and Breastfeeding." *Lancet* 350(9072):157-158.

Slusser, Wendelin and Linda Lange. 2002. *Breastfeeding Programs and Support Systems in Los Angeles County: A Needs Assessment*. Report to Los Angeles County Children & Families First Proposition 10 Commission. Retrieved June 23, 2012 (http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/mch/reports/prop10breastfeeding.pdf).

Stapleton, Helen, Anna Fielder, and Mavis Kirkham. 2008. "Breast or Bottle? Eating Disordered Childbearing Women and Infant-Feeding Decisions." *Maternal and Child Nutrition* 4(2):106-120.

UNICEF. 2007. *The State of the World's Children*. New York: UNICEF.

UNICEF. 2009. *Childinfo*. Retrieved January 15, 2011 (www.childinfo.org/breastfeeding_countrydata.php).

Walker, Lorraine O. and Jeanne Freeland-Graves. 1998. "Lifestyle factors related to postpartum weight gain and body image in bottle- and breastfeeding women." *Journal of Obstetrics, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing* 27(2):151-160.

Waugh, Elizabeth and Cynthia M. Bulik. 1999. "Offspring of women with eating disorders." *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 25(2):123-133.

Weaver, Ian et al. 2004. "Epigenetic Programming by Maternal Behavior." *Natural Neuroscience* 7(8):847-854.

Wolf, Joan B. 2007. *Is Breast Really Best? Risk and Total Motherhood in the National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign*. Texas: A&M University.

World Health Organization (WHO). 2005. *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF. 2003. *Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding: The Special Role of Maternity Services*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Wyatt, Sarah N. 2002. "Challenges of the Working Breastfeeding Mother. Workplace Solutions." *AAOHN*. 50(2):61-66.

Nikaiin, Behi (Behrokh), Tam Donnelly, Nahrida Nazir, Roqaia Ahmed Dorri, Ambreen Mohammad, and Nish Petal. 2013. "Contextual Factors Influencing Breastfeeding Practices Among Arab Women in the State of Qatar." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):74-95. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Rosemary Ricciardelli
Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada

Amber Gazso
York University, Canada

Investigating Threat Perception Among Correctional Officers in the Canadian Provincial Correctional System

Abstract This paper presents findings regarding the perception and experience of threat among correctional officers in the Canadian provincial correctional system. Men employed in provincial remand centers or corrections institutions in diverse provinces across Canada, who interact daily with prisoners, voluntarily participated in detailed 60- to 180-minute in-depth interviews. Analysis of interview transcripts reveals that violence is prevalent and men either experience or anticipate experiencing physical or verbal victimization at work. Additionally, officers employ strategies, such as a confident and authoritative self-presentation, building positive relationships with colleagues, and respectful relationships with prisoners, to mitigate this threat. However, we found that threat to safety extended beyond simply those of physical or verbal victimization to include threat to men's sense of self. Specifically, victimization and violence or their threat shape officer's self-concept over time; the ways officers interact within their prison work environment creates a shift in their self that extends beyond the prison walls.

Keywords Prison; Violence; Sense of Self; Corrections Officer; Static Self; Interaction

Rosemary Ricciardelli is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University of Newfoundland. She earned her PhD in Sociology at McMaster University. She has published in a range of academic journals including: *Sex Roles*, *Criminal Justice Review*, *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, *Journal of Gender Studies*, *The Prison Journal*, and *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. Her primary research interests include evolving conceptualizations of masculinity, and experiences and issues within different facets of the criminal justice system. Her current research looks at prisoner culture, their coping strategies and risk perception, as well as those of corrections officers. She also continues to investigate wrongful convictions and the perceptions of individuals who have had such experiences.

email address: rose.czarnuch@gmail.com

Dr. Amber Gazso is an Associate Professor in Sociology at York University. She completed her PhD in Sociology at the University of Alberta in 2006. Her current research interests include: citizenship; family and gender relations; poverty; research methods; and social policy and the welfare state. Her two current research projects, both funded by SSHRC, explore: (1) how diverse families make ends meet by piecing together networks of social support that include government programs (e.g., social assistance) and community supports, and informal relations within families and with friends and neighbors; and (2) the relationship between health and income inequality among Canadians and Americans in mid-life. Her recent publications focus on low income mothers and their experiences on social assistance or with incarceration; comparing mid-life Canadians and Americans' different experiences of the recession and generational relations; and health disparities among aging Canadians.

email address: agazso@yorku.ca

In Canada, there is considerable research interest in federal prisons, where offenders are incarcerated for two years or more (Griffiths 2010), explicitly in the relationships among prisoners and those between prisoners and correctional officers. Following from Sykes' classic study (1958), researchers have established the importance of an inmate code that enforces conduct rules, such as not "ratting" on fellow prisoners, distrusting prison officials, and doing "your own time" (Sykes and Messinger 1960; Irwin and Cressey 1962; Ricciardelli forthcoming). Griffiths (2010) maintains that a code of behavior also shapes correctional officers' interactions with colleagues. This "code" places a premium on officers protecting other officers in danger, refraining from becoming friends or too friendly with prisoners, and never talking behind the backs of colleagues. Larivière (2002) found officers' negative attitudes towards prisoners, such as the view that prisoners have too much power, were largely attributable to problematic policies that undermine their authority and escalate their potential to experience violence in interactions with prisoners. Samak (2003) investigated the relationship between working conditions and health, safety, and general well-being for correctional officers employed in the Canadian federal prison system. He found that levels of harassment for officers were "alarmingly" high and the stress of working in the federal prisons "spilled-over" into their private lives (Samak 2003).

Harassment may intensify with prisoners who have more idle hands and idle time. A growing possibility given that there is an increasing trend toward the removal of all or most rehabilitative resources and work programming[1] across all federal prisons (Correctional Service Canada 2008; see also the Canadian Unitarians for Socail Justice 2010 for overviews of cuts to institutional programs and funds). This trend is already well established in most provincial systems across the country. This, combined with recent changes at the policy level, has the potential to further escalate violent prisoner and officer relationships within all prison systems (i.e., federal and provincial). For example, the passing of Bill C-10 will lead to more overcrowding in federal prisons due to offenders being mandated to serve longer sentences and criminal law being less tolerant of "second chances." However, at the provincial level, we can anticipate more individuals being charged with crimes *and* serving more time in remand custody (i.e., time served in provincial remand facilities while awaiting trial, even when an offender is facing a federal sentence) due to the extensive backlog of cases/offenders awaiting trial. Indeed, the Toronto Chief of Police, William Blair, noted that "over 65% of people in custody have not had a trial" (Speech given at the 50th Anniversary of the Centre of Criminology at the University of Toronto, November 21, 2012).

There is limited scholarship, however, on the provincial governments' role in the Canadian criminal justice system, particularly on male prisoners' experiences in remand centers (pending trial or sentencing) or of being incarcerated for two years less a day in provincial correctional institutions (Motiuk and Serin 2001; Griffiths 2010).[2] There are some notable exceptions. Comack's (2008) illuminative qualitative study of incarcerated Aboriginal men revealed that cultures of masculinity inside and outside of

[1] This national campaign referenced draws attention to closure of work-programs in federal prisons in Ontario (Canadian Unitarians for Socail Justice 2010).

[2] Federal, provincial, and territorial governments in Canada share the responsibility of managing custodial and non-custodial sentences (Motiuk and Serin 2001).

prison facilitated the gendered violence for which they were criminalized. While Weinrath's (2009) survey of men in remand custody presented their views on the increased use of pre-trial detention, as well as the two-for-one value of time served at the time (i.e., until February 22, 2010, each day an offender served in custody pre-trial was counted as double; thus, a person sentenced to six months in prison who had served three months in remand would have served their sentence before ever being to court). Most commonly, he found that prisoners felt the length of remand time was increasing because extensive amounts of time passed before cases went to trial due to insufficient resources in the court system.[3, 4] Looking at provincial offenders from a different angle, Boyd (2011) surveyed 200 correctional officers working in provincial institutions in British Columbia to explore their experiences and perceptions of violent incidents.

With the exception of Boyd (2011), however, we are not aware of any research that focuses on correctional officers' experiences and perceptions of threat in provincial remand centers or correctional institutions. Such research is important for several reasons, including that there has been a large increase in the number of men awaiting sentencing in provincial remand centers and these men outnumber those actually sentenced and in provincial custody (Weinrath 2009). The John Howard Society highlights the problematic conditions of remand in Ontario, such as 12-hour lock-down during daytime hours, inadequate exercise or work opportunities, and lack of access to educational opportunities (e.g., teachers and libraries). Overcrowding, indicated by the double or triple bunking of prisoners in cells and a high prisoner to officer ratio, is commonplace across Canada with most provincial institutions not large enough to accommodate the number of prisoners. Men are sentenced to provincial institutions for a diverse range of offenses, including failure to pay child support, theft, minor drug offenses, and assault. However, in some remand centers men sentenced to provincial prisons and those still in remand are mixed (e.g., prisoners are not divided based on if they are sentenced or not, rather they are divided by security needs); thus, men charged with murder can live alongside men who failed to pay their parking tickets. As well, officers are inhibited in providing rehabilitative programming by the length and diversity of men's sentences and the high turnover in the prisoner populations (see also Griffiths 2010). In both settings officers must work with repeat offenders, who may interact with different prisoners upon each sentence served, creating both friends and enemies and potentially perpetuating gang activity.

Beyond prison-to-prisoner dynamics, officers additionally manage the personal trials and tribulations offenders face as they await trial. These offenders are possibly anxious about their future, concerned about what is happening to their possessions and family, and angry with their situation. Officers must also work with men experiencing addiction and who undergo detox during their arrival in jail. Moreover, officers are exposed to possibly violent behaviors from offenders post-detox. Remand and provincial correctional institutions, by nature of these characteristics, facilitate a prisoner culture that is hardly solidified and perhaps more in a state of flux than that found in federal prisons. Daily interactions amongst prisoners who have their own unique criminal perspectives and tendencies and personal/psychological health and well-being, combined with the administrative controls that shape these interactions, create a fertile environment for violence (see Trammell 2012; Ricciardelli forthcoming) – one correctional officers must constantly navigate. In fact, the long history of correctional officers being victimized in provincial institutions is made evident in the media (see the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Corrections 2012). Correctional officers serve the function of protecting the public from offenders and/or protecting offenders from each other, but face the possibility of first- or second-hand violence every day: violence directed at themselves or offender violence that they must disrupt through containment tactics, including force.

Our aim in this paper is to highlight officers' experiences in the provincial correctional system. We draw on qualitative interviews with 41 current or retired male correctional officers who worked in provincial remand or correctional institutions of maximum-security classification for male offenders in multiple Canadian provinces. Our interests lie within male officers' perceptions and experiences of threat and how this connects to and shapes their self-concepts in their role as correctional officers. The workplaces of correctional officers, the prisons, are viewed as social structures with fixed settings and predetermined roles. However, we additionally understand officers as having agency to adjust their roles within these settings; thereby, transforming their identities in the process (see also Stets and Burke 2003). In this regard, how "self as officer" implicates the daily lives of correctional officers outside of the workplace will also be investigated. The shift work of correctional officers, their "code" of conduct, their own "institutionalization" within the centers where they work (e.g., they are locked "in"), and their perception of constant actual or potential threat are factors which potentially make this sense of self the most salient across multiple settings. To this end, four questions directed this research:

Q1. How do provincial correctional officers perceive the prison environment?

Q2. How and what types of threat do officers' experience on the job?

Q3. How do officers maintain their safety at work?

Q4. How does this threat affect their sense of self?

The paper is organized such that we begin, first, with a review of the literature relevant to our research objective. Since little exists on our specific topic, we draw heavily on Canadian scholarship on federal prisons and American research on state prisons or county jails to illustrate what the correctional officer role entails and how its performance can change a person (e.g., their health and well-being). Second, we introduce our theoretical framework, situated within the interpretative paradigm, as one that enables an understanding of how self can be perceived as changing in response to threat. We then review the methods and present the findings. The analyses of interviewee transcripts reveal that correctional

[3] Other reasons for the increase in remand time before 2010, beyond employing the strategy of using remand as long as possible to decrease time served, include zero tolerance policies, increased difficulties in getting bail, lawyering and police conduct, and offender drug use.

[4] Research ethics approval was obtained and participant confidentiality and anonymity were protected. Participants were able to ask for clarification about the study or procedures. They were also reminded of their ability to withdraw from participating during the interview and that they were not obligated to answer any questions or discuss any topics. They were also informed that, due to the procedures used to ensure anonymity, their data, once transcribed, could not be removed from the study. In this document, pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the respondents and the names of the correctional facilities have been removed.

officers, by nature of their work, experience actual and anticipated threats of physical and verbal victimization. But concurrently, they experience "threats to their sense of self." Their self can be dramatically changed or change can even be stalled in the daily activities of their job, often with a rippling effect on their daily lives outside of the prison. The importance of our research stems from the realization that threats extend beyond the possibility of physical and mental victimization but, instead, are intimately connected to interactional changes in the self.

Background and Literature Review

The Prison Environment and Threats Faced by Officers

Extensive variation exists in prison conditions across the United States, ranging from prisoners having limited access to hot meals, recreational activities, and anything deemed *unessential* (Lenz 2002) to the extreme, and infamous, conditions in the Phoenix jail system under Sheriff Joe Arpaio. In Phoenix, prisoners are limited to two meals a day, forced to wear pink underwear, and temperatures are allowed to rise to over 130 degrees in the summer (Shorey 2003). Existing American research on federally incarcerated prisoners, however, has established a concrete connection between the prison environment and the potential deterioration of correctional officers' health and well-being, specifically as demonstrated in the work of Bierie (2012). His data showed that prison-level aggregations of harsher conditions, in some cases mandated by policy (Finn 1996), are significantly associated with a marked deterioration in officers' physical and psychological symptomatology that extends beyond individual-level effects. Such deterioration includes: reduced well-being, greater alcohol and tobacco use, and concerns about life outside of work (e.g., financial concerns), increasing physical problems (e.g., headaches, stomach aches, back pain), and longer or more frequent sick leaves (Bierie 2012).

In comparison to that of workers in the general population, the work environment of corrections officers in provincial prisons in Quebec, Canada was correlated with high levels of psychological distress (e.g., for corrections staff) and adverse psychosocial factors (Bourbonnais et al. 2005). Specifically, between 2002 and 2004, male and female officers reported experiencing more psychological distress when they were exposed to high psychological demands, when rewards were scarce at work, and they had low autonomy. Other factors impacting distress included experiences of job strain, a lack of social support from supervisors and peers, or feeling either harassed or intimidated at work. Across North America, the federal and provincial penal work environments appear to negatively impact the overall well-being of those employed within the institutions. As a result, some researchers have begun to investigate the high rates of job burn-out, job dissatisfaction, and turnover among correctional officers (Lambert, Hogan, and Tucker 2009; Lambert, Altheimer, and Hogan 2010; Lambert and Paoline 2010).

American research has established that violence in the workplace is a major source of threat to the occupational health of correctional officers (Hayes 1985; Dignam and Fagan 1996; Garcia 2009; Lahm 2009; Sorensen et al. 2011). In prisons, both male and female officers experience harassment, although women more so than men (e.g., Savicki, Cooley, and Gjesvold 2003). Prisoner age and their years of experience on the job (Ditchfield and Harries 1996; Lahm 2009; Sorensen et al. 2011), as well as prisoner overcrowding (Gaes and McGuire 1985; Martin et al. 2012) have also been documented as relatively accurate predictors of assaults on officers or of prisoners threatening officers. Each year, many correctional officers are victims of physical assault, battery, injury, punctures or stabbings, and verbal assaults (Hayes 1985).

Consistent with American findings, officers in the Canadian correctional system are exposed to the threat of violence, intimidation, and at times are victims of violence on the job. For example, Boyd (2011) reported that provincial correctional officers in British Columbia were prone to "credible threats of harm" from prisoners that included: physical assault, being hit by feces, blood, vomit, urine or spit, and other types of victimization. Moreover, years on the job increased exposure to violent incidents and higher levels of stress. He maintained that transient populations like those in provincial institutions increase the threat and degree of violence in the institution (Boyd 2011). Looking at officers in the federal prison system, Seidman and Williams interviewed 27 officers that had been victims of prison-based hostage takings. Respondents, here, most frequently reported having thoughts of "disbelief, fear of injury and death, and survival" during the incidents, while their emotional reactions exposed feelings of "shock, anxiety, terror, frustration, vulnerability, powerlessness, humiliation, and isolation" (1999:30). The personal impact of these extreme high-threat situations was evident in how these officers became hyper-vigilant on the job, developed sleep disorders, and, as reported by over 50% of the respondents, felt that their personal lives were negatively affected (Seidman and Williams 1999). More recently, Merecz-Kot and Cebrzyńska (2008) discovered that violence extends beyond that of prisoners toward officers. Indeed, a third of their participants reported experiencing repetitive aggressive acts from co-workers or their superiors.

The Corrections Officer: Role Conflict

In American research on state prisons, the roles and responsibilities of correctional officers have been linked to interpersonal challenges, such as the balancing of custody and treatment as embodied in the officer role (Blair, Black, and Long 1981; Hemmens and Stohr 2000). Hemmens and Stohr found that male officers, although less so than female, tended more toward a human service orientation (e.g., a responsibility to rehabilitate) rather than the "hack" orientation (e.g., a "hard-line approach to their job and interactions with inmates" [2000:343]). While education and age did not affect preferred orientation among officers, having a prior military background was correlated to the adoption of a hack orientation. Lastly, they found that military veterans, rather than non-veterans, were more likely to endorse the use of force to gain compliance with an order (Hemmens and Stohr 2000). The limited Canadian literature in the area includes Linda Simourd's (1997) doctoral dissertation, where she investigated correctional officers in the federal prison system. In this quantitative study of front-line staff, she found that many were supportive of the prison's rehabilitative approach, but were additionally concerned that greater staff corruption or manipulation may be a product of increased interaction with prisoners. Lanthier (2003) also noted the difficulties associated with the combined security, service, and reintegration functions of federal correctional officers in their occupational role. He explained how officers' conflicting roles

intensify in their opposition and stressfulness due to their low (the lowest) status as a civil servant in the penitentiary hierarchy. Indeed, officers sit just above prisoners and must comply with their tasks as proclaimed in official regulation or are threatened with penalty – including dismissal from their position (Lanthier 2003). Overall, scholars have found that role conflict, the need to punish yet rehabilitate prisoners can be so commonplace among correctional officers (Grusky 1959; Hepburn and Albonetti 1980; Poole and Regoli 1980; Toch and Klofas 1982; Liou 1995) that compliance with one aspect of the role can make compliance with another near impossible (Toch and Klofas 1982).

This role ambiguity and contradiction, combined with different views of what the correctional officer role entails, may lead to officers feeling torn between conflicting self perceptions or even suggest their need to create multiple presentations of self. Indeed, some scholars have noted the "performative" quality of correctional officers' attitudes when referring to officers who engage in diverse presentations of self and their emotions in their interactions while on duty (Crawley 2004). In this same vein, Guenther and Guenther (1972) explored how officers manage or cope with uncertainties and unpredictability while on the job. Their study revealed that actions (e.g., force and/or assault) used to deal with diverse situations, sometimes threat-based, were in conflict with correctional philosophy.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, the work of Stets and Burke (2003) is followed and a structural approach is adopted in our symbolic interactionist interpretation of how violence or the threat of violence in prisoner–-officer interaction is connected to male officers' sense of self. From this approach, the self is understood as always acting in a social context. Identities and behaviors, as wells as changes therein, are perceived as the product of social structures, particularly interactions within social structures. Stets and Burke (2003) further argue that the opposite is true, that social structures materialize through patterned actions among individuals over time.

In the structural variant of symbolic interaction, the self is understood to be made up of multiple parts or "identities" which are linked to social structures (Stets and Burke 2003). Individuals' identities inform their roles or relationships within society. Any person can have multiple identities; for example, a male correctional officer may have "self as friend," "self as father," "self as officer," or "self as mentor" as an identity. Moreover, each person can attribute multiple meanings to what these roles entail or mean (i.e., what is known as the content of role identities). A male correctional officer, for example, may perceive his role as that of a "protector," "enforcer," or "counselor." Stryker (1980) argued that one role identity may be played out frequently and across different situations, what he terms a salient identity. The salient role identity emerges when an individual presents this identity in a greater number of interactions with people, who are in turn interacting with this identity and who develop strong ties to the individual (in the capacity he or she is presenting him/herself only). The development of strong ties with others reinforces this identity and enables a positive environment for the individual to continue with its adoption. An identity becomes salient when it is the identity an individual utilizes or embodies most often (e.g., it becomes internalized and understood as a representation of self).

According to Rosenberg (1979), self-concepts include how people think, feel, and imagine who they are, their idealized views and their actual practices of self. People experience negative or positive emotions based on their self-presentation and sense of self, which vary according to how they feel they have met the expectations of a role identity. In light of these emotions, they may change their behavior or alter their conception of the situation. In altering the meanings they attach to a situation or behavior, individuals can change their identities. Identity change and the constant (re-)conceptualization of the self is an ongoing likely outcome of social interactions in larger social structures (Stets and Burke 2003). To this end, we specifically explore how male correctional officers' experiences of violence or its threat are connected to their sense of self.

Methods

We conducted in-depth interviews with 100 correctional officers previously or currently employed in provincial remand or correctional institutions in various provinces across Canada (e.g., New Brunswick, Ontario, Alberta, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island)[5] between October 2011 and December 2012. A demographic survey, tracking places of employment, age, marital status, and field notes (where possible), was also collected. Convenience and snowball sampling were used to meet these officers. In practice, this meant that word of mouth recruitment in the community or through supportive provincial ministries was used to find officers who were interested in voluntarily participating in interviews. For the purpose of this investigation, the data analyzed was limited to male respondents, currently or previously employed as correctional officers, who had worked with adult males in provincial correctional institutions or remand centers that held maximum-security prisoners.

This was the specific focus for a variety of reasons. First, each prisoner population (e.g., adult males or females, youth males or females) differs in their behaviors and needs, as well as the policies surrounding their custody arrangement (e.g., women and youth cannot be double bunked in many institutions while men can be triple bunked if necessary); thus, officers' behaviors may change in accordance. Second, prisoner behaviors, as well as the role and expectations of officers, may change based on the security classification of the prison in which they are employed (e.g., the offenders have more restrictions and supervision in maximum-security). Given remand centers are only housed in maximum-security facilities (e.g., experiences of remand officers and those in less secure prisons cannot be reliably combined) our sample is restricted to men working in maximum-secure or remand facilities. Lastly, female correctional officers were not included in the sample because, given fewer women work in direct contact with prisoners in adult male facilities in comparison to men, too few women were interviewed who worked in this capacity to successfully compare experiences by gender, or at least to do so without potentially

[5] Additionally, there is little research on women's experiences serving sentences in provincial correctional institutions. Exceptions include Buchanan and colleagues' (2011) participatory action research with women incarcerated in a provincial prison in Western Canada for drug and alcohol offenses (for 3 months on average) to understand women's perspectives on their addiction and its relationship to their criminalization. Croteau (2000) and Griffiths, Yule, and Gartner (2011) studied violence among female inmates. Notably, Croteau (2000) found that provincially incarcerated women experienced psychological abuse and institutionalized violence alongside physical assault. Griffiths and colleagues' study outlines how trivial issues can escalate into violent altercations among women incarcerated in a provincial institution in Ontario.

breeching the confidentiality or anonymity of our female participants to date. Thus, 41 was the total number of interviews analyzed for this paper.

Respondents' years of work as correctional officers ranged from approximately two to 27. All men included in the sample had worked with adult males in maximum-security facilities; 36 were currently employed as correctional officers. Aside from working or previously working in maximum-security provincial remand or prisons, ten of the respondents had experiences with other prisoner populations (i.e., youths and females) or adult male offenders serving time in less secure facilities. A few also had some experience in federal corrections and 31 of the men had previous employment experience outside of corrections. Interestingly, all participants self-identified as White and Canadian and most had a college diploma (n=30) followed by a university degree (n=11). The minimum education of the sample was a high school diploma (n=3). In terms of religiosity, 13 men identified as practicing their faith, 16 as non-practicing, and 9 men determined any sort of religious affiliation to be non-applicable to their distinctiveness. The ages of respondents ranged from 22 to over 65; the average age of respondents was 35 years old (although data on age was missing for two men). 21 of the men interviewed had at least one child. Interestingly, 16 men reported a change in their marital status since they first started in corrections (recall some men had a few years of experience and were in their early twenties when interviewed). Nonetheless, 4 men were divorced (at least once) and remarried, 14 were currently married, 15 were single/never married, and 8 lived in a common-law relationship.

We used a semi-structured interview guide to conduct our interviews in person or by telephone.[6] Of these interviews, 37 were conducted in person and only four were done by phone. Each interview lasted up to three hours in length, depending on a variety of factors including their multitude of experiences and general talkativeness. The interview guide contained open-ended items covering an array of topics related to the experiences of correctional officers in the prison environment. The open-ended nature of the questions allowed the interviewer flexibility to probe any conversational paths and topics as they emerged. Once respondents were comfortable discussing their experiences, the interview followed the conversational path of the respondent with probing when particular topics of interest arose. The in-depth interviews permitted a deeper understanding of the specific reality as experienced by respondents to be grasped.

Interviews were conducted in English, audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim.[7] The interviews were coded thematically. We used a coding strategy that has some comparability with that which is used in a modified grounded theory drawing from Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Glaser and Strauss (1967).[8] This strategy ensured a rigorous process of data analysis was undertaken that, systematically,

[6] The few phone interviews were due to the extensive distance between where the officers and researchers resided. We found no discernible difference between the in-person and phone based interviews.

[7] Any direct verbal quotes from participants have been edited for speech fillers such as "like", "umm", and "ahh", and grammar in order to assist with comprehensibility and flow. Although, to stay true to the voice of the respondents, transcriptions were verbatim and any edits were minimal and did not affect the participant's vernacular, use of profanity, or slang.

[8] We make no claims that we completed a grounded theory research project, for example, generating theory. Instead, we adopt a coding strategy that is informed by some procedures outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

encouraged conceptual themes to emerge directly from the data. The premise behind this process was founded on that first put forth by Glasser and Strauss who suggested researcher's "use *any* materials bearing on his area that he can discover" (1967:169). Specifically, our data analysis employed a constructed grounded theory approach that was driven by the data but also attentive to existing theory (Charmaz 2006). In this sense, we approached the data with our knowledge about the research questions suspended and allowed themes to emerge from the data. To this end, our analytic strategy was as follows. Upon reading the interview transcripts, we first assigned codes (similar to Strauss and Corbin's open codes) to the data that seemed to capture the different ways officers spoke about their experiences, for example, "being there for me" and "quick code response time." Our next step was to reflect upon how officers' responses had shared dimensions, patterns, or relationships, what we perceived as central organizing themes (similar to Strauss and Corbin's axial coding). For example, we perceived the codes "being there for me" and "quick code response time" to coalesce into the larger theme "Do you got my back?" Central themes were composed of multiple respondents describing similar experiences, views, and feelings regarding a particular topic. Specifically, major re-current themes that emerged across all or some participants' narratives were determined. Figure 1 is an example of how we conceptually and theoretically used our findings in answer to our research questions (see Appendix A); space limitations do not permit us to provide a figure for each research question. Figure 1 depicts how we understand certain factors (shared in interviews) as linked to perceptions of threat by correctional officers (Q1), which we discuss in our findings section.

Both authors reviewed the transcripts and ensured agreement was achieved regarding all codes and emergent themes noted in the data (e.g., a qualitative understanding of inter-rater reliability). Below, these themes are explored, first, by reviewing how officers perceive their environment and the threats they experience and, second, how they mitigate these threats. Throughout, we direct our analysis to how violence or its threat shapes their sense of self.

Officers in the Provincial Correctional System

Perception of Actual or Anticipated Threat (Q1; Q2)

The theme *violence is expected* captures how participants described threats as multifaceted and largely attributable to diverse elements unique to the prison environment. We must recall that correctional officers, even when instructed to be peace officers, are trained in the use of force tactics; therefore, they are primed to anticipate violence when interacting with prisoners. The presence of violence or its threat while on duty was described by all correctional officers working with adult males as commonplace. It was viewed as a natural part of the prison work environment. For example, Jackson, an active officer, explained that he feels the potential for physical violence "a hundred percent" of the time. While Nate, a retired officer, described:

> Being assaulted and attacked. To me it was part of my job... Some were fighting hard, you end up with a brawl. They're punching, kicking, biting, and spitting, and everything like this... [Sometimes] you [have to] give it to them just as much as they give to you… It just happens. Sometimes you open the door and the inmate just suckers your face, nailed ya. You just don't know.

Officers with decades of experiences noted that violence and its threat remained customary even though correctional officer conduct had changed over the last 15 to 30 years. These men explained that when they started in corrections the culture perpetuated violence by abusing or maltreating the prisoners. For example:

> Once my partner came out of the unit, I called him out. I said "Let's go get the mops." And back in the day when I first started in the business that was one of those code words. If an inmate said [anything to us] he was going to get the mops. We'd take him to the mop room. Out of sight, out of mind. He might get a beating on him. (Patrick)

He, echoing others, noted that although the culture had changed – the focus was now on peace rather than conflict – and it was no longer acceptable for officers to engage in acts of physical violence with prisoners (e.g., "inmates are getting killed and our mandate, it says in our policy: care, custody, and control, in that order we are responsible for their safety and you can be held accountable" [Buddy]), physical violence continued regularly and the sense of threat was omnipresent. Other officers, like Steve, described incidents where they were attacked by prisoners: "When I got assaulted, one of the times I had to get taken out in a stretcher and [the prisoners] saw… You'd think they'd killed me they were all cheering as I was being taken out on the stretcher…" Nonetheless, respondents explained that if they retaliated and were caught inflicting physical harm on a prisoner, the current climate would ensure the officer was suspended (with or without pay) or terminated.

Officers viewed several factors as underlying the violent and resulting high threat prison environment. These factors included high prisoner to officer ratios, a lack of co-worker cohesion, being assigned to dangerous units, and confrontations with particularly dangerous prisoners. The high prisoner to officer ratio (e.g., two officers on a range with 16 prisoners double bunked or two officers on a range with over 60 double bunked prisoners) that was intensified by overcrowding in prisons (e.g., two officers on a range with 24 prisoners triple bunked; two in the beds and one on the floor on a mattress) where prisoners vastly outnumbered correctional officers was commonly mentioned as a contributing factor to experiencing not only the threat of violence but actual physical attacks as well. Cells in many prisons contain one bunk bed and are approximately six by nine feet in size. Prisoners could be locked into their cell for 16 hours on a standard day, more time if the jail was in lockdown. The extent of overcrowding was described by many:

> It really is a brand new challenge every time you come in on duty. The place was fit for fifty-seven inmates and you got to come [into work] with ninety-two [prisoners]. Then the next thing you know, sheriff comes in with three guys… They have to sleep in the gym or phone room, which there's not enough room to put a single mattress on the floor. They gotta spend a whole weekend there. And it's hot in there, it's filthy, it's gross, people spit on the walls and snot and… (Mason)

Not surprising, many respondents described experiencing threat as a result of overcrowding:

> Oh, it affected everybody. Everybody was involved in it. When you have, instead of ten, thirty in each area and one officer outside and one officer inside, it's a big difference. Where you got thirty, you've got problems. You have a problem with thirty, not a problem with ten. At times it was [frightening]… I was involved in riots and stuff, where they refused to come in from the yard and you have to go in, fight them, and bring them back in... (Aaron)

Beyond overcrowding, ranges that housed high profile prisoners or prisoners with particularly violent or aggressive criminal histories were considered particularly dangerous, contributing to this sense of threat. The men on these ranges were viewed as more violent, given the nature of their charges, and perhaps more likely to be victimized because of the dynamics within the group of persons sharing the range (e.g., the types of charges different people held, the notoriety of their crime, the mix of gang or criminal affiliations between the prisoners, etc.). Many officers, retired or actively employed, described their experiences on these ranges, and in doing so revealed how their sense of their role as officer had multiple meanings, with explicit feelings attached to these meanings. The meaning of officer as "protector," "enforcer," or "counselor" included feelings of being "nervous" and "prepared" and "alert." For example, Greyson explained, "I remember being nervous. You always feel you've got to watch over your shoulder and stuff. After a while you still got to be careful because you can't really trust any of them because they are criminals." Others described specific prisoners or situations where a prisoner was more likely to attack an officer: "If you're dealing with an inmate or a guy, that's just very agitated…he doesn't like authority and he'll come up from behind you and pop you in the head or whatever... That's one of their things. The inmates, they don't care. They'll fight you" (Johny).

The theme *Do you got my back?* reflects how, despite much of the violence in prison being attributable to prisoner interactions, officers associated any lack of solidarity and cohesion among co-workers, sometimes exacerbated by institutional policy, with an increased sense of threat. Solidarity among co-workers promoted safety, collective perceptions of the role of officer as "collegial" or "protector," and decreased threat. All interviewees noted that they preferred working with certain colleagues rather than others (e.g., "it was tough to work with some folks [that] didn't seem to understand how to carry out the job" [Mike]). More so, all officers were most interested in working with a colleague that they felt would offer them protection in a potentially threatening situation. Jake, currently employed as an officer, explained that: "when you're working with somebody, you want to know that somebody backs you up … I think you pick up a sense from people whether they would be there for you if things get a little rough." This thought process was reiterated by many who described a strong level of solidarity between themselves and some of their co-workers due to their similar backgrounds (e.g., military training, etc.) and strong amicable relationships (e.g., "our shift hangs out all the time" [Victor]).

Most, although not all, officers stated that the safety of their co-workers was first and foremost in importance to them while working. Specifically, the safety of their colleagues was more important than the safety of the prisoners, demands or desire of the administration, and that of the public. The reasoning here was simply that they needed to "protect" each other. Officers had to feel that if they were in danger or threatened, their colleagues would respond. For example, this level of trust was seen as vital especially during *codes*, an alarm indicating an officer was in danger. When asked

about the importance of responding to emergency situations and if they had done so during their careers, many officers explained that they always responded as quickly as possible because even a few seconds passing was enough time for an officer to be hurt, even killed. Officers also reported feeling less safe working in larger facilities because response times would increase simply due to the distance that the emergency response team (ERT) and their other colleagues would need to travel to come to their aid. Although respondents described the importance of responding to these "codes" as paramount, others noted that it is not uncommon for some officers to either not respond to these emergency situations at all or simply just observe them as they unfold rather than intervening and/or providing assistance.

Indeed, respondents explained that while many professed that a "team atmosphere" existed among correctional workers and a "team player" was a central identity attached to the officer role, in reality, this was not always the practice. Many hypothesized that these divisions were due to "gossip," institutional policies, or other personal frictions between colleagues. For example, officers spend up to 16 hours a day with each other and they have varying personalities, work ethics, ages, and political viewpoints that can impact how well people get along. Some of the policies in place to promote an equal work environment were described as being "used as weapons against each other; which is sad" (Steve). These policies, and the allegations that some officers have made against each other have resulted in distrust among some staff and a lack in confidence in how quickly, or even *if*, a fellow co-worker will respond to an emergency situation (i.e., a *code* being called).

Moreover, some participants explained that they would second-guess their actions during physical altercations with prisoners because they feared institutional investigations and punitive repercussions in response to their behavior. For example, beyond adhering to institutional policy, Carmen explained that:

> Inmate dynamics and mentality has changed that now if staff ever so much as flicks them, first thing they'll do is call the police. If you put on the cuffs and they were struggling and it made a mark on their wrists, they want to call the police and have pictures taken. So, [we] just take extra steps. We have more cameras present [and we] make sure that the camera sees when we do the finger check to show that cuffs are not too tight. When they have to stay in cuffs and shackles for a period of times. We will go back, I think, every 15 to half hour with a camera again to show "cuffs check, still okay." We need to protect ourselves.

Other officers explained the difficulties associated with how every *use of force* must be followed by an investigation that includes *a use of force assessment* by an independent third party. The necessity of these investigations combined with the punitive measures that could follow (e.g., suspension, job loss) were described as a hindrance to job performance: "It's ridiculous. We're afraid to go to codes now; you have to describe why you took him in an arm bar to the ground. Why? It's hard to articulate that in a report. They'll [investigators] say it was excessive use of force" (Justin). In the same sense, Jace, like many others, described his anxieties at work after being suspended for using force while trying to prevent a prisoner from committing suicide: "I always have to watch what I'm doing. I feel I suffer from post-traumatic stress… You know, 'cause I'm always worried… 'Am I going to get in trouble for this?'" Unfortunately, all too often officers had experiences "cutting down," "untying," or "seeing blood gushing" (Goodwin) from prisoners trying to end their lives, sometimes successfully and other times not. Yet, such concerns about their behaviors when trying to save prisoners' lives was omnipresent for officers. The quotes illustrative of *Do you got my back?* reveal that solidarity and good relations between co-workers were presented as (although selectively present or absent between peers) an essential and vital element for threat reduction. The potential for lack of assistance or support from colleagues or perceived institutional constraints on behavior appeared to be a major contributing factor to the perception of and actual threat experienced among some officers. Given the wide-ranging potential sources of threat, the question remains, how do correctional officers negotiate their safety?

Negotiating Safety (Q3)

I'm not a bleeding heart is a theme that refers to officers' presentation of self in a way that, through their body language and physical/verbal assertion of confidence and authority, fosters respect from prisoners and protects them from threat. The respondents perceived prisoners as keenly observant, with ample time on their hands, and unforgiving. Officers felt that prisoners would look for their insecurities and then wait for an opportunity to exploit them; they felt prisoners had endless amount of time to watch, learn, and wait before they acted. Their awareness of prisoners' perceptiveness prompted them to change their self-presentation, physically or in terms of their personality, in order to garner respect and trust, and have some semblance of control over prisoners and their personal safety. Many officers explained the importance of presenting themselves as confident, in control, and fair mannered; although not overly sympathetic:

> I certainly didn't want to come across like a bleeding heart social worker, that I'm here to help you every minute of the day…you have to have a presence that is firm but fair and you have to have the wherewithal that when something is not feeling right. People are trying to pull the wool over your eyes, so you learn how to behave … [If] you go into those settings looking vulnerable…the inmates will pick that up very quickly…so you may be targeted… (Mike)

Respondents also valued appearing neither as overly aggressive nor vulnerable in any way. The idea here was that if an officer presented as too aggressive, he could be viewed as "hiding" his fears or as "scared" rather than someone to be feared. In the same sense, if an officer demonstrated his vulnerability, he could quickly become preyed upon. Steve explained that:

> Where they'll [officers] be confident, the inmates will pick up on that. Or we'll have some people that aren't as confident and they have a tough guy act, where they have to be overbearing and they have to kind of throw their weight around more than they should because they're insecure and you can see that. [The] inmates, they'll say: "That guy's walking crazy." He walks in with "I'll kill anybody" [a look on his face] they say "Why he is acting like that?" Because he's scared.

Beyond behavior, physical stature and body image were also important forms of self-presentation. Being physically fit (e.g., muscular), large (e.g., tall), and being perceived as or having a reputation for being a "tough guy" (e.g., strength) assisted in

creating a confident non-vulnerable self-presentation that warranted prisoner respect. Respondents who reported their height as "shorter than average" described making up for their physical height in strength, speed, and muscularity. Some respondents explained they started body building because of their occupation, they described work out routines and diets designed to assist with muscle gain. Some spoke about their disrespect for overweight officers who had "let themselves go" (Drew) and others went so far to as to view these officers as threats to their safety. Clearly, physical stature was considered as important for personal negotiations of safety. It enabled officers to feel they could hold their own and handle or even intimidate the prisoners in their custody; they could possess the "enforcer" correctional officer role. Yet, while valued in one-on-one confrontations and interactions, physical prowess was not relied on by participants when trying to diffuse an altercation among several prisoners – here words were the optimal choice of weapon – because officers explained: "if you're inside a range with thirty guys that are all grown men… You're not going to win" (Willie). Some participants did use their physical stature in emergency/violent situations; however, these altercations were "necessary" or with few or a single prisoner. Overall, bodily presentation was not enough in itself to mitigate threat and provide safety.

Another predominant employed strategy geared toward threat reduction was communication and *talking with respect*. Here, participants explained that tactful and non-threatening communication when confronting prisoners in front of their peers was essential to reducing threat. Indeed, many described their "voice" as their most powerful "weapon" when on duty and so understood the identity of counselor to have some meaning for their correctional officer role. For example, Barry explains: "you need to have good verbal communication for sure when you're dealing with these guys every day, talking to them every day. You've got to be very firm when something needs to be done".

Talking allowed the prisoners to save face and officers to garner their respect, and, in consequence, maintain their safety (e.g., prevent threat). This is evident in Cole's description of his preferred "partner": "…my preference for people to work with is, I don't care if you're 6'2" or 5'2", I still always want to work with people who will prefer to try to de-escalate, to deal with situations verbally, that will respect inmates and treat them as a person because it makes everybody's life easier. If everybody has respect for the inmates, it is a world easier." Also, at times, it was easier and more effective to "talk" to a prisoner rather than to use force. Respondents described a culture among prisoners that would force a prisoner to act aggressively toward a correctional officer who they felt was negatively impacting their reputation in front of or among their peers. Thus, words could be needed to "de-escalate" a situation. Participants frequently described the value of respect and trust in general prisoner management and diffusing crisis situations. Jason, for example, explained how his respectful interactions with prisoners ensured his safety during a prison riot:

> So, on one afternoon shift there were some, we got a sense that something wasn't working right. They walked by me and said "Boss get off the floor" and I said "What's going on?" he said "Just get off the floor," and so they started rioting and smashing some stuff up…they absolutely beat this guy to a pulp, this correctional officer; [they] didn't even touch me…

As evident in Jason's story, the ways in which officers interact with their clients (the prisoners) have extensive implications for their personal safety. Indeed, many officers placed a high value on treating prisoners fairly, consistently, and simply as human beings, which was distinguished from the unacceptable behavior of being their "friend" or a "care-bear." This strategy produced some sense of safety, or at least more of a sense of safety, than "chirping," disrespecting, teasing, or taunting the prisoners.

Self in Transition (Q4)

As the above findings and discussion begin to reveal, the high threat environment on the job and after hours appeared to have a personal impact on the sense of self of the correctional officers interviewed. Here, we draw upon themes that specifically illustrate how respondents' perceptions and experiences of threat impacted their sense of self inside and outside of their paid work. Applying Stets and Burke (2003), it appears that the perception of potential violence within the social context in which officers work, and the roles they took on while interacting in the prisons shaped their sense of self over time; sometimes this resulted in a self that was far removed from the person they were when they first started working in corrections.

Beyond the sense of threat experienced in the prisons, respondents described threats to self that extended beyond the workplace. *Following me home* refers to how the threat of victimization, violent or otherwise, could sometimes follow officers home into their personal lives. All participants described some experience of threat while they were not actively on duty. These experiences begin to suggest how the correctional officer role, and the feelings and behaviors associated with it, can, for some men, become a salient identity over time. For some officers, threat occurred in confrontations with released former prisoners they encountered in public[9] or even at their homes after former prisoners or affiliates of current prisoners followed them home. Nate explained a situation where he was out with his family:

> We had officers who were getting threatening phone calls at home and stuff like this. [I was with] my wife downtown and [the] kids, and they call me one day. Eventually, we walk into restaurants and I say: "If this happens, you people just run there and I'll take care of it and call the police." But, you had to deal with these things and some people couldn't deal with them and they just quit.

Following our interview with Ben, he abruptly returned home because his partner called and reported seeing someone looking into their home windows and trying to enter the premises. These experiences of threat were particularly worrisome for participants because they affected the safety of their family and loved ones. Many officers even choose not to enter certain establishments in their time off work as a result of their knowledge of and interactions with prisoners. Their fear is that their correctional officer role will replace any other role they may act upon, such as father or husband, should they confront ex-prisoners in a non-institutional setting. Others noted that because they had been "followed before," they had become more cautious over time. For example, at a public event, John described that he:

[9] Not all encounters with former inmates are negative or threat-driven.

> …ran across a couple inmates that have been in jail at [institution's name]. I'm walking with my wife and my little girl and my father-in-law and my brother-in-law. But, these guys said: "Well, you're not in uniform. We can kick the crap out of you…" I walked with my daughter. I stopped to look, I turned around and they were after me again…all this in front of my two-year-old daughter.

Indeed, the experiences of threat described by participants indicated that they did not "leave their work at work" (Larry).

The majority of respondents, but not all interviewees, commonly described *becoming harder* over the course of their employment in corrections. While the degree varied by respondent, officers perceived their previously more sympathetic, empathetic, or emotional self was replaced, at some point, with a hardened self; essentially, for some officers, their role as "counselor" was increasingly replaced with a role of "enforcer." Derek explained how he had changed when working as a corrections officer: "I think the jail is the formula to change most people's values and I don't think it's much different from being a cop actually. In the sense you become harder. You become maybe a little less sensitive to others 'cause you're a little less compassionate." Many correctional officers also felt they were less respected than police officers. They expressed feeling they had little respect at all from society in their occupation – recognizing that more often than not they too were hidden away from mainstream society in jails where they associated with individuals that society had deemed unfit to live in the community.

Nate noted that his "harder" self largely emerged as a form of protection: "You become a lot tougher, less caring, your attitude changes, and it has something to do with your everyday expectations. It's not the same. You just don't care after a while." Beyond more noticeable changes in self, the overwhelming majority of respondents spoke of their work self or correctional officer self. Indeed, people too often fail to recognize gradual changes in self or even personality until extensive time has passed and the change becomes more pronounced. This work self was predominantly described as "tough" and "hard," it entailed displays of confidence and aggression, minimal humor and the creation of a "wall" when in the presence of prisoners. For some respondents, this self "came out" as they neared the jail:

> I went to work one day and I was driving in with this friend of mine. I was living with him actually…he says: "I've gotta say something," we laugh and joke from [a city] to the west end of [another city] every day. And the minute you hit the drive way, you stop laughing, your face turns like stone and we go into the jail. And I said: "I don't know, I always did that." It was like I turned a different person on when I went inside the jail 'cause I felt I had to… [I got] caught up in the whole lifestyle, and thought that I had to be this mean, tough son-of-a-bitch walking into the jail. I had that look on my face like: "Don't mess with me or else." (Mac)

Respondents identified a need to at least try and separate their on duty self from their off duty self. However, in many cases as previously noted, the distinction between an on duty and off duty self was difficult to maintain over time. Often it seemed the on duty self eventually carried over to when an officer was no long working; especially whenever aspects of the work environment crossed into the non-work environment (e.g., running into former prisoners on the street, worrying about safety). Indeed, when environmental or situational cues from the prison passed to the outside the perceived barriers between the two worlds seemed to dissolve and the ability to distinguish between selves followed suit.

Among some respondents there was a shared perception of how they changed that expressed, indirectly or directly, their growing need for power and dominance. This desire for power was not necessarily such that officers wanted to be dominators in their overall life; rather they wanted to be authoritative and in a position of status in their officer role (e.g., supervisor, super-intendant, etc.) in their workplace. Said another way, they wanted prisoners to view them as powerful. The theme *power hungry* captures how the presentation and identification of self as authoritative and "controlling" began to seem central to the officer role and officer-prisoner relationship and thus, impacted their overall sense of self. In line with Stryker's (1980) argument, that the playing out of role identity across situations and frequently can encourage embracement of this role identity, the consistent presentation of an authoritative self when interacting with prisoners can easily create a sense of self that is the most salient for some officers.

Some officers described their use of power to control prisoners, repeatedly. They explained that exerting their power was simply a necessary part of the job – prisoners "needed" to know the officer was in charge. In the words of John: "they have to learn that [the easy way] or they're going to have to learn it the hard way. There are other ways [to teach it]: play mind games with them, not get in their business, [but] take the TV away from them. They're like kids." However, others spoke of more subtle ways, such as locking prisoners in their cells for 24 hours, that they found just as effective in displaying their authority. This need for an authoritative presence at work appeared to be largely a consequence of the unique and violent dynamics inherent to the corrections environment. The actions officers witnessed on a daily basis alone, with or without awareness of the details of exact crimes prisoners had been charged or convicted of committing, suggested to officers that without authority – control and power – they would be more vulnerable.

(*Un*)*comfortably numb* is a theme that captures how at a certain time in the careers of some correctional officers their self-conception as officers became static and resistant to change. Said another way, these officers could look back and note a significant change in their personality or self that differed from the previous meanings and feelings they attached to their correctional officer identity. For example, some officers spoke about their realization that they had become less sensitive to the challenges experienced by the prisoners. Whereas, they felt they previously cared more and respected prisoners at least at a basic level of human rights – they wanted to see them succeed and thought they had a chance at "making it" on the outside. These same respondents, however, now felt that they had developed an increasingly negative, non-sympathetic, disgruntled view of the prisoners over time. They viewed these incarcerated men as deserving of their situations, unable to change, and problematic for society. Respondents tended to feel that "usually when they're arrested, they're arrested for a reason" (Si) or "99% of the time they were in there because they deserved to be in there" (Jep). Thus, it appeared that, particularly, as correctional

officers became engrossed in the criminal justice system, seeing the "revolving door" (e.g., the same prisoners leaving and returning to prison over and over again), and embracing the structural and interactional dynamics within the prison system, their sense of self changed in accordance to these experiences. It became shaped by the environment in which they were exposed most often – their work. Some officers extended this discussion to include how their experiences of the adverse, violent, and threat-filled penal environment started to negatively affect their sense of self when working. Likewise, over time this sense of self, as they interacted more and more within this negative environment, became their dominant self.

Indeed, officers, over the course of their employment working with adult men, described seeing everything from men being killed to fathers and sons sharing a cell; they talked about seeing suicides, self-harming acts, abandonment (by wives and families), loss, tears, volatile anger, and everything in between. Many had held dying men in their arms, feared acquiring non-curable diseases on the job, cut down men who had hung themselves, had feces or urine thrown at them repeatedly, seen the aftermath of shanks (knives) in circulation, and other tragic behaviors. The cumulative effect of these experiences appeared to result in some officers taking on a static, negative orientation. In some ways this could be viewed as becoming desensitized, however, it was definitely more than that. This static orientation followed these officers in all realms of life and extended beyond the prison – it became their new, dominant sense of self. Said another way, they learned to minimize their feelings toward otherwise negative realities largely because such experiences were simply part of their everyday life and played a role in *defining* who they had become. Mac discussed his experiences in court at an inquest for a prisoner that had died in his arms, of natural causes. In doing so, he alludes to his emerging awareness of how his sense of self had changed:

> …[the parents] were up at the front and the mother was crying. Now we're talking almost two years after the kid had passed. And, it was at that time that it hit me, I didn't care that that kid died. I didn't care that that he was twenty-two, twenty-three years old and gone. In my…in my opinion, or my feeling at that time was "Oh well, okay, the world's better off without somebody like that." But then, when I was at the coroner's inquest, I saw the mother crying and the father hugging her, it was at that time I went "Wow, that kid had a mother and father and probably brothers and sisters and friends who, who cared for him."

For some officers, it was such occasions that reminded them of who they "used to be" (e.g., their previous emotionality or sensitivity to the plight of prisoners, or their less soured orientation to corrections) before or at the start of their current occupation.

Many officers, who were in their mid-thirties or older, described recognizing and not necessarily being comfortable with this change in their sense of self. Those few who were no longer employed in corrections experienced personal struggles post-employment when they realized just how negative and insensitive they had become. Indeed, some officers spoke about their wives, children or parents reminding them to "check" their on duty self at the door when they returned home after a day of work – perhaps a strategy to help hold on to their "older self." These men often cited their supportive and strong wives or other family members, who often would not tolerate their hostility in the home environment, as the persons who reminded them of just how much their outlooks, and even the language they use in conversation, had changed (e.g., "I was married, when I went to work at the jail and my wife said: "Boy, you didn't used to talk like this"" [Matt]). In the same realm, other officers spoke about being reminded to "be sensitive." Overall, these men discussed their challenges as they learned to trust again and reach out to people anew as they began to interact in new settings or situations. Others still employed in corrections talked about their well-being and needing to change before their relationships with their families became too strained or their insensitive nature lead them to disassociate themselves from others. However, a small, yet notable proportion of older respondents talked about eventually becoming soft again; becoming less negative, more patient, and more understanding. Often these men had personal experiences that were trying in nature (e.g., loss of loved ones, deaths, incarcerated family, etc.) and recognizing that the world was not always a positive place and it was not their place to lay any judgment.

Concluding Thoughts

Correctional officers are surrounded by threat and the potential of being harmed, psychologically, physically, and interpersonally, while on duty and, even possibly, in the community. This study is aimed at understanding how provincial correctional officers, working with adult males, perceived this prison environment (Q1), the threats they experienced at work (Q2), how they negotiated their safety in this work environment (Q3), and how such threat impacted their sense of self (Q4). We found among respondents that the threat of violence was very real; it was an ever-looming and largely anticipated reality (Q1, Q2). The prison environment is perceived as being shaped by this potential for violence and its threat, which stem from elements native to the prison work environment (e.g., overcrowding, the prisoners, stress, deprivation, etc.) itself. In consequence, officers tended to view violence in the prison as largely unavoidable. In this context, their understanding of the penal environment created their need to be wary, on guard, and primed for threat – or they were even more likely to be harmed.

In describing their experiences of threat, officers began to reveal the multiple meanings and feelings attached to their sense of their role as officers. Officers' identities ranged from "counselors" to "controllers" and such identities could change at any moment depending on if or how threatened they felt (Q4). In turn, officers' behaviors were shaped by a desire to maintain their safety (Q3) – the potential for violence in a penal environment could never be disregarded or forgotten. Their duties pertaining to the officer role – the need to ensure the safety, security, and control of prisoners, society, and colleagues while also assisting with prisoner care and rehabilitation – created challenges for officers as they sought to mitigate personal threat to their physical safety, as well as their self-concept (Q3, Q4).

Differences exist in how officers tried to diminish this experience of threat and create some semblance of safety while on duty or, even, in the community (Q3). Respondents described a variety of tactics used to maintain "safety" in the prisons, which revolved largely around their self-presentation, their relationships with their colleagues, and their

relationship with the prisoners. Officers opted to create a presentation of self that was authoritative and confident – ensuring that all prisoners knew just "who" was in charge or had control (Q4). Some worked on their muscularity in order to be presented as physically dominant and strong, while others discussed using their verbal skills to build rapport and create positive relationships between themselves and the prisoners. Overall, officers described self-presentation, understanding of the social nuances of prisoner daily life, the dynamics of co-worker relationships, and the importance of communication, as well as positive-professional relationships with prisoners as effective strategies in reducing threat.

The social dynamics related to the experience of and/or mitigation of threat was connected to an officer's self-concept. The social context in which the correctional officers work plays an integral part, as well as their interaction with colleagues, administration, and prisoners in defining who they are and who they become as persons over time (Q4). Indeed, not only does the perception of threat shape the officers' work experience, it also has a profound impact on personal identity, behavior, and personal outlook – their sense of self. Significantly, we note that how the role of correctional officer shapes an officer's personal "self" in light of threat, despite it being an expected and natural element of the correctional officer occupation, was largely unrecognized by officers. Only in retrospect and/or after many years on the job, did the complex impact of their experiences of threat on their sense of self become acknowledged. In this regard, some officers described becoming "hard" and this "hardness" becoming inherent to their self. Some stressed a desire for "power" and an authoritative element in their self-conception that had started to gain precedence in their day-to-day work lives and perhaps even at home. For these officers, the correctional officer role was no longer maintained at work and instead largely became a salient identity. Moreover, some respondents even discussed a "numbness" or "desensitization" that suggested their perception of their self as a correctional officer had become static and resistant to change.

The hardness and authoritativeness that developed while on duty for many correctional officers was readily identified by their family and/or friends outside of the work environment. Although this self was created and reinforced through interactions in the prison environment, where it successfully assisted with the construction of safety and the mitigation of threat, some participants were aware that the change in self was gradual, yet, eventually, did become permanent for some – self as "correctional officer" was a salient self. In consequence, this self unconsciously surfaced both on and off duty and had implications for the personal relationships, persona, and life of officers. Particularly, it appeared that the desire or even need to be safe and reduce threat by adopting an authoritative presence and a hardened outlook by many had a dramatic impact, usually negative, on an officer's identity and life outside of work. Indeed, the interrelationships between perception of threat, negotiation of safety, and sense of self are many.

To exemplify, these interrelationships would suggest that lacking emotionality toward and sympathy for prisoners was a strategy thought to allow officers to enforce protocol, prevent their manipulation by prisoners or other officers, and, as a result, increase their safety while on duty. However, this lack of emotionality potentially carried over into their life beyond the prison walls, where changes in sense of self (e.g. personality, behavior, perspective) could be personally noted by others close to respondents. These changes were often reflected on comparatively (e.g., who they were now *versus* who they had been prior to their career in corrections) and, often, it became apparent that who they were on duty soon influenced who they were off duty.

Overall, the management of threat for correctional officers is complex and vital to the performance of their roles and duties and has a significant impact on their sense of self. It is also clear that ensuring one's safety in the prison environment cannot be realistically achieved through elementary physical or psychological means alone. Careful social navigation, fostering rapport and respect from prisoners through effective communication and perception are, in fact, considered to be some of the most effective tools at the disposal of correctional officers in managing the threat-filled occupation. Perhaps, further exploration of the experience of threat will provide insight that may benefit officers new to the field or currently within the field in terms of managing personal safety and its impact on self. Regardless, the presence of threat is undoubtedly a complex experience that appears universal among officers working with adult men. It provides a unique lens in examining the social nuances unique to a highly dangerous and underexplored profession.

References

Bierie, David. 2012. "The impact of prison conditions on staff well-being." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 56(1):81-95.

Blair, Robert B., Clifford M. Black, and Henry J. Long. 1981. "The state correction officer as keeper and counselor: An empirical investigation of the role." *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 8(4):875-898.

Bourbonnais, Renée et al. 2005. "Work characteristics and health of correctional officers." *Revue d'Epidemiologie et de Sante Publique* 53(2):127-142.

Boyd, Neil. 2011. *Correctional officers in British Columbia, 2011: Abnormal working conditions*. Simon Fraser University. Retrieved July 13, 2012 (http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/pamr/pdfs/final%20boyd-report-2011.pdf).

Buchanan, Marla et al. 2011. "Understanding Incarcerated Women's Perspectives on Substance Use: Catalysts, Reasons for Use, Consequences, and Desire for Change." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 50(2):81-100.

Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice. 2010. *Save our prison farms Campaign 2010*. Retrieved July 09, 2012 (http://cusj.org/emerging-issues/criminal-justice/save-our-prison-farms/).

Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory*. London: Sage.

Comack, Elizabeth. 2008. *Out There/In Here: Masculinity, Violence, and Prisoning*. Winnipeg, Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Correctional Service Canada. 2008. *Correctional Service of Canada's Employment Strategy: Institutional Component (394-2-74)*. Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada. Retrieved May 28, 2011 (http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pa/emp-strat/index-eng.shtml).

Crawley, Elaine. 2004. "Emotion and performance." *Punishment & Society* 6(4):411-427.

Croteau, Cathy. 2000. *Prison Violence in Canada: A Female Inmates' Perspective*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa.

Dignam, John and Thomas J. Fagan. 1996. "Workplace violence in correctional settings: A comprehensive approach to critical incident stress management." Pp. 367-384 in *Violence on the job: Identifying risks and developing solutions*, edited by G. R. VandenBos and E. Q. Bulatao. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Ditchfield, John and Richard Harries. 1996. "Assaults on staff in male local prisons and remand centres." *Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate Research Bulletin* 38:15-20.

Finn, Peter. 1996. "No-frills prisons and jails: A movement in flux." *Federal Probation* 60(3):35-44.

Gaes, Gerald G. and William McGuire. 1985. "Prison violence: The contribution of crowding versus other determinants of prison assault rates." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 22(1):41-65.

Garcia, Marie R. 2009. *Individual and institutional demographic and organizational climate correlates of perceived danger among federal correctional officers*. PhD dissertation, Temple University, U.S.A.

Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine.

Griffiths, Curt T. 2010. *Canadian Corrections*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Nelson Thomson Learning.

Griffiths, Elizabeth, Carolyn Yule, and Rosemary Gartner. 2011. "Fighting over trivial things: Explaining the issue of contention in violent altercations." *Criminology* 49(1):61-94.

Grusky, Oscar. 1959. "Role conflict in organization: A study of prison camp officials." *Administration Science Quarterly* 3:452-472.

Guenther, Anthony L. and Mary Guenther. 1972. "Coping with uncertainty: Role dilemmas among penitentiary correctional officials." *Georgia Journal of Corrections* 1:55-64.

Hayes, Winifred S. 1985. *Assault, battery & injury of Correctional Officers by inmates: An occupational health study*. PhD dissertation, John Hopkins University, U.S.A.

Hemmens, Craig and Mary K. Stohr. 2000. "The two faces of the correctional role: An exploration of the value of the correctional role instrument." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 44(3):326-349.

Hepburn, John R. and Celesta Albonetti. 1980. "Role conflict in correctional institutions: An empirical examination of the treatment-custody dilemma among correctional staff." *Criminology* 17(4):445-459.

Irwin, John and Donald R. Cressey. 1962. "Thieves, convicts, and the inmate subculture." *Social Problems* 10(2):142-155.

Lahm, Karen F. 2009. "Inmate assaults on prison staff: A multilevel examination of an overlooked form of prison violence." *The Prison Journal* 89(2):131-150.

Lambert, Eric, Irshad Altheimer, and Nancy L. Hogan. 2010. "Exploring the relationship between social support and job burnout among correctional staff." *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 37(11):1217-1236.

Lambert, Eric, Nancy L. Hogan, and Kasey A. Tucker. 2009. "Problems at work: Exploring the correlates of role stress among correctional staff." *The Prison Journal* 89(4):460-481.

Lambert, Eric and Eugene A. Paoline. 2010. "Take this job and shove it: An exploratory study of turnover intent among jail staff." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 38(2):139-148.

Lanthier, Richard. 2003. *Towards a policy for Canada's penitentiaries. The evolution of Canada's prison system and the transformation of the correctional officer's role (1950-2002)*. CSN Labour Relations Department for UCCO-SACC-CSN. Retrieved April 08, 2012 (http://www.uccosacc.csn.qc.ca/Documents/UCCOSACC/National/documents/Research/Towards%20a%20policy%20for%20Canada_s%20Penitentiaries.pdf).

Larivière, Michel A. 2002. "The importance of attitudes in predicting job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment: Results from a national staff survey." *Forum on Corrections Research* 14(1).

Lenz, Nygel. 2002. "Luxuries in Prison: The Relationship Between Amenity Funding and Public Support." *Crime & Delinquency* 48(4):499-525.

Liou, Kuotsai. 1995. "Role stress and job stress among detention care workers." *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 22(4):425-436.

Martin, Joseph L. et al. 2012. "'They Can Take Us Over Any Time They Want': Correctional Officers' Responses to Prison Crowding." *The Prison Journal* 92(1):88-105.

Merecz-Kot, Dorota and Joanna Cebrzyńska. 2008. "Aggression and mobbing among correctional officers." *Medycyna Pracy* 59(6):443-451.

Motiuk, Laurence and Ralph Serin. 2001. *Compendium 2000 on effective correctional programming*. Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.

Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Corrections. 2012. *Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Corrections*. Retrieved July 25, 2012 (http://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/default.html).

Poole, Eric and Robert Regoli. 1980. "Role stress, custody orientation, and disciplinary actions: A study of prison guards." *Criminology* 18(2):215-226.

Ricciardelli, Rosemary. forthcoming. "An examination of the inmate code in Canadian Penitentiaries." *Journal of Crime and Justice*.

Rosenberg, Morris. 1979. *Conceiving the Self*. New York: Basic Books.

Samak, Qussaï. 2003. *Correctional officers of Correctional Service Canada and their working conditions: A questionnaire-based study*. Confédération des syndicats nationaux. Retrieved May 20, 2012 (http://www.ucco-sacc.csn.qc.ca/Documents/UCCO-SACC/National/documents/Research/Correctional%20Officers%20and%20their%20working%20conditions.pdf).

Savicki, Victor, Eric Cooley, and Jennifer Gjesvold. 2003. "Harassment as a predictor of job burnout in Correctional Officers." *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 30(5):602-619.

Seidman, Bonnie T. and Sharon M. Williams. 1999. "The impact of violent acts on prison staff." *Forum on Corrections Research* 11(1):30-34.

Shorey, Ananda. 2003. "Phoenix is sizzling through what could be the hottest July on record." *U-T San Diego*, July 25. Retrieved April 10, 2011 (http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/nation/20030725-2230-phoenixheat.html).

Simourd, Linda. 1997. *Staff attitudes towards inmates and correctional work: An exploration of the attitude – work outcome relationship*. Phd dissertation, Department of Psychology, Carleton University, Canada.

Sorensen, John et al. 2011. "Serious assaults on prison staff: A descriptive analysis." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 39(2):143-150.

Stets, Jan E. and Peter J. Burke. 2003. "A sociological approach to self and identity." Pp. 128-153 in *Handbook of self and identity*, edited by Mark R. Leary and June P. Tangney. New York: Guildford Press.

Strauss, Anselm L. and Juliet Corbin. 1990. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Stryker, Sheldon. 1980. *Symbolic interactionism: A social structural version*. Menlo Park, CA: Benjamin Cummings.

Sykes, Gresham M. 1958. *The society of captives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sykes, Gresham M. and Sheldon L. Messinger. 1960. "The inmate social system." Pp. 5-19 in *Theoretical Studies in Social Organization of the Prison*, edited by R. A. Cloward et al. New York: Social Science Research Council.

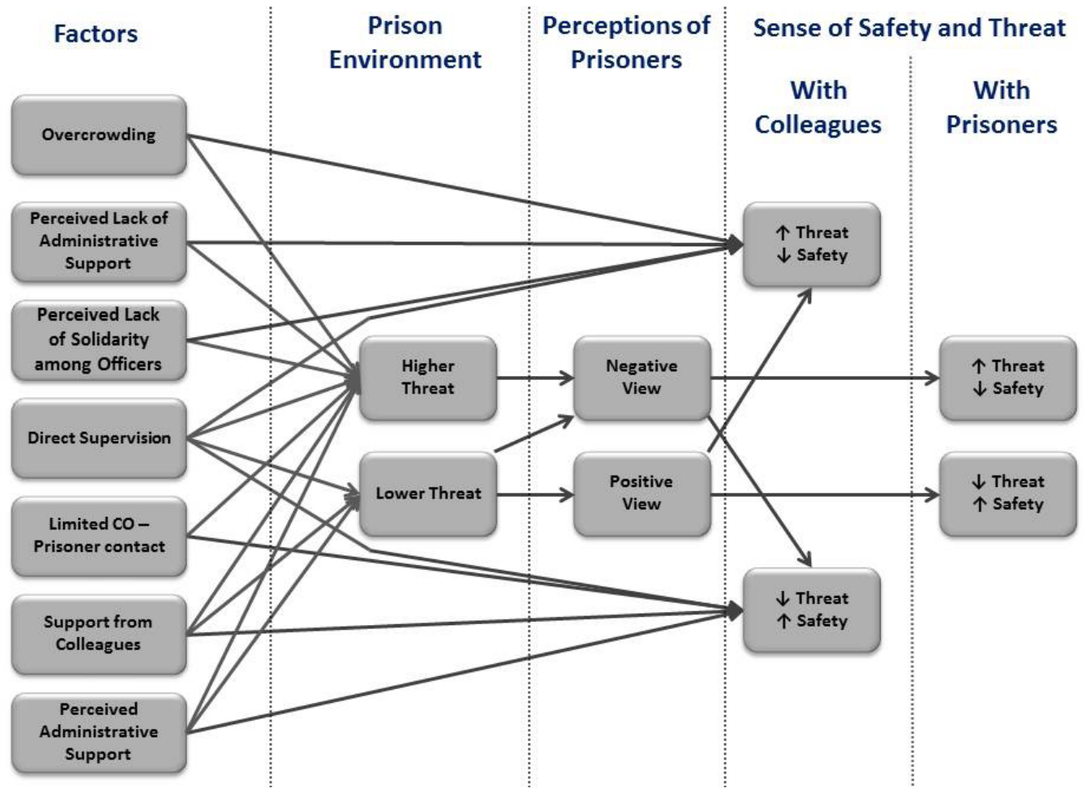
Toch, Hans and John Klofas. 1982. "Alienation and desire for job enrichment among correctional officers." *Federal Probation* 46:35-44.

Trammell, Rebecca. 2012. *Enforcing the convict code: Violence and prison culture*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Weinrath, Michael. 2009. "The Inmate Perspective on the Remand Problem in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice* 51(3):355-379.

Appendix A

Figure 1. A Conceptual Map of Data in Answer to Research Question 1.



The column on the far left notes the factors that are linked to officers' perceptions of threat. The next column indicates how these factors are linked to a characterization of high/low threat in the prison environment. The remaining three columns capture how officers perceive prisoners and whether or not they feel safe or threatened in their interactions with colleagues and prisoners.

Source: self-elaboration.

Ricciardelli, Rosemary and Amber Gazso. 2013. "Investigating Threat Perception Among Correctional Officers in the Canadian Provincial Correctional System." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):96-120. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Special Summer Edition

Robert Prus
University of Waterloo, Canada

Love, Despair, and Resiliency: Ovid's Contributions to an Interactionist Analysis of Intimate Relations

Abstract Ovid (Ovidius – Publius Ovidius Naso; 43 BCE-18 CE) is well known in classical studies and poetic circles for his insightful portrayals of heterosexual relations. However, his *The Art of Love* and related texts have received scant attention from those in the social sciences.

Ovid's writings on love may be best known for their advisory and entertainment motifs, but this same set of texts also provides an extended and comparatively detailed set of observations on heterosexual interchanges, as well as some remarkably astute analysis of interpersonal relations more generally.

Developed within a symbolic interactionist frame (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969; Strauss 1993; Prus 1996; 1997; 1999), this paper gives particular attention to the processes by which people engage others in romantic contexts, make sense of their experiences with one another, deal with an assortment of third-parties, and manage wide ranges of related emotional sensations as they work their ways through aspects of the broader relationship process (from preliminary anticipations and initial encounters to terminations and re-involvements of relationships). It is in these respects that this paper considers the more distinctive ethnographic potential of Ovid's depictions of love in the Roman classical era.

As an instance of ethno-history, Ovid's considerations of people's involvements with love, sex, and romance, as well as the varying emotional states that people experience along the way, add some highly instructive cross-cultural and trans-historical dimensions to more contemporary, generic examinations of affective relationships. Using Ovid's materials as an ethno-historical database with which to assess contemporary interactionist notions of "developing relationships," this paper concludes with a consideration of the implications of Ovid's works and contemporary interactionist studies for research on intimate relationships, emotionality, and influence work.

Keywords Ovid; Ovidius; Love; Relationships; Sexuality; Intimacy; Romantic; Symbolic Interaction; Influence; Ethno-historical

Robert Prus is a Sociologist at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. A symbolic interactionist, ethnographer, and social theorist, Robert Prus has been examining the conceptual and methodological connections of American pragmatist philosophy and its sociological offshoot, symbolic interactionism, with Classical Greek Latin, and interim scholarship. As part of this larger project, he has been analyzing a fuller range of texts produced by Emile Durkheim (most notably Durkheim's later but, lesser known works on morality, education, religion, and philosophy), mindfully of their pragmatist affinities with Aristotle's foundational emphasis on the nature of human knowing and acting, as well as Blumerian symbolic interactionism.

email address: prus@uwaterloo.ca
prus007@gmail.com

It's convention, no more, that men play the part of pursuer.
Women don't run after us; mousetraps don't run after mice.

(Ovid [*The Art of Love*, Book I: lines 275-280]; Humphries trans. 1957)

Although contemporary social scientists have largely ignored the classical Greek and Latin literatures as resources that might help them better comprehend the humanly known and enacted world, this literature offers some remarkably valuable materials for those interested in developing concepts of a more enduring trans-contextual and trans-historical nature. Still, not all of this material is equally instructive for comprehending the human condition. Likewise, one also requires a theoretical and methodological means of developing strong, viable linkages with the classical literature. The intellectual key for developing linkages between classical and contemporary notions of human knowing and acting is to be found in symbolic interaction.

Interestingly, while often seen as a unique, twentieth-century creation, symbolic interaction (a sociological offshoot of American pragmatist philosophy) is more appropriately rooted in classical Greek scholarship (most especially Aristotle – see Prus 2003; 2004; 2007; 2008a; 2009; Prus and Camara 2010). Further, as a theory and methodology that focuses directly on the problematics and processes of human knowing and acting, symbolic interaction provides the essential technology for connecting classical and contemporary scholarship in highly enabling and sustained terms.

The present paper has been developed within the context of a much larger project that focuses on the inter-linkages of classical Greek and Latin scholarship with the contemporary social sciences. Thus, whereas Ovid's *The Art of Love* and related texts are given particular attention in the present statement, Ovid represents only one of a much broader set of classical authors whose works merit extended attention on the part of social scientists.[1] Still, while Ovid's depictions of intimate relationships were predated by other analyses of love and friendship (most notably by Plato [*Symposium*] and Aristotle [*Nicomachean Ethics*]),[2] Ovid's quasi-ethnographic materials are highly instructive on their own and have particular value when located within a more generic or trans-situational comparative analysis of human relationships.

After (a) overviewing the premises and methodological emphases of symbolic interaction and (b) addressing Ovid's (circa 43 BCE-18 CE) texts on love as ethno-historical documents, this paper concludes by (c) briefly considering the relevancy of Ovid's work with respect to a series of subprocesses subsumed in interactionist analyses of relationships, emotionality, and influence work.

Since few social scientists are apt to have extended familiarity with Ovid's materials, these will be presented in ways intended to enable readers to follow the overall flows of each of his texts as well

[1] In addition to considerations of love and friendship (Prus and Camara 2010; present paper), some publications derived from "the Greek project" have focused on the matters of morality, deviance, and regulation (Prus 2007; 2011b), education, knowing, and scholarship (Prus 2006; 2011a; Puddephatt and Prus 2007), rhetoric (Prus 2008a; 2010), history and ethnography (Prus 2008d; Prus and Burk 2010), poetics (Prus 2008b; 2008c; 2009), and religion (Prus 2011c; 2011d).

[2] Prus and Camara (2010) provide an interactionist analysis of Plato and Aristotle's depictions of love and friendship. For another discussion of influence work and romantic involvements in classical Greek (particularly poetic and philosophic sources), see Nicolas P. Gross (1985) *Amatory Persuasion in Antiquity*.

as gain a more focused appreciation of what Ovid has to say about the emergence, continuity, intensification, and dissolution of intimate relationships and people's experiences with emotionality along the way. Still, readers are cautioned that without examining Ovid's actual texts, they will lose much of the more entertaining and eloquent features that Ovid develops.

Although Ovid could not possibly have anticipated the subsequent twists and turns in scholarship that would take place over the ensuing centuries, contemporary readers are apt to be struck not only by the detailed accounts of human circumstances that Ovid provides but also by his remarkable attentiveness to relationships in the making. Particularly consequential, thus, is Ovid's recognition of intimate relationships as developmental realms of human intrigues, influence work, resistance, and emotionality.

Ovid may have written his materials as a poet and an advisor, but because his texts provide so much detail on people's activities in, and experiences with, intimate relationships, Ovid's writings are highly instructive as ethno-historical materials and comparative-analytic resources. As well, because of the more generic nature of intimate relationships in the Western world, readers will find much of Ovid's material to have relevance for their own life-worlds and those of their associates. Thus, once one looks past the (more superficial) trends of the day and the seeming quaintness of other eras (both of which Ovid is acutely aware), contemporary readers are apt to be intrigued by the parallels suggested through Ovid's observations. Still, as a means of framing the subsequent consideration of Ovid's works, it is instructive to outline the basic features of an interactionist approach.

Symbolic Interactionism: Foundational Premises and Methodological Practices

Approaching interpersonal relations as problematic, interactionally accomplished realms of human group life, this statement builds on the symbolic interactionist tradition developed by George Herbert Mead (1934), Herbert Blumer (1969), and others working in this sociological extension of American pragmatist philosophy (for overviews of these materials, see Strauss 1993; Prus 1996; 1997; 1999; Prus and Grills 2003).

While many readers may be familiar with aspects of interactionist thought, it is important to establish a set of shared reference points for examining people's intimate relationships and emotional experiences within. Whereas Herbert Blumer (1969) provides an exceptionally valuable statement on the theoretical and methodological foundations of symbolic interactionism, one may identify twelve premises pertaining to human group life. Thus, *human group life* is (1) *inter-subjective*; (2) *knowingly problematic*; (3) *object-oriented*; (4) *(multi-)perspectival*; (5) *reflective*; (6) *sensory/embodied and (knowingly) materialized*; (7) *activity-based*; (8) *negotiable*; (9) *relational*; (10) *processual*; (11) *realized in instances*; and (12) *historically enabled*.

Methodologically, a fuller appreciation of these assumptions would require that social scientists attend to (1) the ways in which people make sense of the world in the course of symbolic (linguistic) interchange, (2) the problematic or ambiguous nature of human knowing (and experience), (3) the object-oriented worlds in which humans operate, (4) people's capacities for developing and adopting multiple viewpoints on [objects], (5) people's abilities to take themselves and others into account in engaging [objects], (6) people's sensory-related capacities and [linguistically meaningful] experiences, (7) the meaningful, formulative, and enabling features of human activity, (8) people's capacities for influencing, acknowledging, and resisting one another, (9) the ways that people take their associates into account in developing their lines of action, (10) the ongoing or emergent features of community life, (11) the ways that people experience and participate in all aspects of community life in the specific "here and now" occasions in which they find themselves "doing things," and (12) the ongoing flows of community life in each area of human endeavor – even as people linguistically, mindedly, and behaviorally build on, accept, resist, and reconfigure aspects of the (cultural) "whatness" that they have inherited from their predecessors and have come to know from their more immediate associates, as well as through their adjustive considerations of earlier, present, and anticipated activities.

Ovid – Engaging Intimacy

Although much better known as a poet than as a student of human behavior, Ovid's (circa 43 BCE-18 CE) texts, *The Art of Love*, *The Remedies for Love*, and *The Loves* clearly take readers into the realm of meaningful, intentioned, tactical interchange. While his statements are clearly playful at times and his materials are often expressed in more stylistic ways, Ovid's texts depict human interchange in rather detailed, processual terms and have considerable value as ethno-historical accounts.[3] Indeed, Ovid provides a great deal of insight into the ways in which heterosexual relations might be conceptualized, approached, and managed by his contemporaries.[4] Much of Ovid's work is directed toward young men interested in mastering romantic relationships, but Ovid also addresses the ways that intimate relationships might be anticipated, redirected, engaged, and sustained by their female counterparts. Consequently, although often prescriptive and satirical, as well as openly depreciative on occasion, Ovid's texts still are sufficiently detailed, open, and sustained to foster comparisons of early Roman heterosexual relations with more contemporary ethnographic materials.

Relatedly, while offering advice in an entertaining manner, Ovid openly attends to a multiplicity of viewpoints that people adopt in their romantic endeavors. Hence, Ovid acknowledges the standpoints of the various participants (i.e., as central players, supporting casts, competitors, and obstructionists) who become involved in romantic intrigues, as well as the differing ways that the same people may view and engage their relationships with others over time. Additionally (and in a highly reflective manner), Ovid uses his text to take explicit direct issue with those (moralists, literary critics) who may judge his writings to be overly sexually explicit or erotic in emphases. Thus, Ovid also explicitly addresses his own role as an author/strategist in the process of developing his texts.

[3] Ovid may be better known for *Metamorphosis*, an extended statement on transformations that assume distinctively poetic (fantastic or absurd) dimensions, than for his materials on love, but his works on love also have generated a great deal of attention (analytic, as well as admirational, applicational, and condemnational) over the millennia.

[4] Although related, Ovid's *The Art of Beauty* (of which only a small portion has been preserved) is more directly cosmetic in its emphasis.

While lacking the more analytical quality of Ovid's other works on love, *The Heroides* represent a series of fictional narratives that depict human-like experiences of various mythical and legendary women. Addressing aspects of these characters' struggles with love, these fictions seem intended for consumption primarily as entertaining, romantic stories. Still, in more general terms, they also reflect human viewpoints, sensualities, intrigue, dilemmas, tactical interchange, disappointments, losses, and the like.

Further, because Ovid deals with aspects of desire, anticipation, ambiguity, representation, images, tact, tolerance, flattery, deception, and ongoing adjustment in developing his analysis of romantic relationships, his texts also contribute notably to the broader study of influence work (Prus 1999). Thus, Ovid indicates how a variety of actors (more central and secondary) may become involved and tactically engaged in romantic relationships. Still, as a careful examination of his texts reveal, his considerations of influence work also represent documentaries on "impression management" (Goffman 1959), the "careers of relationships" (Prus 1996; Prus and Grills 2003), and "emotionality as a humanly engaged process" (Prus 1996; Prus and Grills 2003).

In more sweeping, historical terms, Ovid's *The Art of Love* may be seen as a highly consequential precursor not only to Andreas Capellanus' (circa 1185) *The Art of Courtly Love* but also Guillaume de Lorris (circa 1212-1237) and Jean de Meun (circa 1235-1305) *The Romance of the Rose*, and other 12-14th century French and Italian poetic accounts of romantic relations (Prus in progress). Ovid's text also represents a noteworthy forerunner to Niccolò Machiavelli's (1469-1527) *The Prince*. Whether or not "all's fair in love and war," the tactical (anticipatory, enacted, and adjusted) features of human interchange introduced in Ovid's writings address some essential features of ongoing community life.

In what follows, attention will be given to Ovid's *The Art of Love* (*AL*), *The Remedies for Love* (*RL*), and *The Loves* (*TL*). In each case, I will follow the overall flow of the materials that Ovid develops so that readers might more readily appreciate the themes he addresses in his works, as well as locate pertinent materials in his texts. Readers should recognize that in developing these synopses I have not been able to sustain the poetic images or even capture the fuller analytic detail that Ovid has crafted in these statements. Indeed, considerably more insight into human relationships can be gleaned by careful readings of his texts. My objective, more generally, has been to establish the relevance of Ovid's works on love as resources that contribute to a trans-contextual, trans-historical understanding of intimate relationships and associated notions of emotionality.

The Art of Love[5]

Take some trouble, at first, to make her handmaiden's acquaintance:

She, more than any one else, really can lighten your way.

She must be one you can trust, if she knows of the tricks you are playing,

Confidante, wise and discreet, high in her mistress' regard.

Spoil her by promising much, and spoil her by pleading a little,

What you seek you will find, if she is willing you should.

She will choose the right time – a maid is as good as a doctor – …

While her maid is at work, combing her hair in the morning,

Let her keep urging her on, let her add oars to the sail,

Let her say with a sigh, or the softest murmuring whisper,

"I don't suppose, after all, there is a thing you can do,"

Then let her talk about you, and add some words of persuasion,

Let her swear that she knows you must be dying of love.

(Ovid [*The Art of Love*, Book I: lines 351-360];
Humphries trans. 1957)

[5] In developing this statement on Ovid, I am particularly indebted to Rolfe Humphries' (1957) translation of *The Art of Love*. The citation numbers are based on those provided in J. H. Mozley's (1939) translation of *Ovid: The Art of Love and Other Poems*, Loeb edition. Still, readers may appreciate that, as a poet, Ovid tends to blend his discussions somewhat, as well as embark on illustrations of a more entertaining quality.

Ovid's *The Art of Love* [*AL*] consists of three books. The first two are addressed to men who wish to obtain instruction on the ways of love. The third book is written for their female counterparts.

Book I

Intending Book I for men who require instruction in developing and managing intimate relationships, Ovid (*AL*, BI:1-34) first emphasizes that *love is an art to be learned* and that he, Ovid, deserves to be considered the master of the art.

Appreciating intimate indulgences more generally, Ovid (*AL*, BI:35-134) encourages newcomers to adopt the role of the hunter and to be prepared to seek out all manners of places (including the theatre, law courts, and festival games, as well as more casual urban contexts) as settings in which to make contact with prospective females.

Using the openness of events such as horse races as an illustrative context, Ovid (*AL*, BI:135-229) suggests that a man find some common base on which to initiate a conversation with a lady of his choosing. Ovid then indicates how an admirer might create a more engaging and favorable impression in her mind.

Ovid (*AL*, BI:230-264) also discusses home parties as another viable setting in which to pursue women, noting that wine often helps minimize people's sorrows and reservations. Still, Ovid cautions his students not to drink too much or to disregard the flaws hidden by the evening light, lest they later find themselves in undesired situations. Shifting frames somewhat, Ovid also suggests that young men be mindful of more pious virgin females – noting that these individuals can cause great anguish on the part of those who become enchanted with them.

Having provided instruction on places in which one may encounter love objects, Ovid (*AL*: BI:265-352) next offers advice on ways to obtain the object of one's desires. He begins by encouraging males to be confident in their approaches and to recognize that, by convention, it is they who will be the pursuers.

Then, focusing on women of some standing in the community, Ovid (*AL*, BI:353-399) suggests that one way of winning the affections of one's desire is to develop an alliance with her maid. Although these instructions may be of limited value to many, Ovid's advice is tactically astute and provides insight into people's relations with others more generally. Thus, Ovid is particularly attentive to the opportunities that certain insiders (e.g., maids, family members, friends) have to encourage and discourage people's romantic involvements.

Ovid (*AL*, BI:400-439) also suggests that men be mindful of the ways in which women can entice them into buying them presents or loaning them money; neither of which, he cautions, are likely to be repaid to their value.

Continuing, Ovid (*AL*, BI:440-459) observes that sweet talk conveyed in written text may be helpful, but defines these endeavors as much less consequential than material goods. Still, even more important than any gifts actually given are the promises of gifts to be given. Noting that gifts are often taken for granted, once received, Ovid points to the value of not only promising women things but of promising more freely.

As well, Ovid (*AL*, BI:460-486) suggests that young men study rhetoric. The objective here is not to practice law, but to develop a more persuasive manner. Likewise, Ovid advises his pupils not to adopt the mannerisms and speech of the lawyer. The emphasis, instead, is on appearing natural and congenial while embarking on sustained persuasive endeavor. More generally, Ovid contends, persistence, especially coupled with patience, is the key to success in matters of love.

Still more is involved, Ovid (*AL*, BI:487-525) observes. It is important to be attentive to, and accommodate the whims of one's desired object. Ovid also encourages men to be clean, neat, and pleasant in appearance and personal hygiene, but to recognize that excessive concerns with masculine appearance may be self-defeating, as also may the adoption of more feminized appearances on the part of males.

In a later shift of emphasis, Ovid (*AL*, BI:565-608) focuses somewhat more directly on men's involvements with married women. While encouraging male lovers to be discreetly attentive to the woman involved, Ovid also recommends that these men endeavor to become defined as friends by the women's husbands. To this end, lovers are advised to be openly generous toward and thoughtful of the husband in order to better advantage themselves with the objects of their affection. Relatedly, Ovid cautions his students about excessive drinking and, especially, about the importance of avoiding violent interchanges. Still, he observes that lovers may obtain certain advantages, including a tolerance of some indiscretions by pretending to be drunk in more affable or playful manners.

Then, focusing more directly on one's primary target as someone (with whom earlier receptivity has been established), Ovid (*AL*, BI:608-739) instructs his students to be direct in assuming the role of the lover. The objective is to convey desire by indulging in flattery. Ovid says that women are highly amenable to flattery and that all, regardless of their qualities, wish to hear themselves described in terms of praise, beauty, and delight.

Continuing, Ovid recommends bold promises, as well as the practice of calling on the gods to witness one's sincerity. Observing that women are no less honorable than these pretentious lovers, Ovid further encourages the timely use and manufacture of tears and other emotional expressions on the part of males. Adding that women want to pretend that they are unwillingly giving themselves to their lovers, Ovid says that it would be foolish for the lover to assume that the girl would or should be the aggressor. If more substantial resistance is encountered, Ovid suggests that the lover invoke patience and assume the situationally more acceptable posture that one wishes only "to be a friend."

As Ovid (*AF*, BI:740-754) concludes Book I, he offers two other pieces of advice to his students. First, he suggests that men not praise the objects of their affection to their friends, lest their friends also become interested in these particular women.

Secondly, in something of an afterthought, Ovid (*AL*, BI:755-774) extends his analysis by observing that women differ so much in their styles and romantic leanings that it is a continual challenge to match one's approach with the orientations of one's object of desire:

I was about to conclude, but – the hearts of the girls! How they differ!

Use a thousand means, since there are thousands of ends...

Hearts have as many moods as the heaven has constellations:

He who is wise will know how to adapt to the mood...

Then there's the question of years, with experience also a factor;

Wary, naive – you must choose which is the method to use.

If you seem coarse to a prude, or learned to some little lowbrow

She will be filled with distrust, made to feel cheap in your eyes,

So she will run away from an honest man, and go flying

Off to the safer embrace of some inferior clown.

(Ovid [*The Art of Love*, Book I: lines 737-772]
Humphries trans. 1957)

Book II

Ovid opens Book II of *The Art of Love* with a somewhat different emphasis. Here, Ovid (*AL*, BII:1-159) intends to provide advice on maintaining the object of one's affections. Noting that things are continually changing. Ovid (*AL*, BII:91-159) observes that good looks represent a fleeting and only partially advantageous feature of obtaining love. Commenting on the desirability of men developing an enhanced quality of mind, Ovid advises his students to become more cultured, and especially to become more accomplished in the liberal arts and languages. Relatedly, instead of focusing on good looks or physique, Ovid describes tact and tolerance as more desirable virtues. Noting that wives tend to be quarrelsome, Ovid instructs his students to tell their mistresses only what they want to hear. Thus, Ovid recommends the extended use of courtesy, flattery, and endearment.

Then, observing that wealth contains its own form of genius, Ovid (*AL*, BII:160-233) flatly states that those with capacities to gift extensively have no need of his assistance. Defining himself as a "poor man's poet," Ovid says that the financially disadvantaged are required to be much more careful in their manners and language than their wealthy counterparts. Also, he adds, those who are financially disadvantaged can expect to endure more hardship in their quests for love. Thus, he encourages extended levels of patience, tolerance, and ingratiation. In the absence of wealth, Ovid instructs his students to be amenable to whatever their love objects desire; to blame what they blame, deny what they deny, laugh when they laugh, and join them with tears when they cry.

Likewise, in games of chance and skill, it is productive for the man to cheer for the woman's side and, in games of contest, to sacrifice one's own victories so that she may win. In addition to more extended courtesies, Ovid instructs men to be thoughtful, helpful, and appear dedicated to their lady in the face of whatever obstacles they may encounter.

Noting that the art of love is not for the lazy or cowardly, Ovid (*AL*, BII:233-249) likens love unto war. Love also is not a place for personal pride or concerns with comfort.

Ovid (*AL*, BII:250-274) also stresses the importance of winning favor with the maids and other servants. He advises his students to be thoughtful, warm, and gracious in dealing with these people, providing them with small gifts when this can be managed. Relatedly, he suggests that even those with limited funds can find ways of appearing gallant to their love objects with inexpensive gifts (as in bringing baskets of fruit when these are in season).

As for poems, Ovid (*AL*, BII:275-287) observes that they may be warmly acknowledged, but poets cannot compete with extravagant, even illiterate, spenders.

Then, returning to ingratiation as a tactic, Ovid (*AL*, BII:288-314) suggests some other, more effective, ways of winning favor than writing love poems. In addition to giving the woman credit for whatever good deeds one does, it is important, Ovid says, to openly stress her beauty, charm, attire, hairstyle, dancing ability, seductive qualities, and so forth. And, if deception is necessary in such matters, Ovid states it is to be concealed in order to be effective.

Continuing, Ovid (*AL*, BII:315-384) also instructs men on how to deal with instances of ill health on the part of their love objects. As before, he encourages attentiveness, sympathetic reactions, and ingratiation. However, Ovid cautions his students, more zealous flattery is less apt to be appreciated when people are not well.

While encouraging men to spend as much time in the presence of their love objects as their ladies might desire, Ovid also recommends that they not depart until they are likely to be missed. Even then, he suggests that shorter absences are preferable, lest one be too quickly forgotten and possibly replaced.

Ovid (*AL*, BII:385-434) subsequently engages the topic of multiple involvements. While emphasizing discretion, he recommends highly insistent denial if ever one is caught being unfaithful. Relatedly, he states, it is important not to be too offended or excessively attentive afterward since this would only confirm one's guilt. More importantly, Ovid advises his readers to engage in passionate lovemaking with the indignant party.

Later, Ovid (*AL*, BII:435-493) adds that some women grow complacent in the absence of rivals. Given more exclusive attention, they lose their interests or capacities for passionate involvements. These women, he says, require anxiety about their partner to re-establish their desires to love. Following more frantic, angered confrontations, they may be receptive to intense romantic involvements.

Then, observing that those who follow his sagely advice will win out in the end, Ovid (*AL*, BII:494-522) also says that those who pursue the course of love should expect to have much to endure.

Noting that women often are not as faithful as they claim, Ovid (*AL*, BII:523-642) encourages his students to be patient and to appear to believe what they are told, even when they definitely know otherwise. Emphasizing the importance of letting the woman's deceptions be sustained, Ovid discourages men from embarking on confrontations or attempts to expose a woman who has lied or cheated on them. Likewise, he dissuades his students from setting traps for their love objects or any rivals they may have. Later, he comments on the desirability of keeping one's own affairs secret and explicitly discourages readers from boasting about their conquests or pseudo conquests.

Shifting frames somewhat, Ovid (*AL*, BII:643-662) advises perspective lovers to be tolerant of a girl's flaws, to ignore these shortcomings, or to pretend that those do not exist. He goes on to show how, through the particular words one uses, the less desirable qualities of objects can be redefined and made more palatable.

Relatedly, Ovid (*AL*, BII:663-732) instructs his students not to ask potentially embarrassing questions of their lady friends. He then points to the redeeming qualities of more mature (over thirty) women. In particular, Ovid emphasizes their greater desires for romantic involvements, adding that he despises girls who only reluctantly give in bed or do so only out of a sense of duty. Observing that love is an art only adequately learned later in life, Ovid further emphasizes that love is something never to be hurried.

Concluding Book II (*AL*, BII:733-746) with a request that his male students afford him recognition as an instructor of the art of love, Ovid says that he will now direct his attention to those females who desire his instruction.

Book III

Then, addressing a female clientele, Ovid begins Book III (1-59) of *The Art of Love* by stating that it would be unfair for him to equip men so fittingly for the art of love and not do as much for women. Rather than leave them defenseless, Ovid will help guide them in the art of love. Likewise, Ovid adds, while men are generally deceptive and conniving, women of a comparable sort are more difficult to locate.

Ovid (*AL*, BIII:60-102) then encourages women to enjoy life while they can. He observes that time will take its toll on one's physical charms and old age often finds people cold and alone. Thus, although observing that they are apt to be deceived by men, Ovid says that women effectively lose nothing, but gain much joy by participating in intimate relations. Ovid says he is not encouraging promiscuity and cheapness, but instead is fostering a more adequate and enjoyable life-style for women.

Observing that the cultivation of a more attractive appearance is a matter of first importance, Ovid (*AL*, BIII:103-239) recommends that women take care to make the most of what they have been given. Adding that men find elegance irresistible, Ovid encourages women to be mindful of their hairstyles, facial features, and the like. He also states that fashion currently changes so quickly that it is not appropriate to recommend any particular style or look. Still, Ovid discusses matters such as dyeing one's hair and adding store-bought tresses for effects. He also suggests that women be attentive to the effects of particular fabrics and colors of clothing on one's overall appearance, noting that certain colors better compliment certain skin tones. Referencing his own text, *The Art of Beauty* (only part of which has survived), Ovid then comments on the importance of personal hygiene and the ways that women more effectively may use cosmetics. He also reminds his students about decorum. Thus, Ovid explicitly distinguishes between back region preparations and the ways that women show themselves to others. Like other artists, women are instructed to "keep the studio door shut."

Ovid (*AL*, BIII:240-252) also advises women to treat their maids with respect. This way, they are more apt to benefit from their maid's loyalty and their maid's more viable, concerned assistance in their preparations and other matters.

Noting that beautiful girls require little or no help at this point, Ovid (*AL*, BIII:253-312) says that he will offer the pretty ones, as well as the homely ones, ways of disguising or minimizing troubling imperfections. In quick order, Ovid offers suggestions for a variety of concerns women might have about height, body shapes, teeth, and so forth. Ovid then provides explicit instructions on more appropriate ways of governing one's laughter, learning how to turn on tears, and attending to one's posture and walk.

In addition to the beauty of appearance, Ovid (*AL*, BIII:313-379) instructs his pupils on achieving other attractive qualities and mannerisms. While some may be able to take advantage of beautiful voices and musical talents to help charm men, Ovid observes that it is desirable for women to read classical and contemporary poets (suggesting that some may find his own works worthwhile in developing their talents in this area). Then, after commenting on the allures of talented dancers, Ovid also points to the value of achieving familiarity with dice games, chess, and the like, but instructs his pupils on the advantages of losing to their lover, as well as the disadvantages of appearing too clever. Then, observing that people often express themselves emotionally in the course of *gaming*, Ovid explicitly warns women about the importance of maintaining composure and, in particular, the necessity of avoiding angry, quarrelsome displays.

While noting the advantage that beautiful girls have in attracting men, Ovid (*AL*, BIII:415-432) contends that the girl who is eager to please also will gain attention. Thus, while luck also enters into attractiveness and other affairs of the heart, Ovid encourages his students to be charming in every way they possibly can.

At the same time, Ovid (*AL*, BIII:433-465) cautions girls to avoid certain kinds of men. Thus, women are encouraged to distance themselves from men who are flashy dressers, those devoted to (their own) immaculate appearances or elegant natures, and those who dress expensively or wear a lot of jewelry. He also encourages women to avoid those who request material favors or assistance from women, those with bad reputations, and those who swear insistently of their undying love. As for those men who make big promises, Ovid says that women are free to match these. However, he adds, it also is expected that those men who live up to their promises will be rewarded accordingly, lest the women who accepted these promises be considered dishonorable because they broke their promises.

In dealing with the approaches they encounter from men, Ovid (*AL*, BIII:466-499) recommends that girls be thoughtful about these matters. He also notes that some delay may be advantageous in enhancing an admirer's passion. However, an extended delay is generally unwise. Thus, while discouraging reckless involvements, Ovid suggests that delays involving desirable males be presented in ways that convey hopefulness. When messengers are involved in the liaison, Ovid recommends even greater discretion. Only trusted individuals are to be involved, lest these assistants later use their knowledge of the situation for personal advantage.

Ovid (*AL*, BIII:500-524) then turns to what he considers more consequential matters. First, he states, if women, even beautiful girls, do not avoid instances of intense anger, they will suffer for it. No one who sees her own angry face in the mirror, Ovid notes, would like to admit that that face is her own. Likewise, says Ovid, expressions of pride, arrogance, haughtiness, or contempt also are quickly disenchanting to anyone whom those women may desire to find them attractive. Also, Ovid adds, few people are apt to be attracted to glum or dour individuals.

In addition, Ovid (*AL*, BIII:525-592) observes, there is the matter of the girl choosing the man best suited for her purposes. Thus, at different times, women may prefer those who (variously) offer wealth, advice, eloquence, entertainment, exuberance, or maturity. Ovid also insists that it would be foolish of women to expect any presents from a poet other than his poems. Noting that a woman should not plan to deal with different people in the same manner, Ovid encourages them to adjust accordingly, but to still insure that they maintain an intensity of desire on the part of the man they have selected.

Once a women has captured a lover, Ovid (*AL*, BIII:593-613) continues, he ought to be made to feel as if he is the only one. Later in the relationship, Ovid suggests that it may be desirable to let him suspect more than is the case, lest he takes her for granted. Still, Ovid states, it is most important that the girl provides her lover with genuine pleasure. Otherwise, he is apt to conclude that it is not worthwhile to spend his nights in the present company.

Extending his text somewhat, Ovid (*AL*, BIII:614-666) next considers the matter of women deceiving their husbands. While noting that brides may be expected by law to honor and obey their husbands, Ovid also observes that women have various ways of screening their activities from husbands and guardians. Appreciating that wine and sedatives can be effective in distracting people, Ovid notes that seductive maids can effectively occupy men's attention. He also alerts women to the advantages of bribery (as with the household staff) provided they are wise enough to maintain secrecy and that the bribe is adequate. As with the men, whom he cautioned about praising their love objects to their associates, Ovid observes that women's friends are no less trustworthy. Relatedly, he suggests that ladies monitor their maids since they may be prepared to do more for the man they are sent to distract than does the lady they serve.

As he works his way to the conclusion, Ovid (*AL*, BIII:667-747) says that he will indicate where men are most defenseless. Here, he instructs women to make men feel that they are loved. This, Ovid says, is an easy task, since this is what men want. Thus, he encourages expressions of affection, and indications of disappointment and mild resentment for being neglected, as well as a willingness to maintain composure. Ovid also cautions his students about being too quick to believe the worst and he especially stresses the risks of women engaging in fits of jealous rage.

Then, after encouraging women to be charming and lady-like (as in elegance, manners, and the restrained consumption of food and drink), Ovid (*AL*, BIII:748-812) turns more directly to the intimacies of lovemaking. He instructs women to be mindful of matching their methods of relating to

their lovers with their personal physical assets. Still more important, Ovid contends, is that the woman enjoys the encounter and insures that her lover enjoys being with her. If pretense is necessary, it is essential that her performance be convincing. Paralleling his conclusion to Book II, Ovid asks that grateful female students simply attest to the value of his instructions.

The Remedies for Love[6]

Although Ovid's *The Remedies for Love* [*RL*] is considerably less developed than *The Art of Love*, *RL* is an important statement on the disinvolvement, disentanglement, or detachment process. *RL* considers the matters of dealing with loss or rejection of love among people severing romantic relationships more generally.

While *RL* primarily is addressed to those men who have suffered loss or rejection in love, Ovid (*RL*:1-52) acknowledges a parallel concern on the part of women. Ovid is going to offer advice on how lovers may recover from these wounds.

Ovid (*RL*:53-134) begins by recommending that people attracted to others keep their passions under control, thereby reducing risks from the start. Still, he recognizes that this seldom is adequate advice, especially for those who are currently suffering from love.

Next, defining idleness as a major source of difficulty, Ovid (*RL*:135-287) instructs those experiencing the loss or rejection of love to eliminate their leisure time. If one cannot find enough work to occupy one's time, Ovid recommends recreational forms of involvement. Likewise, he discourages people from "counting the days and hours" and from reflecting back on "what was." He also dissuades people from seeking help through witchcraft, spells, potions, and the like.

Those men haunted by former loves also are instructed (*RL*:288-314) to itemize all of the woman's negative qualities and deeds, as well as the expenditures and other losses she has caused. Likewise, observing that one can find fault with anyone, Ovid suggests that his students explicitly exaggerate or dramatize (to themselves) any negative qualities they might associate with particular love objects.

Somewhat relatedly, Ovid (*RL*:315-439) suggests that one's love object be encouraged to display any negative qualities that she has so that this may provide a more pronounced reminder of her failings. In addition to seeking solace in other girls, Ovid also suggests that the men employ other women as more desirable comparison points with the former love. He encourages concerted focusing on her every defect.

After observing that the loss of a lover is less painful if one formerly had two sweethearts, Ovid (*RL*:440-487) suggests that one consult his earlier books on love.

When around these troublesome love-objects in group settings, Ovid (*RL*:488-524) instructs his students to maintain the appearances of composure and good spirits no matter how those women may act and, likewise, to distance themselves whenever possible.

[6] This statement on Ovid's *RL* is based on Rolfe Humphries' (1957) translation. However, I have used the somewhat more precise, standardized notations provided in the Loeb edition (J. H. Mozley's [1939] translation of *Ovid: The Art of Love and Other Poems*).

Then, noting that some people may be unable to keep away from a troublesome love, Ovid (*RL*:525-542) suggests that they indulge themselves so fully that they become bored, weary, or otherwise disaffected with her company.

Continuing with his advice to those suffering from love, Ovid (*RL*:555-579) recommends that people set aside concerns with mistrust of the other and focus instead on diversionary matters, such as their financial woes (mortgages, debts, creditors), their properties, and related obligations.

Ovid (*RL*:580-644) also instructs heartbroken lovers to avoid lonely places and seclusion. He encourages these people to be around others, especially a good friend if possible. Ovid explicitly discourages the wounded from spending time in places where they might encounter the women they love. He also discourages men from associating with her acquaintances. Saying that things of this sort are to be avoided, Ovid recommends that the affected male establish a social world that is notably removed from the woman's presence.

Likewise, Ovid (*RL*:645-682) explicitly instructs his students not to ask about their love-objects or even to complain about them. It is much better, he says, to let love fade and die through silence. Still, he cautions, it is not appropriate to hate someone that one once loved. It is enough not to care. Gifts that were given, likewise, are to be left with the girl, lest they become points of contention. Should the parties meet on other occasions, Ovid encourages emotional distancing, treating the former lover as if she were a stranger.

Ovid (*RL*:683-707) further instructs troubled lovers not to be receptive to suggestions or other encouragements of re-involvement with the troublesome individual, warning that women have many ways of re-establishing their influences if given the opportunity to do so.

To assist in these distancing practices, Ovid (*RL*:708-787) suggests that the wounded lover may make comparisons with other girls that the troublesome one is sure to lose. Ovid then cautions people to avoid reading love letters that had been written to them by their former lovers. He also recommends that they avoid all manners of places and things that might foster sensations of love for that person. Likewise, Ovid instructs those struggling with a troublesome love to avoid reading all manners of love poems (including many of his own poems), lest they develop or renew more intense sentiments for their love objects.

As Ovid (*RL*:788-794) concludes *RL*, he instructs his students to put aside any thoughts they may have about rivals faring better than them with the troublesome love object. Instead of regarding the rival as an enemy, thus, Ovid encourages his students to treat the rival in a congenial manner, if only in shorter-term pretence. Later, when one can greet the rival with heartfelt gratitude, the loss of love is no more.

Ovid (*RL*:795-811) also cautions distraught lovers about their diet. In addition to avoiding foods associated with passion, he also warns people about the risks of wine. Either one should remain entirely sober and thereby unaffected by the temptations associated with wine or drink so much that one ceases to care.

Ovid (*RL*:812-815) ends by saying that his readers will thank him after they have come to terms with their situations.

The Loves[7]

Denoting a collection of Ovid's shorter poems on love, *The Loves* [*TL*] is much less systematic in its development than either *The Art of Love* or *Remedies for Love*. Still, *TL* provides a noteworthy series of observations about love as a socially engaged essence. While fragmented and disjointed as a collection, and overlapping with Ovid's other texts in certain respects, the materials in *TL* not only complement Ovid's other considerations of interpersonal relations but also suggest a number of points of departure for future analysis.

Whereas Ovid's *TL* is packaged in three books and each entry is numbered, the individual poems have not been named by the author. Assuming some liberties, I have selected those entries that seem more central to a consideration of people's relationships with others and have designated these accordingly. Still, even more minimalist examinations of these entries offer snippets of insight. Further, while Ovid presents these materials as if they were his own experiences, readers may recognize the more prototypical qualities of the acts, actors, and situations being discussed.

TL, BI: II ["Identifying Oneself as a Victim of Love"] Ovid discusses the matter of identifying the (often debilitating) symptoms of love (e.g., restlessness, anxiety, loneliness) and the notion of people dealing with the emotional states that take them by surprise.

TL, BI: IV ["The Lovers Deal with the Husband"] Ovid considers the ways in which lovers may attend to one another in the presence of the woman's husband and how they may deal with him.

TL, BI: VII ["Violent Encounter between the Lovers"] Here, the poet laments the violence he has inflicted on the girl he loves. Acknowledging his ill treatment of the girl, he expresses remorse, as well as anger toward himself for having acted so violently.

TL, BI: VIII ["The Meddlesome Old Woman"] Ovid describes the attempts of an old woman to keep two lovers separated both by her actions and by the things she says. At the same time, the old woman encourages the younger woman to make the most of her presently good years. Stating that poets are of little value beyond their poems, she encourages the younger woman to be more aggressive in using her good years to accumulate material goods. Relatedly, the old woman also advises the younger woman on ways to obtain more presents from her lovers. Thus, for instance, maids and other acquaintances maybe used to drop hints on behalf of the woman or one may have more than the usual number of birthdays as occasions on which to be gifted. The old woman also suggests that some rivalry might prompt greater generosity. She also says that loans obtained from lovers need never be returned. As well, the old woman advises the younger woman to be coy and attentive to the use of flattery.

TL, BI: X ["The Poet's Justification"] In this entry, Ovid observes that women can use their charms to obtain wide ranges of goods from the lovers. Acknowledging his comparative poverty, Ovid says that he only can offer his poems. Still, unlike many other things, Ovid says, poems can have a lasting splendor.

TL, BI: XI ["Getting Help from the Maid"] This poem recognizes that women's maids, as insiders to their mistresses' life-worlds, can be of considerable tactical assistance in fostering romantic intrigues on the part of their mistresses. Ovid discusses the value of male lovers entreating maids to help them obtain access to their mistresses.

TL, BII: IV ["Being Attracted to Women"] Likening himself to a ship tossed about by the whims of the ocean, the poet says that despite all of his desires to be otherwise, he lacks the ability to avoid finding women attractive. Observing that there is no one particular type of girl that he finds alluring, he finds himself hopelessly attracted to an extended array of women, including those of seemingly opposite qualities. Thus, whether they are short or tall, modest or brash, distant or warm on the surface, cultured or folksy, or whether they are talented in certain ways or not, there are elements in each girl that he finds irresistibly appealing.

TL, BII: V ["Confronting his Lover about a Rival"] In this poem, Ovid addresses instances of males confronting their lovers about affairs they believe their lovers have had with other men. After the challenge and angered reaction, the lover acquiesces and takes pity on the woman's helpless state. While subsequently benefiting from her heightened affection, the lover is left wondering about her relations with the rival.

TL, BII: VII ["Facing Jealousy"] Focusing on the reactions of a jealous (female) lover, Ovid discusses the presumption of his sexual interest in other girls on her part. Stating that nothing has been going on, but still suffering the blame, he comments on the wearying effects of the invectives to which he has been subjected.

TL, BII: VIII ["The Implicated Maid"] Here, Ovid makes reference to a suspicion by his lover that he has been involved with her maid. Insisting that nothing has been going on, at least to the temporary satisfaction of the mistress, Ovid later reminds the maid of her obligation to him. He threatens to share every detail of their liaison with the mistress if the maid subsequently refuses him.

TL, BII: XI ["The Military Metaphor"] Here, Ovid likens the conquest of a mistress to a military success. While not claiming originality, he explicitly emphasizes the tactical nature of his romantic campaign.

TL, BII: XIII-XIV ["The Abortion"] On learning that his beloved had attempted an abortion on her own, Ovid expresses a number of viewpoints on the matter. While extremely grateful that his lover has survived the ordeal, he also expresses the fear that he probably, or at least possibly, was responsible for her predicament. Imploring her to do nothing of the sort again, he also chastises her for not following through on the pregnancy.

TL, BII: XV ["The Ring"] In this playful little poem, Ovid begins by noting that the ring is useless except as a token of the giver's love. Then, after savoring the closeness the ring will achieve with the recipient's person, he dispatches the ring as "love's ambassador."

TL, BII: XVIII ["Being Distracted"] In this little entry, Ovid makes reference to the demands that an affectionate girl can make on one's person at the times a poet should be working to produce text.

TL, BIII: II ["Race track Venture"] Viewing the race track a another setting for meeting girls, Ovid

[7] This discussion is derived from Rolfe Humphries' (1957) translation of Ovid's *TL*.

describes the ways in which one may use an outing such as this for making contact and consolidating oneself with someone that one finds attractive.

TL, BIII: III ["Beauty has its Privileges"] Here, Ovid notes that even though they may lie and otherwise are known to be deceitful, beautiful girls are apt to be forgiven for their transgressions. If there are gods, Ovid contends, even the gods are likely to find the charms of these women so irresistible that they too would forgive them for any wrongdoing.

TL, BIII: VIII ["Money Counts for More"] Noting that the gifts of poets and other authors hold little allure compared to the attractions women have for wealth and position, Ovid asks women who are attracted to such things to consider the killing and other injuries (as with military personnel) that has allowed these people to obtain wealth and position (compared to the gentle life-style of the poet). Because of their own greed, Ovid contends, these women effectively are turned into slaves for the wealthy. However, less advantaged men still may be able to access these women by bringing them gifts. Still, Ovid laments, it would be nice for neglected (and impoverished) lovers to have a god who might help make things right.

TL, BIII: XIV ["Trying to Believe"] In this entry, the speaker acknowledges his inability to keep his lover (spouse) from being involved with other lovers. Still, he asks that she try to be more discreet in her activities and the ways in which she manages appearances. While noting that he does not go snooping or otherwise try to trap or discredit her, he also asks her to deny her involvements and, in other ways, make it easier for him to imagine her sincerity for this is what he very much wishes to believe.

TL, BIII: XV ["Hoping to Endure"] In closing *The Loves*, Ovid (now seemingly in his later years) notes that he has had rather humble origins and has lived a modest life-style. Still, he hopes that his writings may bring some fame to his small community and that his works may last well beyond his lifetime.

Ovid in Historical Context

As Gross (1985) notes, aspects of the analysis of intimate relationships can be traced back to Homer (circa 700 BCE), Hesiod (circa 700 BCE), and Sappho (circa 600 BCE), as well as the Greek tragedians (Aeschylus, circa 525-456 BCE; Sophocles, circa 495-405 BCE; and Euripides circa 480-406 BCE) and the philosophers: Plato (circa 420-348 BCE) and Aristotle (circa 384-322 BCE).[8] While this does not diminish the remarkable contributions that Ovid has made to the study of intimate relationships, it makes an even more compelling case for social scientists giving more direct attention to the classical literature. Thus, in addition to the value of these classical sources in other ways, these works are even more important for the trans-contextual and trans-historical resources that they offer to present-day scholars.

[8] For a somewhat parallel interactionist consideration of love and friendship in the works of Plato and Aristotle, see Prus and Camara (2010). Contemporary readers in the social sciences may be struck by the exceptionally insightful and detailed analytic quality of the materials generated by Plato and Aristotle. Indeed, Plato and Aristotle not only have much to offer students of the human condition but they also provide an instructive base for assessing the adequacy of contemporary sociological and psychological analyses of interpersonal relations.

Still, focusing more directly on Ovid's work on love, it should be noted that in contrast to much contemporary scholarship in sociology and psychology that depicts intimate relations in more static and/or depersonalized manners (as in studies of attitudes, class backgrounds, religious similarities, and the like), Ovid clearly attends to the processual, enacted, tactically engaged, and emotionally experienced features of affective relations.

Although Ovid is somewhat presumptive and prescriptive in his analysis, as well as poetically playful at many points, Ovid's materials also attest to the great many astute observations he has made about human relations, as well as the remarkable assortment of analytic insights he has generated.

While not suggesting that Ovid's materials are to be used as the prototype for subsequent research and analysis, it is appropriate to observe that only a small number of contemporary book-length ethnographies addressing the matters of love, sexuality, and emotionality explicitly acknowledge process, activity, agency, persuasion, and emotionality in ways that favorably compare with Ovid's texts. Although it will not be possible in the present statement to develop sustained considerations of Ovid's texts with respect to interactionist analyses of (a) relationships, (b) emotionality, and (c) influence work, it is hoped that those who have examined the preceding depiction of Ovid's texts may begin to appreciate the potential his work offers for further analysis of these three interconnected aspects of community life.

Relationships in Process

To better assess the contributions of Ovid's texts on love to the contemporary social sciences, it is instructive to ask if, and in what ways, Ovid's materials might be used to assess and/or extend present day notions of relationships in the making. While space limitations preclude a more detailed consideration of Ovid's texts with respect to each of the subthemes addressed herein, much still may be gleaned by considering these matters in light of Ovid's materials.

As part of an ongoing quest (Prus 1987; 1996; 1997; 1999; Prus and Grills 2003) to identify a series of subprocesses that would enable social scientists to better comprehend and examine the ways in which people develop relationships with others in all manners of settings, four features of the relationship process are delineated. These are: (a) *anticipating encounters with others*; (b) *focusing on particular others*; (c) *intensifying association*; and (d) *dealing with distractions and disaffections*.[9] Focusing on

[9] Despite their centrality for the study of human group-life, intimate relationships have received comparatively little sustained ethnographic attention. Some instructive studies of intimate relations include ethnographies focusing on heterosexual life-worlds (Waller 1967 [1930]; Hunt 1966; Bartell 1971; Prus and Irini 1980; Vaughan 1986; Rosenblatt et al., 1995), homosexual encounters (Reiss 1961; Warren 1974; Humphreys 1975; Ponse 1978; Correll 1995), and transsexual interchanges (Kando 1973; Ekins 1997).

In addition to studies that focus directly on intimate relationships and interchanges, scholars also are apt to appreciate the ethnographies that address the development, maintenance, and severance of relationships in other settings. Especially noteworthy in this sense are considerations of the relationships that people develop within the contexts of: bar life (Roebuck and Frese 1976; Prus and Irini 1980); religious involvements (Lofland 1977 [1966]; Prus 1976; Van Zandt 1991; Jorgensen 1992; Shaffir 1993; 1995), the thief subculture (Shaw 1930; Sutherland 1937; Maurer 1955; Letkemann 1973; Prus and Sharper 1977; Adler 1985; Steffensmeier 1986; Shover 1996; Jacobs 1999), the marketplace (Prus 1989a; 1989b; Prus and Frisby 1990), fantasy role-playing games (Fine 1983), entertainment (Becker 1963; Faulkner 1971; MacLeod 1993), outlaw gangs (Wolf 1991), the tattoo subculture (Sanders 1989), medical treatments (Roth 1962; Davis 1963; Schneider and Conrad 1983; Charmaz 1991), and pronounced interpersonal difficulties (Lemert 1962; Karp 1996). For some reviews of the broader literature on the social psychology of interpersonal attraction and interpersonal relationships, see Secord and Backman (1964), Erber and Erber (2000), and Hendrick and Hendrick (2000).

these four aspects of the relationship process, the following extract from that volume addresses the subprocesses embedded within these four themes:

Anticipating encounters with others would include such things as (1) getting prepared for meeting people more generally; (2) envisioning oneself as available for association; (3) defining specific others as potentially desirable associates; (4) approaching others and/or receiving indications of receptivity from others; (5) encountering and indicating acceptance and/or distancing with respect to others; and (6) assessing self and others as viable associates for desired relationships.

As people begin *attending to particular others*, we may expect that their associations would assume a somewhat more distinctive cast, reflecting processes of the following sort: (1) assessing self and other for "goodness of fit;" (2) developing interactional styles with the other; (3) managing openness and secrecy in associations with the other; (4) developing shared understandings, joint preferences, and loyalties with the other.

Focusing on people developing a sense of "closeness" to the other, we can also ask about people *intensifying association* with their acquaintances. This may involve such things as (a) developing dependencies on the other – as in getting help from the other, attending to benefits/resources, and accessing/sharing other's things; (b) pursuing acceptance by the other – as in being helpful/considerate, adjusting to the other, engaging in ingratiation, and defending/protecting the other; (c) working as a team – as in embarking on cooperative ventures, establishing mutuality of routines, and collectively dealing with threats and opposition; and (d) being defined by themselves and/or others as a unit.

Following the overall relationship along, it also is instructive to ask the ways that people *deal with distractions and disaffections*. This means examining: (1) the kinds of things that participants define as problematic or that emerge as points of contention among the participants; (2) the ways that people attempt to deal with these troublesome situations; (3) when and how these episodes continue, intensify, dissipate, and possibly become renewed and extended among members of the group; (4) when and how other people (insiders and/or outsiders) become involved in these interchanges, and what sorts of directions the ensuing interchanges may take; and (5) how these interchanges are worked out with respect to any longer term relationships between the members of the particular group under consideration.

Although this statement has a notably more generic emphasis than Ovid's depictions of intimate associations, a quick review of *The Art of Love* and *Remedies for Love* attests to the comprehensive, detailed, analytic quality of Ovid's material. Indeed, once one puts Ovid's advisory stance and poetic playfulness aside, the preceding processual portrayal of relationships may be seen to summarize Ovid's analysis of intimate involvements. Still, as suggested in the subsequent considerations of emotionality and influence work, Ovid has yet more to offer to students of human group-life.

Experiencing Emotionality

Although matters of emotionality are consequential to people's relationships more generally, intimate relationships represent one area in which people's experiences with affectivity tend to be particularly prominent. Hence, while people's relationships also reflect the matters of acquiring perspectives, developing identities, doing activities, making commitments, and achieving linguistic fluency (see Prus 1996; 1997; 1999; Prus and Grills 2003), some more focused attention will be directed toward emotionality as a feature of intimate relations.

As used herein, the term "emotion" refers to the affective dispositions or self-feelings (involving bodily states and related sensations) that people attribute to themselves and others.[10] While one finds considerable variation in the ways in which people engage emotionality across communities, as well as within subcultures in particular communities, it is apparent that people's emotional experiences represent consequential features of their intimate associations. Relatedly, people may engage a rather extended range of affective sensations within the context of specific relationships. In given instances, thus, this may include matters pertaining to love and animosity, intimacy and distancing, generosity and greed, calm and anger, sadness and joy, anxiety and complacency, fear and courage, and pride and shame.

Further, although emotionality often is envisioned as an individualistic or psychological phenomenon, people's affective experiences more accurately reflect the realms of (linguistically-enabled) inter-subjectivity that people achieve with others in the community. Indeed, even though people often experience emotionality in more solitary ways, people's experiences with emotionality become meaningful only within the (shared) terms of reference invoked within particular human groups. Thus, not only do people often intensify, neutralize, and redirect one another's experiences with affectivity in more particular instances but they also may instruct one another on more particular frameworks within which to interpret, as well as experience instances of emotionality (see Prus 1996; 2008a; 2009; 2010; Prus and Grills 2003; Prus and Camara 2010).

While people commonly define and promote, as well as neutralize and discourage, emotional experiences pertaining to sincerity and trust, patience and composure, banality and boredom, and disaffection and disloyalty, other emotional themes revolve around the pursuit of more intense, often overt emotional experiences (and expressions)

[10] For some ethnographic research that addresses emotionality in more sustained terms, see: Brown's (1931), Ray's (1961), Becker's (1963), and Biernacki's (1988) work on drug-related experiences; Blumer's (1970[1933]), Blumer and Hauser's (1970 [1933]), and Harrington and Bielby's (1995) studies of people's encounters with the media; Evans and Falk's (1986) and Evans' (1994) examination of people learning to be deaf; Lofland's (1977 [1966]) and Van Zandt's (1991) studies of religious cults; Roebuck and Frese's (1976) and Prus and Irini's (1980) accounts of bar life; Bartell's (1971) work on mate-swapping; Rosenblatt and colleagues' (1995) account of multiracial couples; Reiss' (1961), Warren's (1974), Humphreys' (1975), and Ponse's (1978) depictions of homosexual relations; Ekins' (1997) inquiry into trans-gendering; Waller's (1967 [1930]) and Vaughan's (1986) analysis of marital dissolution; Lesieur's (1977) examination of gambling; Lemert's (1962) study of paranoia; Karp's (1996) research on depression; Rubinstein's (1973) and Charles' (1986) depictions of police work; Dietz's (1994) consideration of people's involvements in ballet; Davis' (1963), Schneider and Conrad's (1983), Charmaz's (1991), and Anspach's (1993) studies of illness; Haas' (1972; 1977) examination of high steel iron workers; Wolf's (1991) portrayal of outlaw bikers; Holyfield's (1999) and Jonas' (1999) account of people's experiences in white water rafting; and Fine's (2001) study of high school debaters.

Although writing over two millennia ago, Aristotle provides some exceptionally insightful analyses of emotionality in *Nicomachean Ethics* and (especially) *Rhetoric* (see Prus 2007; 2008a). Plato and Aristotle's depictions of love and friendship (Prus and Camara 2010) are notably relevant here as also is Cicero's consideration of emotionality in his portrayal of rhetoric (Prus 2010).

which are associated with drama and excitement, celebrations and euphoria, and anger and violence. Indeed, these notions are pertinent to the fuller range of emotional states.

Still, this does not mean that people will be able to define all of their emotional states in precise or singular terms. Hence, while people may develop fluencies in discussing certain kinds of emotional sensations, they may struggle to describe other emotional experiences (and sensations), both on their own and with the assistance of others. As well, even when people define themselves in particular emotional states, it should not be assumed that they would be able to manage these situations in more direct or adequate terms.

Because readers can obtain a fuller analysis of people's experiences with emotionality (as a generic social process) elsewhere (Prus 1996:173-201), it may be sufficient at present to identify three broader sets of processes central to people's notions of emotionality: (1) learning to define emotional experiences; (2) developing techniques for expressing and controlling emotional experiences; and (3) experiencing emotional episodes and entanglements.

These aspects of experiencing emotionality presume that people (a) acquire notions of what emotionality is and how emotionality might be expressed, viewed, and managed in particular group settings. Further, people's conceptions of emotionality also (b) include notions of who may or may not experience particular affective states and how others might deal with people in these conditions. Considerations of affectivity also imply an attentiveness to: (c) people's activities (as in expressing emotionality in certain manners and in specific situations and/or encouraging others to adopt particular emotional standpoints or expressivities), (d) commitments (as in anxiety and/or excitement about objectives, options, and long-term obligations), and (e) relationships (as in expressing affection, concern, or disenchantment with respect to particular others).

Further, although people often experience aspects of emotional sensations in more solitary (i.e., private, reflective) terms, people's experiences with affective states typically reflect (a) people's present associations (and interactions) with others, (b) their earlier interchanges with others, and (c) the encounters that they anticipate having with others.

Relatedly, while people may desire specific emotional experiences and diligently work toward these ends, they often encounter complexities and actual lived situations that blunt these objectives and nullify their efforts. Thus, whether people experience, invoke, or attempt to shape instances of emotionality on their own or in association with others, each episode or feature of their situations represents something to be accomplished in its own right.

As a result, people may not only find themselves dealing with matters of affection, intimacy, distancing, loneliness, and the like but also with ambiguity, confusion, resistance, and risk as they and their associates pursue particular interests (and emotional states) amidst the concerns, intentions, and adjustments of the others.

Although Ovid's considerations of emotionality are embedded within the context of romantic encounters and intrigues, his work provides testimony to the pervasive relevance of emotionality in intimate relationships.

Recognizing that people often have difficulties defining and dealing with their emotional sensations, Ovid sets out to instruct his pupils not only on ways of achieving desired love objects but also ways of managing the wide range of emotional states that may be associated with these "affairs of the heart."

Albeit often overlooked in contemporary considerations of romantic relationships, there also is the matter of human *resiliency*, wherein people attempt to revitalize or regenerate themselves (and/or others) after some loss, disappointment, or rejection – attempting to achieve or restore more desired levels of competence, composure, persona, and the like.

Notably, too, while love may be experienced as an individual or personal state, Ovid draws attention to the ways that people engage these notions in reflective, active, and interactive terms. Likewise, Ovid is acutely attentive to the role of the other in the emotions of the self, as well as the processual nature of affectivity as a humanly--experienced essence.

As with the preceding consideration of relationships, Ovid's statements on love provide further trans-historical and cross-cultural validation of an interactionist analysis of emotionality. At the same time, as well, the present consideration of emotionality shows how carefully and thoughtfully this classical scholar has dealt with emotionality as a humanly-engaged essence.

Engaging in Influence Work

Ovid is sometimes criticized for depicting the manipulative and deceptive features of human interchange, but it should be acknowledged that Ovid is very much concerned with the actualities of human relations and the ways that people manage their affairs as thinking, purposive, tactical agents. Thus, while Ovid may be seen as endorsing intimate relationships rather than invoking moralities of a more puritanical sort or adopting the more detached analytical stance of a social scientist, Ovid still provides considerable insight into the viewpoints, practices, dilemmas, and limitations of people who become caught up in romantic intrigues.

Clearly, Ovid is only one of a great many classical Greek and Latin scholars who provide depictions of influence work (and the associated matters of cooperation and resistance). Thus, one may refer to Plato (*Phaedrus*), Aristotle (*Rhetoric*), Cicero (*De Inventione*, *Brutus*, *De Oratore*, *Orator*), and Augustine (*On Christian Doctrine*) for other analyses of influence work. Indeed, as one of "the liberal arts" (see Martianus Capella, circa 380-440), the study of rhetoric or persuasive endeavor has been basic to the development of Western scholarship.

Ovid's contributions to rhetoric are overshadowed by other classical scholars, especially Aristotle (Prus 2008a), Cicero (Prus 2010), and Quintilian. Likewise, Ovid's materials on rhetoric are less extensive than those of Thucydides (circa 460-400 BCE) who instructively attends to political and military rhetoric in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. Nevertheless, by providing

a highly sustained consideration of influence work (and resistance) in romantic settings, Ovid rather uniquely indicates the relevance of rhetoric in more casual interpersonal contexts.

To briefly situate Ovid's texts within the context of a more contemporary analysis of influence work, it may be useful to focus on the following aspects of the persuasion process (Prus 1996:158):

- Formulating (preliminary) Plans
- Role-Taking (inferring/uncovering the perspectives of the other)
- Promoting Interest in One's Objectives
- Generating Trust
- Proposing Specific Lines of Action
- Encountering Resistance
- Neutralizing Obstacles
- Seeking and Making Concessions
- Confirming Agreements
- Assessing "Failures" and Recasting Plans.[11]

Ovid has not set out to develop a theory of influence work *per se*. Nevertheless, an examination of the preceding processes in light of Ovid's *The Art of Love* and *Remedies for Love* reveals that he is acutely mindful of these matters. Thus, Ovid envisions influence work in process terms – as denoting anticipatory, deliberative, enacted, interpreted, resisted, and adjustive realms of activity. Ovid also shows how influence work is inter-constituted with people's relationships and notions of emotionality. Relatedly, while encouraging people to adopt certain tactics in dealing with others, Ovid also is aware of people's more common circumstances, dilemmas, tactical ventures, and the problematic nature of success.

Ovid's texts may be presented in more entertaining, poetic ways, but his work represents an invaluable set of trans-situational and trans-cultural reference points on relationships, emotionality, and influence work. Thus, scholars interested in the nature of intimate relationships may use Ovid's texts, along with other detailed, historically generated materials and contemporary examinations of people's experiences in intimate relationships, in developing more conceptually informed comparative analyses of community life

[11] Whereas the subprocesses outlined here are most extensively illustrated in an ethnographic study of interpersonal selling activity (Prus 1989a), the influence process is given much more comprehensive attention in *Beyond the Power Mystique* (Prus 1999). Envisioning power as a humanly-enacted (vs. structuralist or moralist) essence, the emphasis is on the ways in which people engage influence work as agents, targets, and third parties.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Fatima Camara, Arthur McLuhan, and Beert Verstraete for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. I am also grateful to Magdalena Wojciechowska (editor), Krzysztof Konecki, Anna Kacperczyk, and Łukasz Marciniak, as well as the staff of *Qualitative Sociology Review* for their assistance in moving this manuscript into publication.

References

Adler, Patricia. 1985. *Wheeling and Dealing*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Anspach, Renee R. 1993. *Deciding Who Lives: Fateful Choices in the Intensive Care Nursery*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Aristotle. 1915-1946. *The Works of Aristotle*, edited by W. D. Ross. 11 volumes. London: Oxford University Press.

Aristotle. 1984. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, edited by Jonathan Barnes. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Augustine. 1958. *On Christian Doctrine* [De Doctrina Christiana]. Translated by D. W. Robertson, Jr. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.

Bartell, Gilbert. 1971. *Group Sex*. New York: Signet.

Becker, Howard S. 1963. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: Free Press.

Biernacki, Patrick. 1988. *Pathways from Heroin Addiction: Recovery without Treatment*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Blumer, Herbert. 1969. *Symbolic Interaction*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Blumer, Herbert. 1970 [1933]. *Movies and Conduct*. New York: Arno Press.

Blumer, Herbert and Philip Hauser. 1970 [1933]. *Movies, Delinquency and Crime*. New York: Arno Press.

Brown, L. Guy. 1931. "The Sociological Implications of Drug Addiction." *Journal of Educational Sociology* 4: 358-369.

Capella, Martianus. 1997. *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury*. Volume II of *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*. Translated by William Harris Stahl and Richard Johnson, with E. L. Burge. New York: Columbia University Press.

Capellanus, Andreas. 1941. *The Art of Courtly Love*. Translated by John Jay Parry. New York: Norton.

Charles, Michael T. 1986. *Policing the Streets*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Charmaz, Kathy. 1991. *Good Days Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness and Time*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Cicero. 1942. *De Oratore* (Two Volumes). Translated by by E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cicero. 1949. *De Inventione*. Translated by by H. M. Hubbell. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cicero. 1962. *Brutus*. Translated by G. L. Hendrickson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cicero. 1962. *Orator*. Translated by H. M. Hubbell. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Correll, Shelley. 1995. "The Ethnography of an Electronic Bar: The Lesbian Cafe." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 24(3):270-298.

Davis, Fred. 1963. *Passage through Crisis*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.

Dietz, Mary Lorenz. 1994. "On Your Toes: Dancing Your Way into the Ballet World." Pp. 66-84 in *Doing Everyday Life: Ethnography as Human Lived Experience*, edited by Mary Lorenz Dietz, Robert Prus, and William Shaffir. Toronto: Copp Clark Longman.

Ekins, Richard. 1997. *Male Femaling: A Grounded Theory Approach to Cross-dressing And Sex-changing*. New York: Routledge.

Erber, Maureen Wang and Ralph Erber. 2000. *Intimate Relationships: Issues, Theories, and Research*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Evans, A. Donald. 1994. "Socialization into Deafness." Pp. 129-142 in *Doing Everyday Life: Ethnography as Human Lived Experience*, edited by Mary Lorenz Dietz, Robert

Prus, and William Shaffir. Toronto: Copp Clark Longman.

Evans, Donald and W. W. Falk. 1986. *Learning to be Deaf*. Berlin: Mouton.

Faulkner, Robert R. 1971. *Hollywood Studio Musicians: Their Work and Careers in the Recording Industry*. Chicago: Aldine.

Fine, Gary Alan. 1983. *Shared Fantasy: Role Playing Games as Social Worlds*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fine, Gary Alan. 2001. *Gifted Tongues: High School Debate and Adolescent Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Gross, Nicolas P. 1985. *Amatory Persuasion in Antiquity: Studies in Theory and Practice*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press.

Haas, Jack. 1972. "Binging: Educational Control among High Steel Ironworkers." *American Behavioral Scientist* 16(1):27-34.

Haas, Jack. 1977. "Learning Real Feelings: A Study of High Steel Ironworkers' Reactions to Fear and Danger." *Sociology of Work and Occupations* 4(2):147-170.

Harrington, Carine L. and Denise D. Bielby. 1995. *Soap Fans: Pursuing Pleasure and Making Meaning in Everyday Life*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Hendrick, Clyde and Susan S. Hendrick. 2000. *Close Relationships: A Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Holyfield, Lori. 1999. "Manufacturing Venture: The Buying and Selling of Emotions." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 28:3-32.

Humphreys, Laud. 1975. *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places*. Chicago: Aldine.

Hunt, Morton. 1966. *The World of the Formerly Married*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Jacobs, Bruce A. 1999. *Dealing Crack: The Social World of Street Corner Selling*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Jonas, Lilian. 1999. "Making and Facing Danger: Constructing Strong Character on the River." *Symbolic Interaction* 22(3):247-267.

Jorgensen, Danny. 1992. *The Esoteric Scene, Cultic Milieu, and Occult Tarot*. New York: Garland.

Kando, Thomas. 1973. *Sex Change: The Achievement of Gender Identity among Feminized Transsexuals*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Karp, David A. 1996. *Speaking of Sadness: Depression, Disconnection and the Meanings of Illness*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lemert, Edwin. 1962. "Paranoia and the Dynamics of Exclusion." *Sociometry* 25(1):2-20.

Lesieur, Henry R. 1977. *The Chase: The Career of the Professional Gambler*. Garden City, NY: Anchor.

Letkemann, Peter. 1973. *Crime as Work*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Lofland, John. 1977 [1966]. *The Doomsday Cult: A Study in Conversion, Proselytization and Maintenance of Faith*. New York: Irvington Publishers.

de Lorris, Guillaume and Jean de Meun (Jean Clopinel). 1962. *The Romance of the Rose*. Translated by Harry W. Robbins. New York: Dutton.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. 1950. *The Prince and the Discourses* (with an introduction by Max Lerner). New York: Random House.

MacLeod, Bruce A. 1993. *Club Date Musicians: Playing the New York Party Circuit*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Maurer, David. 1955. *Whiz Mob: A Correlation of the Technical Argot of Pickpockets with their Behavior Pattern*. New Haven, CT: College and University Press.

Mead, George H. 1934. *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ovid. 1914. *Heroides and Amores*. Translated by Grant Showerman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ovid. 1921. *Metamorphoses*. Translated by Frank Justus Miller. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ovid. 1939. *The Art of Love and Other Poems*. Translated by J. H. Mozley. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ovid. 1957. *The Loves, The Art of Beauty, The Remedies for Love, and The Art of Love*. Translated by Rolfe Humphries. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Plato. 1937. *The Dialogues of Plato*, edited by Benjamin Jowett. New York: Random House.

Plato. 1961. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Plato. 1997. *Plato: The Collected Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

Ponse, Barbara. 1978. *Identities in the Lesbian World: The Social Construction of Self*. Westport, CN: Greenwood.

Prus, Robert. 1976. "Religious Recruitment and the Management of Dissonance: A Sociological Perspective." *Sociological Inquiry* 46(2):127-134.

Prus, Robert. 1987. "Generic Social Processes: Maximizing Conceptual Development in Ethnographic Research." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 16:250-291.

Prus, Robert. 1989a. *Making Sales: Influence as Interpersonal Accomplishment*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Prus, Robert. 1989b. *Pursuing Customers: An Ethnography of Marketing Activities*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Prus, Robert. 1996. *Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research: Intersubjectivity and the Study of Human Lived Experience*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Prus, Robert. 1997. *Subcultural Mosaics and Intersubjective Realities: An Ethnographic Research Agenda for Pragmatizing the Social Sciences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Prus, Robert. 1999. *Beyond the Power Mystique: Power as Intersubjective Accomplishment*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Prus, Robert. 2003. "Ancient Forerunners." Pp. 19-38 in *Handbook of Symbolic Interactionism*, edited by Larry T. Reynolds and Nancy J. Herman-Kinney. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira.

Prus, Robert. 2004. "Symbolic Interaction and Classical Greek Scholarship: Conceptual Foundations, Historical Continuities, and Transcontextual Relevancies." *The American Sociologist* 35(1):5-33.

Prus, Robert. 2006. "In Defense of Knowing, In Defense of Doubting: Cicero Engages Totalizing Skepticism, Sensate Materialism, and Pragmatist Realism in *Academica*." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 2(3):21-47.

Prus, Robert. 2007. "Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*:Laying the Foundations for a Pragmatist Consideration of Human Knowing and Acting." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 3(2):5-45.

Prus, Robert. 2008a. "Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: A Pragmatist Analysis of Persuasive Interchange." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 4(2):24-62.

Prus, Robert. 2008b. "On the Pragmatics and Problematics of Defining Beauty and Character: The Greek Poet Lucian (120-200) Engages Exacting Portraitures and Difficult Subjects." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 4(1):3-20.

Prus, Robert. 2008c. "Producing, Consuming, and Providing Instruction on Poetic Texts in the Classical Roman Era: The Pragmatist Contributions of Horace (65-8BCE), Longinus (100CE), and Plutarch (46-125CE)." *Studies in Symbolic Interaction* 30:81-103.

Prus, Robert. 2008d. "Writing History for Eternity: Lucian's (c120-200) Contributions to Pragmatist Scholarship and Ethnographic Analysis." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 37(1):62-78.

Prus, Robert. 2009. "Poetic Expressions and Human Enacted Realities: Plato and Aristotle Engage Pragmatist Motifs in Greek Fictional Representations." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 5(1):3-27.

Prus, Robert. 2010. "Creating, Sustaining, and Contesting Definitions of Reality: Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43BCE) as a Pragmatist Theorist and Analytic Ethnographer." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 6(2):3-50.

Prus, Robert. 2011a. "Defending Education and Scholarship in the Classical Greek Era: Pragmatist Motifs in the Works of Plato (c420-348BCE) and Isocrates (c436-338BCE)." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 7(1):1-35.

Prus, Robert. 2011b. "Morality, Deviance, and Regulation: Pragmatist Motifs in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 7(2):1-44.

Prus, Robert. 2011c. "On the Processes and Problematics of Representing Divinity: Dio Chrysostom (c40-120) and the Pragmatist Motif." Pp. 205-221 in *History, Time, Meaning, and Memory: Ideas for the Sociology of Religion*, edited by Barbara Jones Denison. Leiden: Brill.

Prus, Robert. 2011d. "Religion, Platonist Dialectics, and Pragmatist Analysis: Marcus Tullius Cicero's Contributions to the Philosophy and Sociology of Divine and Human Knowing." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 7(3):1-30.

Prus, Robert. in progress. "Encountering Nature, Experiencing Courtly Love, and Romancing the Rose: Generic Standpoints, Interpretive Practices, and Human Interchange in 12th-13th Century French Poetics."

Robert Prus and Matthew Burk. 2010. "Ethnographic Trailblazers: Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 6(3):3-28.

Prus, Robert and Fatima Camara. 2010. "Love, Friendship, and Disaffection in Plato and Aristotle: Toward a Pragmatist Analysis of Interpersonal Relationships." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 6(3):29-62.

Prus, Robert and Wendy Frisby. 1990. "Persuasion as Practical Accomplishment: Tactical Manoeuverings at Home Party Plans." Pp. 133-162 in *Current Research on Occupations and Professions: Societal Influences*. Volume 5, edited by Helena Znaniecki Lopata. Greenwich, CT: JAI.

Prus, Robert and Scott Grills. 2003. *The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities, and Regulation*. Westport, CN: Praeger.

Prus, Robert and Styllianoss Irini. 1980. *Hookers, Rounders, and Desk Clerks: The Social Organization of the Hotel Community*. Salem, WI: Sheffield.

Prus, Robert and C.R.D. Sharper. 1977. *Road Hustler: The Career Contingencies of Professional Card and Dice Hustlers*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Puddephatt, Antony and Robert Prus. 2007. "Causality, Agency, and Reality: Plato and Aristotle Meet G. H. Mead and Herbert Blumer." *Sociological Focus* 40(3): 265-286.

Ray, Marsh B. 1961. "Abstinence Cycles and Heroin Addicts." *Social Problems* 9(2):132-140.

Reiss, Albert J. Jr. 1961. "The Social Integration of Queers and Peers." *Social Problems* 9(2):102-120.

Roebuck, Julian B. and Wolfgang Frese. 1976. *The Rendezvous: A Case Study of an After-hours Club*. New York: Free Press.

Rosenblatt, Paul C., Terri Karis, and Richard Powell. 1995. *Multiracial Couples: Black-and-White Voices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Roth, Julius. 1962. "The Treatment of Tuberculosis as a Bargaining Process." Pp. 575-588 in *Human Behavior and Social Process*, edited by Arnold M. Rose. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Rubinstein, Jonathan. 1973. *City Police*. New York: Ballantine.

Sanders, Clinton. 1989. *Customizing the Body: The Art and Culture of Tattooing*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Sanders, William B. 1977. *Detective Work: A Study of Criminal Investigations*. New York: Free Press.

Schneider, Joseph W. and Peter Conrad. 1983. *Having Epilepsy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Secord, Carl W. and Paul F. Backman. 1964. *Social Psychology*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Shaffir, William. 1993. "Jewish Messianism Lubavitch Style: An Interim Report." *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* 35(2):115-128.

Shaffir, William. 1995. "When Prophecy is Not Validated: Explaining the Unexpected in a Messianic Campaign." *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* 37(2): 119-136.

Shaw, Clifford. 1930. *The Jack-Roller*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Shover, Neal. 1996. *Great Pretenders: Pursuits and Careers of Persistent Thieves*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Steffensmeier, Darrell J. 1986. *The Fence: In the Shadow of Two Worlds*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield.

Strauss, Anselm. 1993. *Continual Permutations of Action*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Sutherland, Edwin. 1937. *The Professional Thief*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thucydides. 1972. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Rex Warner, with an introduction by M. I. Finley. New York: Penguin Putnam.

Van Zandt, David E. 1991. *Living in the Children of God*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Vaughan, Diane. 1986. *Uncoupling: Turning Points in Intimate Relationships*. New York: Oxford.

Waller, Willard. 1967 [1930]. *The Old Love and the New*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Warren, Carol A. B. 1974. *Identity and Community in the Gay World*. New York: Wiley.

Wolf, Daniel. 1991. *The Rebels: A Brotherhood of Outlaw Bikers*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Prus, Robert. 2013. "Love, Despair, and Resiliency: Ovid's Contributions to an Interactionist Analysis of Intimate Relations." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):124-151. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Michael Salter
University of Western Sydney, Australia

Through a Glass, Darkly: Representation and Power in Research on Organized Abuse

Abstract This paper draws on the author's experience undertaking life history research with adults with histories of organized child sexual abuse. Organized abuse has been a particular flashpoint for controversy in debates over child abuse and memory, but it is also a very harmful and traumatic form of sexual violence. Research participants described how, in childhood, threats and trauma kept them silent about their abuse, but in adulthood this silence was reinforced by the invalidation that accompanied their efforts to draw attention to the harms that have befallen themselves and others. This paper will examine the role of qualitative research in addressing a form of alterity whose defining characteristic is the silencing and dismissal of narrative.

Keywords Sexual Abuse; Crime Victims; Life History; Sensitive Research; Coherence; Representation; Power

Michael Salter is a Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Western Sydney. His research focuses on the intersections of gendered violence, health, and culture, and in particular on the ways in which violence and its impacts are represented and made meaningful by victims, perpetrators, and others.

email address: Michael.Salter@uws.edu.au

I spent much of 2007 and 2008 travelling around Australia interviewing adults with histories of sexual abuse by groups or networks of people. Whilst most child sexual offences involve one offender and one victim, some children and adults with histories of sexual abuse have reported multi-perpetrator, multi-victim sexual abuse. Such experiences of abuse have been called "organized abuse" (La Fontaine 1993) and are associated with a range of trauma-related mental illnesses amongst victims, as well as other poor life outcomes (Williams 1993; Leserman et al. 1997; Gold et al. 1999). Many of the interviewees for the project were too disabled by abuse-related mental health conditions to work and so they lived in rural and country towns, where their disability pension went further than in the city. Interviews were often preceded by hours spent on trains, planes, and buses, and followed by overnight stays in country motels. The liminal experiences of travel served as something of an allegory for the narratives I was gathering, which involved violence against children of a scale beyond what is commonly acknowledged to be real or possible. Mollon has suggested that narratives of organized abuse are, in many ways, external to "the dominant symbolic structure determining what we normally believe to be true, possible and within the nature of reality" (2008:108). As a result, allegations of such abuse have often been interpreted as myths or fantasies since the "possibility of their reality has no place" in the symbolic order constructed by "mainstream cultural and media discourse" (Mollon 2008:108).

The life histories of survivors of sexual abuse have long been the subject of heated and sometimes vitriolic debate. Over the last twenty years, much of this debate has been ostensibly concerned with experimental psychology and "memory science;" however, it has reflected a long-standing tradition of disbelief in relation to the testimony of women and children. As Habermas (1984) observed, questions of ethics and justice are increasingly reframed in the public sphere as "technocratic" issues dominated by scientific vocabulary. Behind the scientific rhetoric, the debate over women's and children's testimony has been a deeply ideological one that has drawn on entrenched views of women's and children's memories as porous and highly susceptible to influence and contamination (Campbell 2003). This was particularly the case for victims of organized abuse, whose narratives of sadistic sexual abuse by groups and networks came under scrutiny in the 1980s and 1990s (Salter 2008). Despite the serious health needs of survivors of organized abuse, a range of academics, journalists, and activists have argued that their access to mental health care and the criminal or civil courts should be curtailed on the basis that disclosures of organized abuse do not reflect actual events but rather they are the product of "moral panics" and "false memories" (e.g., Loftus and Ketcham 1994; Guilliatt 1996; Ofshe and Watters 1996). These claims have proven so influential in the adjudication of criminal and child protection matters that, in some cases, child and adult complaints of organized abuse have been ignored by social services (South Australian Ombudsman 2004; Seenan 2005) and children have been returned to their parents despite ongoing complaints and evidence of such abuse (Rafferty 1997; Nelson 2008).

Like other researchers (Itzin 2001; Scott 2001), I sought to apply a qualitative methodology to the study of organized abuse in order to address what was absent in public debates about organized abuse: that is, the voices of the survivors themselves. The ways in which research methodologies create distances between researchers and research participants – in political and ethical, as well as spatial terms – has been a key factor in shaping the academic and media debate over organized abuse. Few researchers have directly

engaged survivors of organized abuse in the research enterprise through qualitative interviews, so there is little systematic analysis available regarding the content of survivor descriptions of their abuse. Survivors have rarely been afforded a presence in the research literature in their own right, and whilst some have represented their own histories through autobiographical writing, their contributions have largely been ignored or devalued by many academics and journalists writing on organized abuse. Many quantitative researchers have instead based their view of survivors upon pejorative mass media depictions, generalizing quantitative data drawn from surveys and case reviews in order to argue that such testimony is the product of "moral panic" and "false memories." By undertaking a qualitative project, I hoped to place survivors' perspectives at the centre of discussions on issues that most directly affect them.

Initially, I envisaged that my role as an interviewer was to provide a context in which participants felt safe engaging in the exposition of these histories with me. As the project progressed, it became clear that, for many participants, the interview was a nodal point in a larger struggle for survival that had, at its heart, the right to self-authorship. I came to realize that the very currency that qualitative research trades in – words, signs, symbols – constituted, for these participants, a mode of exchange within which they had been pervasively disempowered. Plummer suggests that narratives of sexual abuse survival are one of the dominant "sexual stories" that has proliferated across the contemporary media landscape but he also notes that such stories have a role in "pulling people apart," as well as "holding people together" (1995:5). Disclosures of organized abuse have gained considerable prominence in public discourse, but paradoxically, they have often been "storied" in ways that have silenced and discredited, rather than empowered, children and adults describing such abuse. As a result, they have found themselves distanced from vital supports, including health and welfare services and the police. The struggle for enunciation and recognition were fundamental aspects to their experiences of abuse, ill health, and discrimination. The research encounter was not simply an opportunity to communicate or uncover this struggle. By the very nature of qualitative research, it became implicated in the struggle itself, and this article aims to examine the interplay of power and representation within the interview encounter.

Methodology

Participants were recruited through counseling agencies and the newsletters and mailing lists of organizations in the fields of mental health, sexual assault, sexual abuse, and child protection. It was a prerequisite of participation that participants had or were accessing mental health care, and that they had a caring person in their life that knew about their history of abuse and could support them during or after the interview if they wanted. The interview was based on the "life history" method (see Plummer 1983; 1995), in which participants were invited to discuss their lives from childhood to the present day. The majority of literature on organized abuse consists of commentary and speculation rather than empirical analysis of organized abuse cases, although the available research reveals provocative linkages between organized abuse and other forms of child abuse and violence against women (Gallagher, Hughes, and Parker 1996; Kelly 1998; Scott 2001). The life history method was applied in an exploratory fashion in order to examine these linkages further. Survivors of sexual abuse are rarely engaged in qualitative research, perhaps due to the concerns of researchers and ethics committees that they may experience distress in the interviews (DePrince and Freyd 2004; Becker-Blease and Freyd 2006). However, the proposition of Becker-Blease and Freyd (2006) that adult survivors of child sexual abuse are able to accurately predict and manage the potential risks of retraumatization in qualitative research found support in this study. As the article will discuss, no participant expressed regret for their participation and many indicated that they gained some benefit from participation.

Abuse, Representation, and Power

As a researcher, my focus was on the criminological dimensions of participants' accounts of their lives: the contexts in which they experienced organized abuse, the acts that were committed against them, and so on. However, what I discovered within the interviews was an environment charged by a range of pressures and expectations, spoken and unspoken. Flooding into the research encounter was participants' desire to speak and be heard, to be a speaking subject rather than an object of discourse. In the interviews, participants were highly sensitized to their social and political invisibility as victims of serious and life-threatening harm. There was an irreconcilable gap in their lives between the severity of the abuses they had witnessed and been subject to, and the ways in which these abuses were denied public representation and acknowledgement. Child sexual abuse victims often grow up in contexts in which their efforts to articulate distress and seek care and support are systematically invalidated, disbelieved, and disavowed (Linehan 1993). Hence, the dynamics of the debate over the veracity of sexual abuse testimony reproduced and even intensified the characteristics of sexually abusive environments in ways that many victims found distressing and humiliating.

Such invalidating dynamics were reflected in the conduct of various professionals and workers that participants had approached as adults in times of crisis. In the interview, Darren described how one psychiatrist's effacement of his memories of organized abuse was "one of the worst things" that has ever happened to him.

> The psychiatrist I went to see, he summed me up within ten, fifteen minutes. He'd turned around and basically told me I was crazy, and I was a victim of "fraudulent memory syndrome" or something like that, "false memory syndrome." He'd likened me to some nutcase that thought he was a serial killer. Yeah, he really just said, out and out, "You are a crazy man."
>
> ...It's just hard for me to even think about, it was one of the worst things that has ever – just, I'd wanted to, I'd been waiting to get enough money to see this guy, and I'd pinned a lot of hopes on being able to talk to this fellow. Because I'd actually talked to him before ... and he'd seemed like basically a decent sort of guy. But then, he just nailed me. I walked out of that place so – I hadn't been that suicidal in years.

For participants, the ways in which their recollections of organized abuse have been denied

representation and acknowledgement were intrinsically linked to their current experiences of illness and marginalization. With no legitimacy attached to their self-representations, they had no power to externalize their suffering and hence, find care and support for the mental health problems and distress associated with their history of abuse. The subsequent collapse in self-valuation, leading to thoughts of suicide and death, was reflective of their devaluation in the eyes of potential care-givers who refused to acknowledge the level of their need. Goodwin has observed the frequency of an incredulous response amongst physicians confronted with narratives of sadistic abuse, arguing that this response is an "intellectualized variant of derealization" that serves to "gain distance from terrifying realities" (1985:7). For Darren, there was a direct relationship between the effacement of his narrative of abuse and the effacement of him as a person; as he says, "I hadn't been that suicidal in years." The means through which the psychiatrist sought to understand and rationalize his violent experiences constituted him as a person beyond belief and hence, beyond hope.

Campbell (2003) suggests that, in Western societies, the valuation of a persons' testimony is linked to the valuation of the person themselves. Where memory and testimony are called into question then the bases of identity and personhood are fundamentally delegitimized. If subjectivity is socially constituted through engagement and interaction, then the persistently invalidating nature of participants' social encounters resulted in a sense of self that was experienced as diminished and subordinated. They often felt isolated, alone and powerless. Sky said:

> I'd tell people little bits and pieces about my past because I'd worked something out and I'd be pleased to finally understand it. And they'd zone out, or they'd freak out worse than I do. So I want to tell people, but I don't want to incapacitate either. And people sometimes just think I'm insane. So I've ended up very isolated from people that could be helpful at this point.

Throughout their lives, participants had been denied the opportunity to speak in full about their most formative experiences, and where they had attempted to narrate their own histories they had often been confronted by shock, disbelief, and denial. They were therefore relegated to a constrained enunciative position in which they were restricted from accessing care and support or generating a sense of meaning and significance from their experiences of abuse. If culture is based upon the circulation of symbols and narratives, as Geertz (1973) proposes, then the fate of a population excluded from this symbolic exchange was starkly described by participants in this study. The opportunity to speak about their lives in the research encounter was therefore a powerfully symbolic one attended by anxiety and trepidation. This is well in evidence in the excerpt below from Isabelle, who discusses her response when her therapist handed her the advertisement for the research project.

> I got handed the research ad and I just went [gasp] "Fuck, that makes this concrete. The fact that you've even handed this to me makes my history concrete."
>
> Up until that point, it was kind of like, "Oh yeah, I think I'm talking to someone [a therapist] about it [organized abuse], but maybe it's not real. It's still over there, it's still just my imagination, and one day, she's [the therapist] just going to come in with a straight jacket and it'll be cool and I'm just crazy and it'll be all over. And it'll make sense because I'll just be mad."
>
> Until she handed me that bit of paper, and I'm sitting there, looking at it. And she said, "Oh, I'm just handing it to you, you don't even have to participate. You can screw it up, and throw it in the bin." And I'm looking at it, thinking, "Hmmm … That makes things concrete … you are handing it to me because I'm one of them [a survivor of organized abuse]. Oh fuck." And I'm kind of … I just put it in my folder, and I didn't know whether I should screw it up.
>
> Another part of me thought, "Nah, if you ignore it, that means all this is going to be for nothing. And that means they are going to keep winning, and you don't want that either. And you can't do what he's [the researcher] doing, because it's not safe to do that [run a project on organized abuse]. But maybe, it'll be OK to talk to him." So, then, that happens, and a couple of days go by with lots of anxiety, on a scale of 1 to 10 it was past that. And we[1] still thought, "Nah, it's cool, we are going to do this."

The life history format may be used by researchers to bring attention to the lives of the vulnerable (Plummer 1983:58); however, in this project, it was clear that research participants had sought out, identified, and acted upon the testimonial opportunity presented by the project. Armstrong (1994) has noted the ways in which women's testimony of sexual abuse has been devalued since the 1980s, stripped of its collective and political dimension and relegated to a private narrative of harm and loss. It was this devaluation that participants sought to redress through their participation. Public and political value are accorded to truth claims born from personal experience where the individual is valued as a participant in the public sphere, the place of civic engagement; an engagement not only traditionally denied to women (Pateman 1988) but particularly to women who speak out against men's sexual violence (Armstrong 1994; Scutt 1997). In Isabelle's account, qualitative research had the potential to breach the public-private divide and enable her to testify to her abuse in a public way and thus, disrupt the silence that allowed her abusers to "keep winning." This new testimonial position opened up new ways for Isabelle to view herself: as neither a crazy woman nor a woman in a crazy world but rather as a victim of a terrible harm that demands redress. The fact that she persevered with this decision despite a high level of fear and anxiety highlights the significance of this opportunity for her, and the symbolic potentials of qualitative research with people who have been pervasively denied other forms of public self-representation.

The Historiography of a Life History

In the debate over the credibility of sexual abuse disclosures, psychologists and psychiatrists have been at pains to emphasize the complexities and ambiguities of memory. They have accused adults with histories of organized abuse and those workers that support them of being hopelessly naïve about the vagaries of autobiographical memory. However, in this study participants indicated

[1] Some participants had a diagnosis of dissociative identity disorder, a mental illness associated with severe abuse in childhood and defined by the "presence of two or more distinct identities or personality states" that repeatedly take control of the person's behavior, as well as recurrent memory loss during such incidents (International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation 2011:118). People with such a diagnosis may sporadically refer to themselves as "we."

that they were intimately familiar with the unreliability of personal memory, which they described as an elusive and sometimes assaultive force in their lives. They recounted periods of their lives in which they suffered from extensive amnesia for previous experiences, as well as periods in which they were disabled by the uncontrollable intrusions of recollections of violence and abuse. Participants were under no illusion that their life histories were naturalistic productions, since their histories were narratives that they had consciously worked to develop and construct, often over years of torturous reality-testing and corroboration.

Prior to undertaking this effort, participants often had no life history or self-narrative to call their own. They confronted prolonged gaps and blackouts in their recollections of childhood and irreconcilable contradictions between the story of their lives that they inherited from their parents and their own memories.

> [When I was a child] a neighbor had come to our house, and Mum said to her, "I don't hit my children." And I distinctly remembered being hit by her a few days earlier. So, again, this is what I mean about the way we were fed certain stories about our family, which was different to what was really happening. But, it wasn't until I was older, and I remembered that conversation, and I thought, "But, that's not true." But, we were all taught to bury the truth. (Anne)

Attempting to recreate their life histories was therefore an attempt to impose order upon internal disorder and craft a sense of self and history from the recollections of abuse that confronted them. The development of this new history was slow, arduous work. Some participants brought an extraordinary high index of suspicion to their own recollections, refusing to introduce new recollections into their life history before they had rigorously tested them for accuracy. Where they encountered uncertainties in their recollections of abuse, they often identified this themselves. At times they refused to accept as necessarily true a recollection of abuse if they felt it was untrustworthy. In his discussions of his early childhood, Darren mentioned that his mothers' boyfriends would sometimes come to the house when she was absent, but he quickly broke off that discussion:

> All that really early stuff – I don't want to talk about that, it's like the mists of time, y'know. It's really early childhood memory, and I would say that, as a child – scared witless – and, as a child, in my mind, I don't really want to go back there.

Participants were, in a very real sense, the ethnographers of their own lives, with an unusual level of insight into the process by which they constructed their stories, their identities, and their understanding of organized abuse. The interview was therefore a site in which they could recount not only their life history but the history of this history; their own historiography.

In the interview, Renee described how, in her late twenties, she had a "breakdown" brought on by uncontrollable "flashes" and images of abuse that made her physically sick. A number of other participants also recalled periods of their lives in which they did not recall their experiences of childhood abuse; however, once these memories began they could not be stopped. They manifested as intrusive "flashbacks" that incapacitated participants and severely disrupted their lives. In Renee's case, the emergence of these traumatic memories presaged a prolonged period of illness and disability that had continued to the time of the interview.

> I blocked out my memories, and didn't remember until I was twenty-seven. I had a breakdown, I guess. All of a sudden, one night, I was going over my life: "Oh, yeah, when we were six we lived in this town, and then we moved and we lived with Nanna and Pa and then we moved in with Mark [stepfather]" – and then, just, my heart's pounding, I felt sick, and these flashes of people, and – at the time I was seeing a counselor and I rang her that day. And it wasn't long after that I left the job that I'd been in for ten years, I just – fell to pieces.

Renee had been raised by her mother and stepfather, Mark, in a house characterized by violence, alcoholism, and drug abuse. She began to remember being sexually abused by Mark at home and by a group of Mark's extended family and friends. This abuse included a local photography studio where she remembered child abuse images being taken of her. In her adult life, the emergence of these recollections was profoundly disturbing to Renee and she was initially uncertain how to make sense of them. She confronted her mother and Mark about what she remembered and their ambivalent response only served to inflame her sense of distress and humiliation.

> [Mum said] "Oh, yes, he does remember going into your bedroom one night and getting into bed with you. He was drunk." My stepfather. Yeah. He said that to mum, he remembers. One night, accidentally. "But nothing happened!" Because he was drunk. But, they were always drunk.
>
> ...So it was played down, it was – "Big deal." It was played down. Mum was there and he said, "Well, as a matter of fact, one of my dad's mates used to play with my dick when I was a kid, and I quite liked it." So his attitude was, "What's the big deal?"

Her mother's and stepfather's responses were all the more upsetting for Renee because she struggled with her own doubts and bewilderment about what her memories represented. In an effort to resolve this confusion, and to reject Mark's imputation that her memories were the product of mental illness, she began to undertake significant investigatory work in an effort to verify her memories of abuse.

> I guess I did a lot of my own detective work. I knew where we lived as kids, I knew where the [photography] studio was. I went to libraries, and did all this research, found out who owned the place, found out who was leasing the place, a whole lot of stuff. And it all started to add up. It was years until all the memories were in sequence and it made sense … I wasn't backing down until I found out who owned that bloody place, their names, who leased it. Being stubborn can have its benefits.

She was later able to go into a local shop that she believed had been the site of the photography studio and verify that it had the same layout as she remembered. Having uncovered the name of the leasees at the time, she visited their private house only to find that it fit drawings she had made in hospital of the house that she had been driven to for abusive "parties."

> I had a drawing of the house from when I was in a psych unit. I actually went there to put a brick through their window – and there was the drawing. I went there during the day and said, "There's

> that backyard where we had a party." It was just bizarre.

In the interview, Renee sometimes appeared trapped between her desire to affirm the validity of her recollections and the ambiguity of the images that confronted her in flashbacks and nightmares. She described her life history as a jigsaw puzzle that she was unsure if it will ever fit together, but she felt that she had been able to generate a general (if somewhat patchy) sense of order that explained the chronology of her abuse and the development of her disabling trauma symptoms.

> I've been told, and I don't know if it was true, but there was quite a lot of money to be made back in the seventies with that kind of stuff [child pornography]. And when I look at all: my stepfather, and money, and sex, and yeah, it all kind of doesn't really make … full sense. There are bits that do, where I can say, "Yeah, that definitely happened."

Interactionist approaches to qualitative research have emphasized the co-production of narrative between the interviewer and interviewee. In relation to organized abuse, skeptics have gone further, claiming that interviewers can "implant" or impress upon a vulnerable interviewee a false narrative. Whilst the narrative structure that emerged in the interview with Renee was undoubtedly shaped by the research encounter, she came to the interview with a sense of her history and identity that was not spontaneously reorganized to suit the particularities of an interview or an interviewer. Her self-narrative did not grant me, as the researcher, unmediated access to social realities or lived experience but nor was her narrative independent of these realities and experiences – far from it. In the interview, she provided a detailed description of the strategies she had employed to construct the history of her life and the circumstances that shaped the evolution and development of her self-narrative. The forces and processes at play in the interview environment – representation, symbolization, recollection – were the very forces that Renee and other participants sought to describe and articulate.

"Sick with the Memories": The Limitations of the Interview

The effort to translate memory into verbal or written representation was an ongoing struggle that participants recounted in great detail. Cara spoke of being "sick with the memories" of organized abuse and described "big, big flashbacks" knocking her off her feet. Other participants talked of memories punching them in the stomach and making them vomit, or waking up at night feeling hands around their throat or on their shoulders, holding them down. The risk that participants' memories might manifest in uncontrollable or distressing ways in interview was one that had to be managed throughout the research encounter. It was clear that some recollections of abuse could be directly addressed in the interview whereas other memories needed to be approached obliquely or avoided altogether. Some horrifying experiences were mentioned in passing, but participants were unable to speak about them at length; accounts of abuse, violence, and losses that were, literally, unspeakable. These experiences were marked by silence rather than discourse, or else by the sudden termination of narrative, as in this example from Jane below:

> In absolute terror, uh, clutch- clutching a sibling, when the, when this monster who was someone that you normally loved and trusted would be parading around the bedroom saying, "Where are you? COME OUT!" And um, um, I'm just having a little bit of trouble divulging here, because I don't want to go too far...

The struggle to enunciate the subjective experience of trauma calls attention not to the revelatory power of disclosure but instead to the potentially destructive consequences of the inadequacies of language. Psychological trauma is presaged by the collapse of systems of meaning and representation in the face of overwhelming physical and emotional pain (Herman 1992). Kristeva (1976) has emphasized how language and representation organizes the energies, rhythms, and forces of corporeal experience, a relationship which imbues language with significance and meaning. However, the collapse or deformation of meaning, in the face of trauma, fundamentally disrupts this dialectic, leaving the unity of language imperiled by an overflow of fragmented and threatening psychic material.

In the interviews, participants had to continually negotiate between the desire to articulate themselves and the maintenance of coherence and meaning that may be threatened when violence is brought to the threshold of language. In the interviews, participants sought to narrate a stable sense of self, albeit with recognition given to the fragmentation and ambiguities of self-hood(s) emerging from traumatic contexts. A self with a fragmented past is necessarily a fragmented self, a point made vividly by Isabelle when she said:

> I find it really hard to put things in language and context half the time. It's just this messy imagery, sensory … it's like my body is there, and if my body could tell you exactly how and when, there would be a context. But, everything is just so scattered in our mind. Sometimes it feels like there are twenty different events all connected in one. I just feel like … it's unraveling this messy … you know how cats play with balls of wool? And they get them all knotted up and messy? Sometimes you can't unmessy it, it's beyond repair. That's what it feels like in our head, sometimes.

Testimony of trauma, particularly where it involves intense personal suffering and grief, is necessarily incomplete because of what Scarry (1985) identified as the "inexpressibility of pain"; however, the possibilities of the interview encounter for survivors of violence are further narrowed by the limitations that systems of representation place upon the subject. The severity of the violence disclosed by victims of organized abuse is such that Cooper, Anaf, and Bowden (2006) and Sarson and MacDonald (2008) have questioned whether the terminologies of "child abuse" and "domestic violence" can adequately describe them. Whilst some recollections of abuse could be directly addressed in the interview, others were too "messy," as Isabelle suggests, to be put into words. Attempting to do so threatened to "unravel" the spool of self-hood and history that participants had spent many years untangling. As a result, there are necessary limits to the capacity of the research encounter to document and communicate fully the experiences of abuse and violence that had characterized participants' lives.

Evaluating the Research Encounter

Participants were drawn from an extremely traumatized population and they had a spectrum of mental health diagnoses, including dissociative identity disorder, schizophrenia, psychotic depression, manic depression, bipolar disorder, and "personality disorders." Nonetheless, participants' feedback was very positive about the experience of the project. In order to evaluate participants' experiences in the interview, all participants were sent a brief post-interview evaluation questionnaire a month after the interview. The questionnaire included three items that were selected to measure participants' experience of the research in terms of the potential benefits, psychological distress, and risk-benefit ratio. The items were drawn from Newman, Walker, and Gefland's (1999) study on the costs and benefits of participating in trauma-focused research, in which the constructs of benefit, expected upset, and regret were measured using the 5-point Likert items below:

1. I gained something positive from participating in the interview;
2. Participating in the interview upset me more than I expected;
3. Had I known in advance what the interview would be like for me, I still would have agreed.

Of the 21 participants, 16 returned their questionnaires, which was approximately a 75% return rate. One participant only completed one of the questions and so was dropped from the analysis, leaving a total questionnaires sample of 15 (70% of the total sample). Table 1 shows the distribution of participants' responses to the three reaction questions.

Table 1. Likert scale responses to questions regarding participation in the interview.

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Benefit[a]	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	6.7	4	26.7	10	66.7
Unexpected upset[b]	5	33.3	4	26.7	3	20.0	3	20.0	0	0.0
No regrets[c]		0.0		0.0		0.0	5	33.3	10	66.7

[a] "I gained something positive from participating in the interview"
[b] "Participating in the interview upset me more than I expected"
[c] "Had I known in advance what the interview would be like for me, I still would have agreed"

Source: self-elaboration.

All participants except one reported that they had experienced benefit from their participation, with two-thirds of the sample strongly agreeing with the benefit statement. The results of the unexpected upset measure were mixed. Over half the sample reported that they did not experience unexpected upset during the interviews, with 20% responding neutrally to the question and 20% reporting some experience of unexpected upset. Nonetheless, no participant reported regretting their participation, with two-thirds of the sample strongly agreeing with the statement that they would have participated in the interview if they had known what the experience would have been like.

Participants expressed few adverse reactions to the study and the majority indicated that they had derived benefit through their participation. This finding is particularly significant since often a month had elapsed before participants received the questionnaire, so their responses pertained not only to the interview experience but its aftermath. Although a minority of participants reported unexpected distress in the interviews, it seems that these experiences were tolerable since no participant expressed regret at their participation. The fact that 20% of participants reported unexpected distress in the interviews, yet, did not regret their participation, highlights their perseverance and, perhaps, the importance of the opportunity to participate in this research project for them.

Conclusion

Plummer questions "the current, almost obsessive, concern of much analysis which reduces dense, empirical *human* life to *texts*" (1995:16). Beyond words and discourse, "a real world and real lives do exist, howsoever we interpret, construct and recycle accounts of these by a variety of symbolic means" (Stanley 1993:214). Adult accounts of organized abuse have been pervasively reduced to "just words" by academic and media commentators, characterized as textual productions with little or no relation to social reality. In the interviews, participants described how these discursive maneuvers left them unable to access treatment for disabling psychological symptoms or to protect themselves from sexual and physical violence. Consigned to a liminal space in which their words, feelings, and needs were assigned no value, some participants called into question the viability of a life characterized by ongoing suffering without hope of intervention. Hence, words are not "just words": they have a political and social force of their own.

In this study, this was a force that participants identified within qualitative research and sought to mobilize to their own ends. The urgency that victims of violence can bring to the research encounter, and their power to determine the shape and form of the interview, is evidence of the very agency that can be denied to them by overly cautious formulations of the "vulnerable research participant." That is not to deny the vulnerabilities of victims of violence in their struggle to enunciate experiences of abuse and powerlessness but rather to situate qualitative research within the politics of representation. Marginalized populations are the bearers of narratives and self-histories that are delegitimized by powerful institutions and individuals (including academics) because they disturb the authorized accounts of social life that mystify and legitimize power inequalities.

Underlying this is the semiotics of disadvantage, whereby prevailing systems of representation lack the symbolic resources for the articulation of experiences that trouble the structures of power that generate, legitimize, and maintain the hegemony of such systems.

In the face of the hegemonic silencing of alternative accounts, qualitative research offers a space for discursive excavation and reconstruction. Scarry argued that experiences of violence can "magnify the way in which pain destroys a person's world, self and voice" so "acts that restore the voice become not only a denunciation of the pain but almost a diminution of the pain, a partial reversal of the process of torture itself" (1985:5). In this light, qualitative research not only becomes a site of resistance and protest for subordinated groups but also a place in which the deconstructive force of abuse and violence can be challenged and perhaps even reversed. This is a political rather than therapeutic contestation (although the two are not mutually exclusive) and, as this project showed, victims of violence may seek out qualitative research precisely for its public, testimonial qualities.

Marginality and testimonial illegitimacy exist in a spiraling relation that effects measurable changes upon bodies and lives. One of the main tools that social researchers have used to uncover and highlight disadvantage – the research encounter – is not divorced from the materiality of testimony and discourse. It proffers a site in which narratives of harm and disadvantage can overcome the obstacles embedded in hegemonic constructions of credibility and authority. The interview cannot capture the totality of suffering and indeed may add to it when symbolic representations prove unable to hold or contain intolerable affect. Despite these limitations, within the interaction between interviewer and participant, a reconfiguration of the semiotics of disadvantage can be produced, whereby symbolic resources are mobilized in ways that reveal, rather than obscure, processes of subordination. With the legitimization of suppressed narratives comes the possibility of the development of new, authorized subject positions for people whose testimonial experiences have otherwise been marked by invalidation, disbelief, and marginalization.

References

Armstrong, Louise. 1994. *Rocking the cradle of sexual politics: What happened when women said incest*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Becker-Blease, Kathryn A. and Jennifer F. Freyd. 2006. "Research participants telling the truth about their lives: The ethics of asking and not asking about abuse." *American Psychologist* 61(3):218-226.

Campbell, Sue. 2003. *Relational remembering: Rethinking the memory wars*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Cooper, Lesley, Julia Anaf, and Margaret Bowden. 2006. "Contested concepts in violence against women: 'Intimate', 'domestic' or 'torture.'" *Australian Social Work* 59(3):314-327.

DePrince, Anne P. and Jennifer J. Freyd. 2004. "Costs and benefits of being asked about trauma history." *Journal of Trauma Practice* 3(4):23-35.

Gallagher, Bernard, Bill Hughes, and Howard Parker. 1996. "The nature and extent of known cases of organised child sexual abuse in England and Wales." Pp. 215-230 in *Organised abuse: The current debate*, edited by Peter Bibby. London: Arena.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Gold, Steven N. et al. 1999. "Relationship between childhood sexual abuse characteristics and dissociation among women in therapy." *Journal of Family Violence* 14(2):157-171.

Goodwin, Jean. 1985. "Credibility problems in multiple personality disorder patients and abused children." Pp. 1-20 in *Childhood antecedents of multiple personality*, edited by Richard Kluft. Washington: American Psychiatric Press.

Guilliatt, Richard. 1996. *Talk of the devil: Repressed memory & the ritual abuse witch-hunt*. Melbourne: Text Publishing Company.

Habermas, Jürgen (1984) *The theory of communicative action*. London: Heinemann Educational.

Herman, Judith. 1992. *Trauma and recovery*. New York: Basic Books.

International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation. 2011. "Guidelines for treating dissociative identity disorder in adults, third revision." *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation* 12(2):115-187.

Itzin, Catherine. 2001. "Incest, paedophilia, pornography and prostitution: Making familial abusers more visible as the abusers." *Child Abuse Review* 10(1):35-48.

Kelly, Liz. 1998. "Confronting an atrocity: The Dutroux case." *Trouble and Strife* 36:16-22.

Kristeva, Julia. 1976. "Signifying practice and mode of production." *Edinburgh Review* 1:64-77.

La Fontaine, Jean S. 1993. "Defining organized sexual abuse." *Child Abuse Review* 2(4):223-231.

Leserman, Jane et al. 1997. "Impact of sexual and physical abuse dimensions on health status: Development of an abuse severity measure." *Psychosomatic Medicine* 59(2):152-160.

Linehan, Marsha. 1993. *Cognitive behavioral treatment of borderline personality disorder*. New York: Guilford Press.

Loftus, Elizabeth F. and Katherine Ketcham. 1994. *The myth of repressed memory: False femories and allegations of sexual abuse*. New York: St Martin's Griffin.

Mollon, Phil. 2008. "When the Imaginary becomes the Real." Pp. 108-115 in *Forensic aspects of dissociative identity disorder*, edited by Adah Sachs and Graeme Galton. London: Karnac.

Nelson, Sarah. 2008. "The Orkney 'satanic abuse case': Who cared about the children?" Pp. 337-354 in *Ritual abuse in the twenty first century: Psychological, forensic, social and political considerations*, edited by Randy Noblitt and Pamela Perskin. Bandon: Robert D. Reed Publishers.

Newman, Elana, Edward A. Walker, and Anne Gefland. 1999. "Assessing the ethical costs and benefits of trauma-focused research." *General Hospital Psychiatry* 21(3):187-196.

Ofshe, Richard and Ethan Watters. 1996. *Making monsters: False memories, psychotherapy, and sexual hysteria*. California: University of California Press.

Pateman, Carole. 1988. *The sexual contract*. Oxford: Polity Press.

Plummer, Kenneth. 1983. *Documents of life: An introduction to the problems and literature of a humanistic method*. London, Boston: Allen & Unwin.

Plummer, Kenneth. 1995. *Telling sexual stories: Power, change and social worlds*. London, New York: Routledge.

Rafferty, Jean. 1997. "Ritual denial." *The Guardian*, March 22, p. 26.

Salter, Michael. 2008. "Out of the shadows: Re-envisioning the debate on ritual abuse." Pp. 155-176 in *Ritual abuse in the twenty-first century: Psychological, forensic, social and political considerations*, edited by Randy Noblitt and Pamela Perskin. Bandon: Robert D. Reed Publishers.

Sarson, Jeanne and Linda MacDonald. 2008. "Ritual abuse-torture within families/groups." *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma* 16(4):419-438.

Scarry, Elaine. 1985. *The body in pain: The making and unmaking of the world*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Scott, Sara. 2001. *Beyond disbelief: The politics and experience of ritual abuse*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Scutt, Jocelynne. 1997. *The incredible woman: Power and sexual politics (Vol. 1)*. Melbourne: Artemis Publishing.

Seenan, Gerard. 2005. "Social workers blamed for continued abuse of three daughters in remote island community." *The Guardian*, October 8, p. 4.

South Australian Ombudsman. 2004. *Annual Report 2003-2004: Report of the Ombudsman concerning an alleged failure by the Department for Human Services (Family and Youth Services) to acknowledge and deal with a conflict of interest arising from the placement of a child into foster care*. Adeladaide: South Australian Ombudsman.

Stanley, Liz. 1993. "The knowing because experiencing subject: narratives, lives and autobiography." *Women's Studies International Forum* 16(3):205-215.

Williams, Mary B. 1993. "Assessing the traumatic impact of child sexual abuse." *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 2(2):41-59.

Salter, Michael. 2013. "Through a Glass, Darkly: Representation and Power in Research on Organized Abuse." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):152-166. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Nicholas A. Guittar
University of South Carolina Lancaster, U.S.A.

The Meaning of Coming Out: From Self-Affirmation to Full Disclosure

Abstract Qualitative researchers have begun to analyze narratives of individuals' experiences with coming out in order to explore the social influences that affect these processes. However, most studies on coming out are based on the assumption that "coming out" has a singular shared meaning. The present study is centered on challenging this very assumption by taking a constructivist grounded theory approach to exploring the meaning of coming out for 30 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (LGBQ) individuals via open-ended interviews. Coming out does not have a universal meaning among LGBQ persons; rather, it varies on the basis of individuals' experiences, social environment, and personal beliefs and values. All 30 participants in the current study agree that coming out is a transformative process and an important element in identity formation and maintenance, thus challenging the notion that coming out is no longer a relevant concept. For some participants coming out is more of a personal journey of self-affirmation, while for others it is about the sharing of their sexuality with others – and oftentimes a combination of these two characteristics. Implications for future research on coming out are included.

Keywords Coming Out; Meaning; Sexual Identity; Sexuality; LGBQ; Gay and Lesbian Studies

Nicholas A. Guittar is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of South Carolina Lancaster. He attended the University of Central Florida where he earned a PhD in Sociology with a focus on social inequalities. His research interests lie primarily at the intersection of gender and sexuality, and his current research focuses more specifically on sexual identity formation and maintenance among members of the LGBQT community.

email address: NGuittar@mailbox.sc.edu

Heterosexuality is still very much the sexual norm throughout the U.S. (Katz 2007). As such, individuals who identify as having a sexual orientation that falls outside of this dominant heterosexual framework face myriad difficulties in identifying and maintaining a sexual identity. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (LGBQ) individuals are tasked with many difficult and often ambiguous challenges associated with maintaining a healthy sexual identity. Central to these challenges is the process of coming out, which has been identified as one of the most crucial elements in the development of a healthy sexual identity (McLean 2007).

The body of empirical research on issues involving the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (LGBQ) communities has been growing considerably over the past 20 years. Of all the literature concerning LGBQ[1] persons, coming out, and the development of an LGBQ identity are probably the two best developed concepts (Shallenberger 1996). However, most studies on coming out are based on the assumption that "coming out" means the same thing across individuals. Further, it is assumed by much of the psychological community that the experiences associated with coming out are likely to fit a series of formulaic stages (Savin-Williams 2001). But, coming out is not a simple linear, goal-oriented, developmental process (Rust 1993), and the experiences associated with coming out are as numerous as the number of people who have taken their lesbian, gay, or bisexual identities public.

Sociological research is still underdeveloped in terms of taking a more inductive approach to exploring the unique experiences of those with an LGBQ identity. Even qualitative studies that employ an objectivist take on grounded theory typically assume that respondents share their meanings (Charmaz 2000). As long as research relies on the assumption that coming out means the same thing to everyone, how can we really begin to explore individual variations in all things related to coming out?

The ambiguity of meanings related to matters of sexuality is not a new phenomenon. In her book, *Virginity Lost*, sociologist Laura Carpenter (2005) set out to investigate virginity loss as a cultural phenomenon that is important to study in its own right. To her surprise, Carpenter quickly came to recognize that perhaps the most challenging element of her study was the dearth of research on the meaning of virginity loss:

> [o]nce I began to research the topic, I found that the scholarship on early sexuality was largely silent on the meaning of virginity loss, and even more so about its definition. This silence surprised me, given how consistently American institutions – mass media, medical science, schools, religious institutions, public policy organizations, and the government – depicted virginity loss as one of, if not *the*, most meaningful events in an individual's sexual career. (2005:5)

By simply rereading Carpenter's passage while replacing the term "virginity loss" with "coming out," we see that the rest of her statement seems to hold true. Coming out is often touted as central to identity formation, and its relevance is echoed throughout American institutions, yet we have exerted little effort on discerning the meaning of the concept.

I have yet to identify a single study where one of the primary research questions is focused on exploring the meaning of coming out. Fortunately, by scrutinizing the details of previous studies, it is possible to construct somewhat of a mosaic of meanings that have been attributed to coming

[1] Although this study is designed around the use of these labels, study participants may very well identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, pansexual, poly-sexual, fluid, or they may prefer to abstain from attaching any such label to their sexuality. Essentially, I am interested in anyone who engages in a process of coming out related to their sexual orientation, so the participants need not self-identify as LGBQ.

out. Some of these meanings are extracted from the narratives of participants within the given studies, although most of them are definitions proffered by researchers at the onset of their manuscripts. For example, according to Waldner and Magruder (1999), coming out refers simply to the acknowledgement of a gay identity to others. A slightly more specific rendition of this was shared by Merighi and Grimes (2000) who summarized coming out as the disclosure of one's sexuality to family members. These studies, along with others (Griffith and Hebl 2002; Johnston and Jenkins 2003; McLean 2007), typically maintain that coming out includes 1) disclosure of a sexual identity, 2) the involvement of family, friends, or co-workers, and 3) a transformative nature to the exchange. Considering the variation in definitions, it is essential that we gain an understanding of how those individuals who are engaged in coming out define this concept.

Appleby (2001) offers a unique approach to defining the concept. Rather than proposing an explanation for what coming out means, he refrains from disclosing a meaning aside from speaking about a theme extracted from his ethnographic interview data: that coming out is an ongoing process. Although a meaning of coming out is never explicitly stated, the author alludes to coming out only as the outward disclosure of one's sexual orientation. Still, he at least gives the participants leeway to define coming out as an ongoing process. Unfortunately, few studies have offered participants this opportunity to contribute their own input into the conceptualization of the term "coming out."

Some researchers altogether avoid defining the concept. For example, in his studies on coming out to parents, Savin-Williams (1989; 1998) discusses how the disclosure of one's sexuality to family members is a pivotal and often neglected part of the process, yet an explicit definition of coming out is not completely stated. In his work, there is occasional mention of how the psychological community relies on a rigid definition to explain coming out (Savin-Williams 2001). However, he rebukes such a practice citing how it does not adequately explain most individuals' lived experiences. Perhaps the lack of definition in his writings then is simply a reflection of how the author wishes to avoid placing a definitive label on people's rather unique experiences related to sexual orientation and identity.

Still, many researchers rely on their own definitions of coming out while interviewing LGBQ persons. In a study of young lesbian and bisexual women, Oswald states that "coming out is a process of significant change for women who accept and disclose bisexual or lesbian identities, and for those to whom they come out" (1999:66). Although Oswald's definition is an example of circumventing the question of what coming out means and defining it for oneself, her definition of coming out is unique in that it explains coming out as both self-acceptance and public disclosure. Oswald later states how each participant in her study "was interviewed about how she *came out to herself* and the most important people in her life" (1999:67 [emphasis added]). Oswald's statement begs the question of whether self-acceptance alone might even constitute coming out. Or, perhaps self-acceptance is simply a prerequisite to coming out as opposed to being part of the process.

At some juncture we need to stop and ask ourselves if the meaning we ascribe to a concept is similar to the meanings held by individuals outside of academia. In the case of coming out, this remains to be seen as very few studies have given participants the opportunity to weigh in on its meaning. Granted, some studies on coming out are written by scholars who themselves identify as having an LGBQ identity. In these cases, it is possible that the researchers simply use the definition that most aptly describes their own experiences. This is an approach most often used in autoethnographic works of coming out at work or school. Since the author is the central figure in these narratives, it makes sense to use one's own definition of coming out (see: Coming Out in the Higher Education Classroom, a special feature in *Feminism and Psychology* 2009).

As for studies where the researcher is interviewing or surveying a chosen population, the question remains: is the author's definition of coming out in congruence with that held by each of the participants? Scholarship in research methodology has devoted a great deal of time and effort to investigating how researchers and study participants construct different meanings of a concept or question (Groves et al. 2009). In many cases, there remains an assumption of shared meaning between the researcher and the participants. This assumption of shared meaning even permeates many carefully constructed qualitative studies that use various incarnations of grounded theory in their coding and analysis (Charmaz 2000). This brings me back to the question at hand: What does coming out mean to different people? Does telling a close friend constitute coming out, or is it a matter of disclosing one's sexual orientation to a parent? Is it a matter of full disclosure to all family, friends, and acquaintances? Does self-acceptance constitute coming out? Does one ever truly come out?

A few things should be said about the use of blanket terms such as "coming out." Seidman, Meeks, and Traschen (1999) assert that the use of blanket concepts like "coming out" itself constructs LGBQ persons as suffering a common fate or similar circumstance. A postmodern take on the use of such categories or labels is that they are unfit to describe the varied life experiences of different people. The same goes for the use of the "closet" metaphor. An example of this shortcoming was encountered by Crawley and Broad (2004) in their study of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community panels. Although community panels are intended to showcase the unique experiences of LGBT people, "the auspices of the setting and the coming-out formula story call on panelists to typify what it means to be LGBT, albeit in ways that contradict popular stereotypes" (Crawley and Broad 2004:39). So, although contemporary sexual identity categorization and storylines associated with coming out are intended to bring attention to individual variation, they still serve to undermine these very differences.

Assumptions by researchers about the meaning of coming out may typify people's experiences in ways that are not true to individuals' lived experiences. Such assumptions and vagaries are problematic in terms of gaining a better understanding of what coming out really means to individuals. In reviewing the literature on coming out, the only conclusion I have come to is that perhaps there are so many definitions for coming out simply because "coming out" is not a concept with a singular, shared meaning. Through the use of

constructivist grounded theory I dig below the surface of typical "storytold" meanings and work with participants to uncover meanings that are relevant to their social worlds.

Theory, Methods, and Data

In an effort to investigate the meaning of coming out, my analysis is informed by symbolic interactionism, and guided by constructivist grounded theory – which was employed for my organization, coding, and analysis (Charmaz 2006). Early foundations in grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) would emphasize the trouble associated with using any particular theoretical framework (symbolic interaction) to guide my research. But, I believe it is natural and unavoidable that researchers incorporate their perspectives into the work. Symbolic interactionism maintains a focus on the creation and evolution of meaning and how these contribute to one's personal and sexual identity. The goal then, in terms of employing an interactionist perspective on coming out, is to understand the socially situated meaning of the concept (i.e., coming out) at a given moment in order to investigate how it shapes individuals' lived experiences.

The beauty of constructivist grounded theory lies in its emphasis on seeking meaning (Charmaz 2000). Considering the fact that the sole research question of this study is concerned with exploring the *meaning* of coming out, this method is invaluable. Constructivist grounded theory recognizes that knowledge is mutually created between researcher and research participant (Lincoln and Guba 2000), and it avoids many of the assumptions that befall other more positivist interpretations of grounded theory. Interviews are naturally well-suited for a constructivist approach to grounded theory in that qualitative interviews are contextually-based and mutually accomplished stories created through the collaboration of researcher and participant (Gubrium and Holstein 2002).

A total of 30 participants were sought for this study. This sample size was instrumental in allowing me to gather rich data on the meaning of coming out, as well as other themes that arose during my grounded analyses. Participants for this study were recruited by employing both snowball and purposive sampling techniques. Considering the methodological challenges of obtaining a diverse sample of LGBQ individuals, most of which have taken their sexual identities public to some extent, snowball sampling is the most viable sampling choice. Snowball samples, although ideal for recruiting highly "invisible" populations, are associated with a variety of methodological concerns, not the least of which is potential homogeneity (Groves et al. 2009). For example, referrals from a single LGBQ organization would be likely to share many traits with one another. But, by initiating four to five different trails of snowballing, I worked to minimize this effect and reach populations who may not be accessible through any other means.

Most previous studies on coming out have emphasized a specific segment of the population such as adolescents, college students, young professionals, or people in mid-adulthood. Additionally, participants in studies on coming out tend to be white, highly educated, and of a high socio-economic status (Griffith and Hebl 2002). These sorts of samples allow researchers to make more direct within-group comparisons; however, they limit the investigation of coming out as a general social process entered into and experienced by people from various walks of life. In order to minimize the homogeneity of the sample I employed some purposive sampling techniques, and this move was directed at gaining diversity on the basis of gender, race, age, education, orientation, and "degree of outness."

Collecting data across multiple dimensions allows for greater representativeness and it helps capture the overall texture of the topic (Corsaro 1985). Gender, race, age, education, and orientation are straight forward, but my decision to purposively sample people who are varied in terms of outness enabled me to obtain a sample that includes: 1) individuals who have only come out to one or two people, as well as 2) individuals who have come out to a greater degree. Locating and including individuals who are very early in their coming out processes is important in terms of truly understanding the full gamut of meanings individuals may attribute to coming out. Research is lacking on those who have just begun to come out, so these individuals offer the unique opportunity to learn about coming out as a fresh and emergent theme in their lives. Without purposive snowballing, it would have been unlikely that any such individuals would have made their way into my sample.

Since marked differences appeared during the course of my data collection that really begged further exploration, I chose to engage in some theoretical sampling (Strauss and Corbin 1998). My theoretical sampling was centered on age and "degree of outness." Although I started by pursing a wide range of ages in my sample, I developed theoretical justification for sampling more participants under the age of 25. While completing the transcription and open coding of these early interviews, I realized that I needed to focus more on exploring what coming out means to those who are newly engaged in the process. Simply put, younger populations are growing up in an environment of increasingly open dialog concerning sexuality (especially since 1993, when sexual orientation increasing entered mainstream conversations) and this came through in the data. I had already decided to theoretically sample individuals who were early in their coming out processes. But, now I had a theoretical basis for sampling individuals who are also quite young. I still completed my data collection with 10 participants over the age of 25, but having 20 participants under 25 enabled me to further explore the contemporary meanings of coming out, and gain more insight on recent developments in identity formation and maintenance.

There is a fair amount of diversity among the 30 participants in this study. The sample is diverse in terms of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, education, and social class. Considering how most studies on coming out are about 90 percent white, the participants in this sample are relatively racially/ethnically diverse. Of the 30 participants, 18 are white, 4 Latino, 2 bi-racial, 2 Jewish, 1 Indian, 1 Muslim-Arab, 1 Mediterranean, and 1 Viking (participants designated their race/ethnicity in their own words). The sample consists of 12 men and 18 women (two of which maintain a decidedly fluid gender identity). In terms of their present sexual orientation, 15 participants identify as gays, 9 as lesbians, 3 as queer, 1 as pansexual,

and 2 prefernot to identify. Theoretical sampling enabled me to seek participants who vary based on their "degree of outness," at least in terms of the outward disclosure of their sexual orientation. Participants ranged from those who have disclosed their sexuality to only two or three people to those who consider themselves "completely out."

All data were collected via face-to-face open interviews conducted by me. This approach gave me the ability to collect narrative accounts that detail the meaning of coming out, how participants disclosed their LGBQ identity to others (or not), and whether and how different factors affected the coming out process. The use of open interviews also enabled me to inductively uncover any other phenomena that may not have been discovered under the use of a more rigidly structured interview format. Consistent with the aims of grounded theory, my "questions are sufficiently general to cover a wide range of experiences and narrow enough to elicit and elaborate the participant's experience" (Charmaz 2006:29). Interviews lasted 90 minutes on average.

Analysis began with open coding, which was followed by focused coding (Charmaz 2006), and the utilization of the constant comparative method. Initial or open coding was conducted through line-by-line coding, which kept me focused on the data and therefore, left less opportunity to impose extant theories or personal beliefs on my data (Charmaz 2000). Sensitizing concepts (such as influence of family, support from friends, etc.) provided the starting points for organizing some of my analyses, but they did not serve as ending points to which I forcibly directed my data analysis. I then engaged in focused coding, which was more conceptual than my initial coding and therefore, allowed me to categorize initial codes into broader conceptual themes. Throughout my entire coding process, I followed the recommendations of both Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2000) to participate in memo writing.

The Meaning of Coming Out

> The way I define coming out is coming out to my parents because everyone I met and talked to, you know, my colleagues, my professors, my friends, they all knew I was queer. But, my parents never knew. (Ari)

At the onset of this study, I set out to discover what "coming out" means to individuals in the LGBQ community. In the most general sense, coming out is often compared to *telling* or *storytelling*. For example, in the case of mental health patients, individuals must often engage in the telling of their condition – such as in the workplace or around new friends (Goffman 1974). Some participants in the current study even used the word "telling" in discussing their coming out experiences. For example, Ram, a 21-year-old gay male, discussed how he became "addicted to telling." As he explained, "every little person I told I feel like a knot was undone." Or, as stated by Gabrielle, a 22-year-old lesbian, "coming out is a way of telling others who you are." Coming out, or even telling, therefore, assumes that there is something that needs disclosing, something that requires sharing. Taken one step further, it also implies that there currently exists a certain level of secrecy around a particular topic (hence, the analogy of "the closet").

Scholars such as Seidman, Meeks, and Traschen (1999) emphasize that contemporary identity disclosure is less focused on legitimating sexualities via coming out since non-heterosexual identities are becoming increasingly normalized. That is, LGBQ persons are less likely to experience secrecy and social isolation, so "the closet" is not as repressive as it once was. The normalization of LGBQ identities casts doubt on the relevance of coming out as a necessary part of identity formation and maintenance. However, every single participant in this study acknowledged engaging in coming out. Evidence from my interviews challenges the notion that coming out is no longer a relevant concept. Coming out is a personal and social process that appears to be omnipresent so long as we operate within a heteronormative society. As seen in the opening quote, the face of coming out may be changing. Many teens and young adults are assumed gay in certain contexts. The *assumption* that someone is gay is oftentimes based on physical identifiers that are stereotypically associated with gay culture or a gender presentation based in gender non-conformity (e.g., a masculine female). But, even those who are assumed to be gay still engage in some form of coming out.

What is Coming Out?

Across the body of research on coming out, we have already seen that substantial variability exists in the *meaning* of coming out. If there is variability in the meaning attached to coming out within academia, then it is likely that there is variability among its use within the LGBQ community too – and this study serves as evidence of such variability. It should come as no surprise then that even the word "meaning" has multiple interpretations. For example, when asked: "What does coming out *mean* to you?" my respondents interpreted the word "meaning" differently, yielding a variety of responses. I set out to learn more about what coming out means to each individual (i.e., what it entails). One participant, Eden, proceeded to tell me somewhat philosophically how coming out means "to live life openly and honestly." Many other individuals started by defining the term broadly (as in a definition) and then explaining how it relates to their lives. Throughout the interviews some resounding themes emerged, such as coming out to oneself, coming out to family/friends, and coming out as full disclosure, among others.

Coming Out to Oneself

One of the most ignored elements of coming out is whether or not "coming out to oneself" is part of the equation. Some scholars maintain that self-acceptance or self-affirmation is part of coming out. But, if coming out is the *public* disclosure of one's sexual identity (as many scholars posit), then logic would dictate that self-acceptance – an internal process – must be a prerequisite for coming out rather than a part of coming out. As one respondent, Athena, put it, "you have to come out to yourself before you come out to others." Athena seems to be indicating self-acceptance as a prerequisite to coming out. However, she later recognized that although her vision of coming out does include the public disclosure of her identity to others, coming out "has more to do with accepting yourself than other people accepting you." Based on the data in this study, self-acceptance is quite central to coming out and not merely a prerequisite.

Across many interviews, the discussion of coming out to oneself was an emergent trend. Not

only were participants discussing the importance of self-acceptance, but in some cases they were referring to self-acceptance as being synonymous to coming out. Pao, a 24-year-old female who identifies as gay, mirrors this sentiment that self-affirmation *is* coming out.

> For me, coming out is accepting *me*, accepting who I am – I'm gay, that's it. Telling myself – not really coming out. I just find that so cliché that people think that coming out is just practically making a speech, like, "hey everybody…" Not really. Coming out is me accepting me – nobody else, just me.

Incidentally, with the exception of her sister, Pao has not come out to any of her family. But, she does intend to. It is just that disclosure to her family is not a defining element of her coming out story, nor is it a part of what coming out means to her.

Another participant, Kelly, agreed that, at least for her, coming out means purely coming out to oneself.

> Coming out, in terms of myself, would probably be me accepting myself for loving who I want to love and not doing what society tells me – you know, like, loving who I *should* love. That, to me, is coming out. There are other definitions, you know, like telling people about it, but that's never been something I've felt like I've had to do only because I was lucky and I knew I would have support no matter what.

Kelly was very careful in qualifying why self-acceptance was synonymous with coming out for her, but why coming out likely has a broader meaning for other people. In her evaluation, self-acceptance is more central to her coming out since she has such strong external support from others. Kelly's family had been proactive in letting her know that she would be loved regardless of her sexual orientation, and they conveyed this through concrete action. Kelly describes a phone call she received from her mother during her freshman year of college – while Kelly was still unsure about her sexuality. "She's like 'Kelly, are you a lesbian or what? Do I need to, like, buy you a coming out cake or something?' It really was awesome. I knew that if I ever..." Kelly conveyed that, from that point forward, she took solace in her family's support and looked at her coming out as purely a personal journey of self-acceptance.

More common in the current study was the inclusion of "coming out to oneself" as one element in a broader meaning that individuals ascribe to coming out. Self-acceptance was frequently depicted as an initial step in coming out. In fact, of the 30 participants in the sample, exactly half of them (15) indicated coming out to oneself as being a central element in their meaning of coming out. Most participants were very clear that coming out to oneself was not a prerequisite to coming out; rather, it was a major part of coming out – of the process itself. Even though most agreed that coming out to oneself was part of the process, there was some disagreement. For example, Carly, a 22-year-old female who identifies as queer, spoke of coming out to oneself as both a part of the process and a prerequisite:

> Coming out to yourself is part of the process. I know people who, on a regular basis, sleep with people of the same gender, yet, do not even think to themselves that they can be anything other than straight. I don't get that at all, but I feel like that's an important part of, yeah, coming out to yourself. I think of it as a prerequisite.

Veronica, a 20-year-old female who identifies as a lesbian, embodied the notion that coming out means both 1) coming out to oneself, and 2) coming out to others. As Veronica put it, "coming out, I think, for me...it's two steps – coming out to yourself, which was the hardest step, for me, and coming out to the people in your life…letting them know who you are." Veronica's discussion of these two elements to coming out went well beyond this single statement. As is the case with other participants who saw coming out to oneself as one part of a broader meaning to coming out, she discussed it often. In fact, her reference to a two-prong meaning came up organically earlier in our interview – before I delved into any questions on the meaning of coming out.

> I just came out with it to Matty [one of her close guy friends]. I had come out to myself probably the – well, kind of – like, I didn't let it process all the way. I had kind of come out to myself probably the same week because I was trying to be, like, the aspiring psychology major in high school and I sat myself down in front of a mirror and I, whenever I had a breakdown – sometimes I do that – I'll just vent almost to myself and go on an uncensored rant, and it slipped out of my mouth that I'd fallen in love with all of these people, these girls, in my past, and, I mean, it was out there, but it was like my brain was still fighting it a little bit until I hung out with Matty and I just said it, and once it was out there it was just like [whistling sound] – tssouuh – free. And then, from that point, I told a couple of other people.

Here, Veronica conveys not only that the meaning of coming out has two elements but that they combine to create a sense of having truly come out. Coming out to herself gave her the confidence to come out to Matty, but self-acceptance alone was not enough to constitute the meaning she ascribes to coming out. Veronica did not feel as if coming out was a completed process at that point. Still, from that moment forward she had a sense that her coming out was becoming familiar, comfortable, and progressive. Coming out to herself verbally in the mirror made it real, and telling Matty made coming out a symbol of liberation.

Another clear example of coming out to oneself as part of the larger meaning attributed to coming out came from Brandon, a 19-year-old gay male. As Brandon saw it, coming out is "a three-step process." He spoke first about how coming out means "coming out within and having that self-realization of your sexuality." Following this process, there is "an initial disclosing of your sexual identity to those around you – your peers, people you go to school with." Then, he lastly spoke about "the disclosing of your identity where the topic just happens to specifically come up." So, the meaning Brandon attributes to coming out goes one step further than Veronica in that he alludes to coming out as an ongoing, unending process driven by new circumstances and new situations. But, both Veronica and Brandon shared the sentiment of many participants in this study: coming out to oneself is part of the meaning of coming out, but self-acceptance alone does not account for the entire meaning of coming out.

Coming out to oneself was central to the meaning of coming out more often for individuals who identified their sexual orientation as queer, fluid, pansexual, or open. Research suggests that coming out is more of a necessity for people who are interested only in members of the same sex (i.e., gay or lesbian) than for bisexuals (McLean 2007). In the case of bisexuality or various open

identities (e.g., pansexual, fluid), individuals are not as easily identifiable on the basis of with whom they engage in relationships. Considering our society's insistence on binary logic (gay/straight, male/female), those who have attractions for both men and women, multiple genders, or those who do not use gender as a determinate for choosing a mate are often misunderstood (Lucal 2008). Western societies' socially constructed, dualistic framework makes coming out more problematic for individuals who are bisexual, queer, fluid, or pansexual. For example, a bisexual woman who is currently engaged in a relationship with another woman will be perceived as gay – that is, bisexuality cannot be understood by a single situational observation. Such realities make the public disclosure of one's sexuality less central to the meaning of coming out.

Coming out to Others

Aside from the two participants whose meanings of coming out were rooted only in coming out to oneself, every other participant shared a meaning for coming out that included some form of coming out to others. I should qualify this statement by mentioning that the term "coming out to others" was not found in any of my interviews. Rather, it is a useful way for me to encompass the two most common themes outside of coming out to oneself: 1) coming out to family/friends, and 2) coming out as "full disclosure." These two elements of coming out both include the disclosure of one's sexuality to another person (i.e., coming out to others). The interviews of a select few participants included mention of both coming out to family/friends and coming out as full disclosure. But, for the most part, participants mentioned only one or the other. Those participants who cited coming out as full disclosure mentioned very little about coming out to family/friends in discussing the meaning of coming out. This finding likely has to do with the methodological differentiation between a necessary cause and a sufficient cause. Coming out to family/friends is a necessary cause for full disclosure, while full disclosure is a sufficient cause for coming out to family and friends. So, those who talked about coming out as meaning full disclosure inferentially provided sufficient cause for coming out to family/friends.

One important item to remember here is that I am not concerned so much with to whom individuals do or do not disclose their sexuality or in which social arena. I am concerned with *what coming out means to each individual*. Although the discussion of meaning often includes details related to whom they chose to disclose their sexuality and in what setting, individuals having disclosed their sexuality to family/friends does not automatically imply that their meaning of coming out includes coming out to family/friends. Such was demonstrated by Kelly above in the section on coming out to oneself. Kelly had disclosed her sexuality to some family and friends, but, to her, the meaning of coming out was purely a matter of self-acceptance and self-affirmation.

Coming out to Family/Friends

Among all of the various meanings participants attributed to coming out, coming out to family/friends was the most common. However, there is definitely variation in what "family" or "friends" means from person to person. For one participant, Brian, family refers specifically to his parents, while for another participant, Carly, the discussion focused more broadly on those people closest to her. Although coming out to family/friends was a highly prevalent theme across the interviews, relatively few participants cited it as the lone element in their meaning of coming out. But, there were a few exceptions – three to be exact: Ari, Nathan, and Adam. This study opened with a quote from Ari, a 28-year-old who identifies as a lesbian. As Ari put it:

> The way I define coming out is coming out to my parents because everyone I met and talked to, you know, my colleagues, my professors, my friends, they all knew I was queer, but my parents never knew.

After reflecting on this statement, Ari revisited the meaning of coming out later in the interview. She went on to specify that coming out means more to her than simply telling her parents. "Coming out means telling the people who are closest to you… telling the people who matter, and I suppose I'd have to define 'matter' – it would be parents, close relatives, close friends." This statement represents a common trend in the meaning of coming out seen throughout this study. The words "family" and "friends" were typically used to refer to those people in one's social network with whom one has high levels of interaction, strong ties, and more meaningful relationships. Extended family and distant friends and acquaintances were rarely spoken about within the context of these conversations, except to point out that coming out to such persons was not central to their meaning of coming out. Those participants who felt that the meaning of coming out includes disclosing their sexuality to extended family and distant peers were also the participants who believed in coming out as "full disclosure" – which will be discussed more below.

Adam, a 20-year-old gay male, mirrored Ari's meaning of coming out. Adam discussed broadly how, for him, coming out means disclosing his sexuality to his parents and his close friends. As Adam sees it, the reason that he places so much emphasis on coming out to his parents is because of how long they have known him under an assumption of heterosexuality. "No one's going to be harder to come out to than your parents because they had 14 years to get used to the person that they thought they were raising, with the ideals they thought I was going to have, and the future they thought I was going to have." This, he explains, is why family and close friends are central to his meaning of coming out – these relationships are rooted in longer histories and therefore, greater assumptions. Adam talks a great deal about coming out to other people as well – new friends, acquaintances, co-workers – but these interactions are not central to what coming out means to him. Simply put, there is very little at stake with these more distant relationships.

> The initial impetus of coming out to my parents, my friends – that was tough. But, with every day, every new person I meet it gets a little bit easier, just because I've done it before and I know who I am and who I can depend on, and if it's not the person I'm talking to, that's fine…

Much more common was the inclusion of coming out to family/friends as one element in a much broader meaning of coming out. More often than not, coming out to family/friends was combined with coming out to oneself, although it was occasionally paired with coming out as full disclosure.

Those participants who spoke about multiple elements to their meaning of coming out rarely referenced any series of fixed "stages" or "steps" that they went through or are going through while coming out. In fact, the only examples of such steps were already shown above in the statements of Brandon and Veronica. Other participants simply saw coming out as having various elements to the meaning, but they never explicitly stated a "formula" for coming out.

Of the participants who spoke about coming out as meaning both coming out to oneself and coming out to family/friends, there was sometimes a hint of time-order in their wording. As stated by Rachel, a 20-year-old female who identifies as gay:

> [Coming out means] coming to terms with who you are and how you feel about who you want to be with, who you want to date, who you feel comfortable with, and who you're attracted to. And, first of all, coming to terms with it yourself and accepting it, and usually telling people you are around and letting them, you know, decide "Oh, this is ok with me…" I feel like you need to accept yourself before you can let, you know, be able to let others accept you.

Although Rachel iterated a this-before-that causality in her statement, more common was the simple mentioning of both coming out to oneself and coming out to family/friends. Even when causality was not explicitly stated, participants almost always spoke about coming out to oneself before talking about coming out to others. For instance, the meaning of coming out according to Hannah, an 18-year-old female who identifies as gay, is "not just knowing that you're gay or bisexual, but being okay with it, and having the people that are close to you that you want to know – letting them know." Lee, a 20-year-old gay male, simplifies the connection even further. Coming out is, "acceptance of yourself, acceptance of your friends knowing who you are." One exception to this implicit or explicit one-way causality was demonstrated by Alex, a 24-year-old female who identifies as gay. "I came out to Pam. That was when I came out to myself. And then it was a half-hour of panicking madness." Alex is referencing the first vocal declaration of her sexuality to one of her best friends, Pam. It was not until that moment when she heard herself utter the words out loud that she began to totally accept herself (i.e., identify) as gay. So, coming out to oneself need not always precede coming out to others.

Whether or not coming out to oneself was achieved prior to coming out to family/friends, one thing is certain: coming out to those within one's social circle is not simply about telling. It is about gaining acceptance, and even more importantly – it is about liberation and validation. In fact, the discussion of validation was central to Gabrielle's explanation of why coming out to family/friends was an essential part of her meaning of coming out:

> You come out because you want to be validated, that it's OK. So, it's either coming out to your parents, and them being like "it's OK" or something inside of you and you can't keep it inside yourself because you're too depressed about it, but you want to get validated…it's a sort of validation, and it's a form of being proud of who you are…at the end of the day, it's what you feel within yourself, and I think that coming out is a way of getting validated, validating yourself, and encompassing the pride part of it.

The notion of achieving liberation or receiving validation, both from within and from without, was by far strongest among participants who saw coming out to family/friends as central to the meaning of coming out.

In discussing the liberating power of coming out, participants sometimes implied liberation through the use of analogies. Kyle spoke of how coming out "was a huge weight lifted off my shoulders because I had been struggling with that for a while." She was speaking more specifically to the elation she felt after coming out to her mom. Ram, a 21-year-old gay male, spoke about how coming out to his family and friends was an "unburdening." The most colorful analogy came from Alex, who is both a poet and an artist:

> Coming out is owning it, identifying as it, just letting people see it, and even if you are a little bit ashamed of it at first, it's sort of like that good burn, you know, like the first time you go and get a really good, deep-tissue Swedish massage, and the next day you just feel like shit, and the day after it you're like, "Wow, I feel better now, I can actually move more." So, coming out, for me, was like getting a Swedish massage – you can quote me on that.

Other participants that emphasized elation as a result of coming out frequently used singular words, like "happy," "free," "open," "honest," "proud," and "real" to describe the feeling that followed coming out to family/friends. I often felt such a positive shift in the interviews upon engaging in this portion of the discussion, which reiterates the centrality of coming out to others in the meaning of coming out for so many people. Of course, for many people, the meaning of coming out goes well beyond coming out to family/friends. For about one third of the participants in this study, the meaning of coming out can be more aptly described as "full disclosure."

Coming Out as Full Disclosure

> To me [coming out] is just finally being able to be completely yourself in all facets of life. If you're coming out, then you're coming out and you just need to be out. And, I know that's not always the case, and it took me a little bit longer than I wanted it to be. But, I think that eventually, when you come out, it should be out to everyone. (Renee)

For many people, coming out was not limited to the select few family members and friends that make up one's inner circle. Coming out may mean disclosing one's sexuality to any and everyone, including extended family, casual friends, acquaintances, co-workers, classmates, neighbors, or just people on the street. Much of the conversation surrounding coming out as full disclosure revolves around the idea that to come out means to be yourself in *every* setting, or as Renee put it, "to be completely yourself in all facets of life."

Most participants agreed that, given an idyllic setting, they would be out entirely. In fact, some participants flat out stated that they loathe the process, and the social expectations that people with non-heterosexual identities are expected to share their sexuality with others. Brian, a 20-year-old male who identifies as queer, emphasized this when discussing the meaning he attributes to coming out, "I think everyone should come out…straight people should have to come out as straight, and queer people as queer. I just don't like how it's assumed that everyone is straight – everyone's one way." But, in spite of the

current social climate regarding sexuality, Brian still maintains that coming out means publicly disclosing one's sexuality broadly to whomever is interested in knowing.

Part of the ideology behind full disclosure is the notion that "if someone doesn't accept me for me, then I don't want to be associated with them anyway." As Veronica explained, "I definitely have always had the tendency to always let people know, almost as soon as possible, that I cannot just waste my time with them if they're gonna reject that part of me." She goes on to state that coming out means full disclosure preceded by coming out to oneself.

> [Coming out means] all the way out, to the fullest extent. Not like: "I'm thinking about it" or "I'm curious." It's like: "You know, I'm gay, I identify as gay," letting them know. To me, that's "out," but I think there definitely is a two-step process, and I think the most difficult for me was definitely coming out to myself.

The one caveat to the idea that coming out means full disclosure is that an individual may choose to come out entirely within a particular social arena (e.g., an LGBQT organization in town); yet, refrain from coming out in other social arenas (e.g., one's family, close friends, or workplace). The most frequent example of this in my interviews involved those who were disinterested in or unable to come out in the workplace. In discussing how coming out means full disclosure, Gabrielle stated: "I'm very proud, so I don't think I would put a level on [how open she is about her sexuality] unless I'm working and that's a different situation." Because of the lack of sexual orientation-based employment protections in her home state, Gabrielle, who is as "out" as can be, is forced to place a figurative asterisk on her "full disclosure."

Since sexual orientation is not a protected class under employment law in many states, participants cited the need to keep their sexualities private in the workplace, regardless of what coming out means to them. Although employment restrictions may curb individuals' degree of outness in the workplace, they did not seem to alter individuals' meanings of coming out. Participants who saw coming out as full disclosure, yet were unable to come out at work, still maintained that full disclosure was their social goal and the meaning they attribute to coming out nonetheless. The meaning remained unchanged, regardless of the structural barriers that currently prevents one from being as out as one wishes.

The most extreme example of a barrier to full disclosure was seen in my interview with Michelle, a 25-year-old female who identifies as gay. Michelle has spent the past few years employed in the U.S. Armed Services, and still serves actively in the military. To Michelle, coming out means full disclosure, but due to her military career she is structurally unable to engage in full disclosure within all social arenas. At the time of our interview, the military was still enforcing Don't Ask Don't Tell, so her desire to engage in full disclosure was limited by her desire to keep her career intact. To a lesser degree, this same situation arose in various other interviews, and the exception always revolved around employment. It would be interesting to ascertain if this same interaction would arise for LGBQ persons residing in states that offered legal protections on the basis of sexual orientation.

Still, some participants maintained that coming out literally means true, *full* disclosure. Eden expressed perhaps the most open meaning of coming out as full disclosure, which is reinforced by her personal mantra of living life openly and honestly.

> [Coming out] means if your family, friends, pets, neighbors, people walking down the street, people on the bus, anybody asks you a question that involves a statement about your sexual identity, orientation, gender identity, and expression, then you would divulge. To me, coming out means everywhere I go, someone's going to hear about it if it comes up in conversation.

Arielle, a 24-year-old who identifies as a lesbian, mirrored the sentiment that full disclosure is in fact *full* disclosure preceded by self-affirmation. To her, coming out means gaining self-acceptance of her sexual orientation and "sharing it with everyone regardless of repercussions, whether positive or negative." But, many participants, such as Eden and Arielle, recognize that the meaning they personally ascribe to coming out may not necessarily be congruent with the meaning held by other people. Coming out is a unique experience that depends on a number of social factors, and so the meaning of coming out varies substantially as well.

Discussion and Conclusion

Coming out is an important element in the lives of LGBQ persons, and it is widely considered to be a crucial element in the development of a healthy sexual identity among members of the LGBQ community. It may serve a multitude of functions, not the least of which is self-affirmation and the public disclosure of a non-heterosexual identity. As this study demonstrates, coming out is not the same for everyone. Individuals have varied experiences with coming out, and this is evident in the different meanings participants attributed to coming out.

The meaning of coming out varies on the basis of one's life circumstances, social environments, and personal beliefs and values. A singular meaning of coming out cannot be derived without ignoring the broad variation seen across the participants in this study. All 30 participants did agree on one thing: coming out is a transformative, ongoing process – a career. For some participants, this transformation was more a personal journey of self-affirmation. Still, for most participants, coming out means much more than just "coming out to oneself." For most participants, coming out means (at least in part) the sharing of their sexuality with others. This includes disclosing their sexuality to family and close friends, or perhaps even disclosing their sexuality to any and everyone (i.e., full disclosure). Participants most commonly referenced both coming out to oneself and coming out to others as being central to the meaning of coming out.

Aside from detailing the variety of meanings associated with coming out, the single most important contribution of the current study is the finding that coming out is still a relevant concept related to sexual identity formation and maintenance. Seidman, Meeks, and Traschen (1999), as well as other contemporary sexuality scholars, contend that coming out is no longer focused on legitimating sexualities via an outward disclosure. True enough, for two participants in this study coming out was only about self-affirmation

– and not about disclosure at all. Still, coming out was important to them and their sexualities. Evidence from my interviews challenges the notion that coming out is a thing of the past. Every single participant in the current study actively engaged in coming out, and they each considered coming out central to their life trajectories.

Coming out is both a personal and a social process that appears to be omnipresent as long as we operate within a heteronormative society. The face of coming out may be changing – many teens and young adults are assumed gay by friends and family. The assumption that someone is gay is typically based on outward characteristics that are stereotypically associated with gay culture or a gender presentation based in gender non-conformity (e.g., a masculine female). But, even those who are assumed to be gay still engage in some form of coming out. Consider a teenage girl who is assumed gay, yet confronted by her best friend about her sexuality nonetheless: she will still be faced with matters of self-affirmation and potentially a confirmatory disclosure to her friend – both of which are examples of coming out. Even if her sexuality never becomes a public matter, she will still manage the process of coming out to herself.

Most researchers that study coming out refer to coming out as a purely external endeavor. An overstated focus on the visible element of coming out – that is the public disclosure of a sexual identity – can skew the achievement of a full understanding of the concept of coming out. Public media and the heterosexual majority often frame coming out entirely as a matter of "outing" oneself to others. But, presuming such a thing limits the scope of research. Kitsuse (1980) warns against conceiving of coming out as only a matter of secrecy and disclosure. Although Kitsuse is speaking of "coming out" as it relates more broadly to anyone defined by another person as a deviant, his point resonates with the current study. His contention is that, in order to study coming out, special attention must be granted to "the issue of the social affirmation of self" (Kitsuse 1980:1). Coming out is not simply about satisfying the moral majority. Rather, coming out serves as a way to challenge social conventions and expert opinions, and affirm a positive sense of self.

Plenty of people engage in self-acceptance and affirmation, yet have no interest in disclosing their sexuality to other people. The finding from this study that, for some people, the meaning of coming out is entirely a matter of self acceptance challenges the definitions utilized by many scholars in which coming out is defined only as an external endeavor. The notion that coming out can be a purely internal process problematizes research that assumes a heterocentric model of coming out which focuses solely on explaining difference to others. Considering the frequency with which participants spoke of coming out to oneself as being central to the meaning of coming out, "coming out" should be conceptualized as a process that includes self-affirmation (i.e., coming out to oneself).

Participants who are further removed from conventional dualistic thinking (i.e., they think beyond a gender binary) are more inclined to de-emphasize coming out to family and friends and focus instead on coming out as a personal journey of self-affirmation. Young people appear to be identifying with more *open* sexual identities, such as pansexual, queer, and fluid. As these sexualities continue to emerge, we will likely see the meaning of coming out change across time. We know very little about coming out among people who identify as pansexual or fluid, but research on bisexuality may provide a clue. People who identify as bisexual, when compared to those who identify as gay or lesbian, are less likely to come out to others (Weinberg et al. 1994; McLean 2007).

Part of the difficulty associated with disclosing a bisexual identity is that few people in the general population understand anything about bisexuality (Bradford 2004). As newly emerging sexual identities, pansexuality and fluidity are generally even less understood than bisexuality. Even among the participants in this study, many people were unfamiliar with pansexuality. The lack of public understanding over newly emerging identities may explain why the meaning of coming out among people who identify as pansexual, queer, or fluid is more about self-affirmation than anything else. Perhaps in the coming years we will see an increase in the volume of people who perceive coming out as a purely personal journey.

The meaning of coming out held by most participants still includes some element of coming out to others. However, there appears to be a fairly even split between those who emphasize coming out to family/friends *versus* those who emphasize coming out to any and everyone (i.e., coming out as "full disclosure"). As was the case with coming out to oneself, those who stress coming out as being a matter of full disclosure are oftentimes individuals who maintain fluid or open sexualities. But, this is not always the case. Many gay and lesbian participants also emphasized full disclosure as a central element in the meaning they attribute to coming out. It may be that, as non-heterosexual identities continue to gain acceptance, coming out will be more about full disclosure since individuals will have less to fear about sharing their sexuality. Then again, as posited by Seidman, Meeks, and Traschen (1999), increased normalization of all sexualities may simply make the public disclosure of one's sexuality unnecessary. Follow-up interviews with the participants in this study may shed some light on the effect of increased public acceptance on coming out.

One of the biggest challenges with any qualitative study is obtaining a diverse sample. This difficulty is magnified when the study involves a "hidden" population such as sexual minorities. Although, like many other studies on coming out, I had a hard time obtaining racial diversity in the sample, the most challenging characteristic upon which to draw diversity is what I call "degree of outness." LGBQ persons who *have* engaged in coming out are well represented in literature on coming out. However, few studies include samples of people who have *not* engaged in any coming out. Although my sample includes participants who have come out to differing degrees, very few of my participants have disclosed their sexuality to only one or two people. The meaning and related experiences of coming out are likely very different amongst those who have and are newly engaged in coming out. So, I have to recognize this as a limitation of the study. Although there are a few other limitations to the current study (small sample size, lack of participants who identify as black or presently identify as bisexual), the findings and subsequent implications far outweigh the limitations.

The overall issue of *meaning* presents a methodological concern for studying coming out, and

any other social phenomena for that matter. As evidenced in this study, individuals attach a variety of meanings to coming out, and these meanings vary based on their individual lived experiences. Future research on coming out should take into account the variety in meaning when designing studies – or at least recognize the limitations of using a finite definition of the concept. An assumption of shared meaning should not be made without considering the disparate impact such a practice will have on the outcome of the study. At the very least, researchers should share their meaning of coming out with participants so that study participants can understand the researcher's position on the concept and therefore, provide more meaningful, valid responses to questions. Otherwise, the disconnect between researchers' intent with and participants' understanding of a concept may lead to biased findings. After all, research findings are typically analyzed and written up based on the researcher's conceptualization or operationalization of the phenomena under scrutiny – not the participants.

Participants in the current study spoke freely about their entire trajectory of coming out – from early affinities to eventual identities. Future research on coming out should continue to focus on the entire career of coming out rather than how coming out relates to a person's present identity. Most of the interesting themes and trends that emerged from my data would have been missed had I relied on speaking only about participants' present identities. As the popular adage goes "the journey is more important than the destination." It is not the identity itself, but rather the process of identifying, that informs us about social trends and symbolic meaning associated with coming out.

References

Appleby, George Alan. 2001. "Ethnographic Study of Gay and Bisexual Working-Class Men in the United States." *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 12(3/4):51-62.

Bradford, Mary. 2004. "The Bisexual Experience." *Journal of Bisexuality* 4(1/2):7-23.

Carpenter, Laura M. 2005. *Virginity Lost: an intimate portrait of first sexual experiences*. New York: New York University.

Charmaz, Kathy. 2000. "Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods." Pp. 509-535 in *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage.

Corsaro, William A. 1985. *Friendship and peer culture in the early years. Language and learning for human service professions*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

Crawley, Sara and K. L. Broad. 2004. "Be Your (Real Lesbian) Self." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 33(1): 39-71.

Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. 1967. *The discovery of grounded theory; strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing.

Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity*. New York: J. Aronson.

Griffith, Kristin H. and Michelle R. Hebl. 2002. "The Disclosure Dilemma for Gay Men and Lesbians: 'Coming Out' at Work." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 87(6):1191-1199.

Groves, Robert M. et al. 2009. *Survey Methodology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Gubrium, Jaber F. and James A. Holstein. 2002. *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Johnston, Lon B. and David Jenkins. 2003. "Coming Out in Mid-Adulthood: Building a New Identity." *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 16(2):19-42.

Katz, Jonathan. 2007. *The invention of heterosexuality: with a new preface*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kitsuse, John I. 1980. "Coming Out All Over: Deviants and the Politics of Social Problems." *Social Problems* 28(1):1-13.

Lincoln, Yvonna S. and Egon G. Guba. 2000. "Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences." Pp. 163-188 in *Handbook of qualitative research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lucal, Betsy. 2008. "Building Boxes and Policing Boundaries: (De)Constructing Intersexuality, Transgender, and Bisexuality." *Sociology Compass* 2(2):519-536.

McLean, Kirsten. 2007. "Hiding in the Closet?: Bisexuals, Coming Out and the Disclosure Imperative." *Journal of Sociology* 43(2):151-166.

Merighi, Joseph R. and Marty D. Grimes. 2000. "Coming Out to Families in a Multicultural Context." *Families in Society* 81(1):32-41.

Oswald, Ramona Faith. 1999. "Family and Friendship Relationships After Young Women Come Out as Bisexual or Lesbian." *Journal of Homosexuality* 38(3):65-83.

Rust, Paula C. 1993. "'Coming Out' in the Age of Social Constructionism: Sexual identity formation among lesbian and bisexual women." *Gender and Society* 7(1):50-77.

Savin-Williams, Ritch C. 1989. "Coming out to Parents and Self-esteem among Gay and Lesbian Youths." *Journal of Homosexuality* 18(1/2):1-35.

Savin-Williams, Ritch C. 1998. "The Disclosure to Families of Same-sex Attractions by Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youths." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 8(1):49-68.

Savin-Williams, Ritch C. 2001. *Mom, dad. I'm gay. How families negotiate coming out*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Seidman, Steven, Chet Meeks, and Francie Traschen. 1999. "Beyond the Closet? The Changing Social Meaning of Homosexuality in the United States." *Sexualities* 2(1):9-34.

Shallenberger, David. 1996. "Reclaiming the Spirit: the Journeys of Gay Men and Lesbian Women toward Integration." *Qualitative Sociology* 19(2):195-215.

Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin. 1998. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Waldner, Lisa K. and Brian Magruder. 1999. "Coming Out to Parents." *Journal of Homosexuality* 37(2):83-100.

Weinberg, Martin S., Colin J. Williams, and Douglas W. Pryor. 1994. *Dual Attraction: Understanding Bisexuality*. New York: Harrington Park Press.

Guittar, Nicholas A. 2013. "The Meaning of Coming Out: From Self-Affirmation to Full Disclosure." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):168-187. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Paul Sargent

San Diego State University, U.S.A.

Reluctant Role Models: Men Teachers and the Reproduction of Hegemonic Masculinity

Abstract In-depth interviews with men teachers and other key personnel in early childhood education (ECE) revealed that the men are attempting to perform a type of subordinate masculinity that could challenge traditional gender relations. However, their attempts are thwarted by the gender regime embedded in the occupational structure, particularly the demand that they perform as "male role models" for the boys in their classes. This means that they are prescribed to perform in stereotypical ways and to purposely model traditional masculinity to boys, thereby inculcating hegemonic norms of masculinity.

Keywords Masculinities; Men Teachers; Male Role Models; Boys

Paul Sargent, Associate Professor of Sociology and the Director of the Center for Qualitative Research at San Diego State University. His research typically focused on the social construction of gender, particularly the construction of masculinities. The author of *Real Men or Real Teachers: Contradictions in the Lives of Men Elementary School Teachers*; "Sociology in the Academy: A Study in Contradictions?" (with Charles F. Hohm), *The American Sociologist*; "The Gendering of Men in Early Childhood Education," *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*; "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Men Caught in the Gender Bind of Early Childhood Education," *Journal of Men's Studies*; and "A Qualitative Comparison of the Effectiveness of Private and Public Refugee Resettlement Programs: The San Diego Case" (with Charles F. Hohm and Robert J. Moser), *Sociological Perspectives*. His research projects included a video recorded ethnography of a children's center, to determine if there were differences between the ways adults relate to girls and the ways they relate to boys, and a content analysis of *CSI*, a television crime series, to evaluate the program's representation of male and female victims.

In Memoriam

We would like to express our deep sorrow over the death of Dr. Paul W. Sargent, Associate Professor of the Sociology Department at San Diego State University, who passed away on February 20, 2013. He will be remembered for his academic accomplishments and commitment to research and teaching.

It is a great honor for us to publish his article in *Qualitative Sociology Review*.

Editorial Board
of *Qualitative Sociology Review*

The question of what constitutes "men's work" and "women's work" has been the focus of much feminist scholarship over the last thirty years (see, for example, Bradley 1989; Williams 1989; Reskin and Roos 1990; Dunn 1996). At the forefront of this body of work, and the central concern of most scholars, is the set of difficulties faced by women who cross over, or attempt to cross over, into occupational areas traditionally seen as men's work. This focus is clearly justified considering the fact that most extrinsic rewards, such as high pay, advancement, and prestige, are associated with men's work, thus contributing to women's lower social status relative to men.

To a lesser degree, there has been some interest in the lives of men who cross over into women's work. The literature on this issue is a mixed bag. There are those who argue that men who enter occupations such as nursing, social work, and early childhood education do so assuming, *a priori*, that they will succeed in terms of priority hiring, faster promotions, closer relations with administrators, and freedom from any forms of harassment (Williams 1992). Others contend that men may not intentionally seek these perquisites, but simply by virtue of their status as men, will receive them anyway (Uhlmann and Cohen 2005). Both arguments share the notion that even in women's work, men can use their access to patriarchal power to their advantage, including the potential to masculinize the workplace to their advantage.

There also exists a small, but growing, body of evidence suggesting that men who enter occupations such as early childhood education (ECE) and nursing meet with the same kinds of resistance and disfavor that women encounter when trying to access traditionally male occupations and must find ways to maneuver through the gender environment (Sargent 2005). This qualitative study adds to the latter body of work by presenting the results of in-depth interviews with several groups of personnel in ECE.

A Typology of Masculinities

Men and women are not homogeneous in the ways they present or perform (*do*) their gender. Instead, their performance is affected by the demands of the larger gender order and by the gender context of their immediate social landscape (Maccoby 1998; Messner 2000).

"Doing gender" has become a central analytic concept for feminists since it was widely presented to the scholarly community by West and Zimmerman in their 1987 article by the same name. They borrowed the ethnomethodological basis of the concept from Garfinkel (1967), but then recontextualized it to make it more applicable to a wider set of constructionist approaches to gender. In their narrative, they provide an alternative to the perspectives that framed gender as either a "role," an essential condition, or a psychological given. Instead, we see that gender is an accomplishment and each of us is accountable to others for properly demonstrating our masculinity or femininity by wearing the correct vestments, behaving appropriately, and engaging in gender-affirming activities, including having an appropriate occupation.

There is not a single set of accomplishments associated with being masculine, but several. Connell (1995) identified four ways in which men engage

with existing gender relations within a social milieu. He termed these four performances of masculinity hegemonic, complicit, marginalized, and subordinate. Hegemonic masculine practices are those that serve to normalize and naturalize men's dominance and women's subordination. Complicit masculinities are those that do not embody hegemonic processes *per se* but benefit from the ways in which hegemonic masculinities construct the gender order and local gender regimes in hierarchal fashion. Marginalized masculinities represent the adaptation of masculinities to such issues as race and class. Finally, subordinate masculinities are those behaviors and presentations of self that could threaten the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity. Gay men, effeminate men, and men who eschew competition or traditional definitions of success are examples frequently cited. To this list we can add men who care for children (Donaldson 1993; Sargent 2001). These men are vulnerable to being abused and ridiculed by others, both men and women.

Underlying and supporting the maintenance of gender hierarchies is the enforcement of "rules of compulsory heterosexuality" (Rich 1980). This means that homophobic ideas and practices provide the ideological foundation for the constant policing of heterosexual and homosexual masculinities (Connell 1992; Epstein 1997). Homophobia acts to normalize dominant gender ideologies and performances by creating fears of being seen as "different." Boys and men who reject or challenge hegemonic forms of masculine behaviors often live under a constant threat of emotional or physical violence (Pascoe 2007). In this study of men's lives in ECE, an important question that can be asked of the data is: What forms of masculinity are men in ECE doing and is their doing of gender a function of the men's desires or of cultural and institutional imperatives?

Method

My goal from the outset of this study was to speak with men teachers and caregivers about the very personal business of being men in a predominately women's occupation (Oakley 1981). I wanted to pose questions to men that are more often posed to women regarding their experiences entering and remaining in a gender-atypical work environment (Cohen 1991). In addition, I wanted to ask other significant actors in ECE to tell me about their experiences with men working in the field. Weiss called this forming a "panel of knowledgeable informants" (1995:73) and the narratives of these other participants were used to support the men's accounts, thus adding credibility to the study.

Participants

Thus far, I have interviewed 54 men working in ECE, 20 women who work in ECE alongside men, 10 elementary school principals, 6 pre-school or childcare center directors, and 8 faculty members in colleges of education. All participants were located in the western United States in California, Oregon, or Washington. Approximately one-half of the schools/centers are located in urban areas; the remainder, are equally distributed between suburban and rural locations.

Procedure

The data were gathered through in-depth interviews. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. I began with open-ended questions such as:

- "Tell me about getting into teaching." [men teachers]
- "Tell me about your experiences as the only man at your school." [men teachers]
- "Can you relate to me some of the things you have heard regarding the employment of men in early childhood education?" [all participants]
- "Describe for me some of the experiences you have had with men in your classroom (or program)." [faculty in colleges of education, principals and supervisors, women teachers]

Subsequent questions flowed from my list of prompts designed to elicit rich detail. Other questions concerned problems the participants had encountered in the course of their own work lives (Harper 1994). By asking the participants to "teach" me about their lives, I was making use of their normal communicative style (Briggs 1986).

The analysis of the interview data was an ongoing process and coding often took place during the transcription process itself. For the most part, codes were generated inductively, but some were taken from the existing literature (e.g., Hansot and Tyack 1988; Bradley 1989; 1993; Allan 1993; 1994), what Miles and Huberman would call a "start list" (1984:37). The first step was "open coding" (Strauss and Corbin 1990), which basically consists of combing the transcripts and noting segments of participants' narratives that seem in any way relevant to the research question at the heart of the project. As it became clear that some of the themes were beginning to be repeated, I proceeded to the next step in coding, focused coding, which consists of imposing the emerging themes back on the data in a more deductive style. That is, looking for further evidence of the existence of data that can be subsumed under each major code.

In general, the analysis followed the grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967) with some of the particular techniques coming from Spradley's (1979) Developmental Research Sequence, which made the process lend itself well to computer-aided analysis. All of the major themes I present in this research were confirmed to be in customary use in terms of being frequent, widespread, and collective (Becker and Geer 1960).

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the participants' narratives yielded several persistent themes. First, ECE is indeed a gendered occupation. All social actors within the milieu are expected to behave in gender-typical ways and gender deviance is met with disapproval and negative sanctions (Leidner 1991; Acker 1992). Second, there is a division of labor that assigns men tasks such as lifting, hauling, repairing, and discipline (Williams 1992) while, preventing them from close, nurturing interaction with children (Sargent 2001). Third, men must operate under conditions of extreme scrutiny and suspicion. There is a prevailing fear that the men might be gay or pedophiles and these two concepts are erroneously conflated. In addition, men are generally seen as being less than competent in areas concerning the care of children. These themes are treated in detail elsewhere (Allan 1994; King 1995; Sargent 2001) and will be only tangentially cited here when appropriate.

The theme that I detail in this paper is one that emerged during the initial analysis of the interview data, but has taken on fresh meaning recently because of a public debate that has erupted regarding the status of boys in school. In 2001, Christina Hoff Sommers published her controversial work, *The War Against Boys*, in which she boldly refuted prevailing claims that boys were the advantaged sex in the classroom. Her contention was that the classroom environment had become anti-boy through the imposition of theories and practices designed to assist girls in gaining ground. In the ensuing years, the battle over which sex is more likely to thrive in school has gathered participants from all around the ideological compass.

There are those who argue that boys are doing just fine relative to girls. AAUW recently published another in a series of working papers focusing on gender equity in education. In their latest publication (2008), the authors argued that any performance gaps seen in schools are more likely associated with race and class than with sex category. They also argue that on most indicators of educational success (graduation rates, test scores, etc.) girls and boys are fairly equal when demographic categories are taken into consideration and that both girls and boys continue to show improvement on the majority of indicators. Kimmel (2006) asserts that many of those who side with the "boys are in crisis" argument are actually using this position to further an all-out attack on feminism and feminists.

Some of those who contend that boys really are struggling in school argue that the routines of school are feminized to the point that boys' socialization prevents them from fitting and thriving (Pollack 1998). Others contend that boys' brains are hardwired in ways that hinder their learning in any but highly structured, competitive environments (Gurian 2009). Whether boys' struggles are considered a function of culture or biology, the same solution is typically suggested: hire more men. Putting men into the classroom is not a new idea, of course. For over a hundred years, there has been a call for more men teachers, primarily to control the behavior of boys and the current debate simply adds one more dimension.

From the interviews I conducted, it becomes clear that it is not simply a cry for more men that is being sounded, but, more specifically, a call for men who will serve as male role models for the boys in their classes – an expectation that is fraught with contradictions for both the men teachers and the children in their care, particularly the boys.

In interviews with men teachers, and other significant actors in ECE, the topic of male role model (MRM) arose in every interview. It were the participants themselves, never I, who brought the term into the conversation. From reading popular and scholarly literature, I had anticipated that the concept of role model would arise, but was surprised at the complex and contentious nature of the concept. There is not a single image of the MRM, but several, and these are often ambiguous and contradictory. These contradictory meanings, and the expectations they represent, create for the men a classic double bind: "situations in which options are reduced to a very few and all of them expose one to penalty, censure or deprivation" (Frye 1983:2).

Men as "Male Role Models"

The themes associated with the concept of MRM that emerged from the interviews can be organized into three categories. First, participants talked about being aware of a generalized discourse describing a desire for hiring more men. Second, a few participants addressed, albeit after prompting, the possible benefits for girls that might arise from men teachers' presence. Third, the majority of respondents suggested that men teachers affect the lives of boys and this happens in two ways. Indirectly, it is assumed that men will inject more discipline into the classroom, exert more control over the boys, and thus create a less chaotic learning environment. A more direct contribution arising from the presence of men is the provision of a model of masculinity that can be, ostensibly, emulated by the boys.

Hiring Men

All of the participants in my study were aware of the lack of men in ECE and made it very clear that they assumed this to be the reason behind my research. One of the first points most of them wanted to establish was that they considered a male presence to be, in some way, of value to the schools and to the children. However, only a few had any specific ideas regarding the actual benefits that might arise from men working in the occupation. As I stated earlier, my opening question was very general and of the form that Spradley (1979) would classify as a "grand tour question." This kind of question allows the respondents great freedom in constructing their initial responses and very quickly establishes for the interviewer some insights into the context that the participants will likely be constructing and employing as they respond to further probes.

There seemed to be general agreement that hiring men was a good idea, but the reasons given to support this were vague at best. Sometimes the reason for hiring men was presented as a concept that "everyone knows is true" without any supporting commentary.

An interesting pattern that recurs throughout the interviews is the frequency with which participants talked about the fact that they have (or should have) ***one*** man among their staff. The following examples support this. [In every case, the emphasis is mine.]

> Katherine (elementary school principal): Most schools want to have ***a*** man on staff. They will go to great lengths to hire ***one***.

> Jennifer (Head Start Director): Our parents are always so excited to see Gary. It's wonderful to have ***a*** man working here.

> Sylvia (a college of education faculty member): I'm always happy when I can place a male student at a site that has ***a*** male teacher.

> Barbara (elementary teacher): I have friends in other schools and they think we're so lucky to have ***a*** man.

There are several overlapping issues here. Participants seem to be saying that once the school has one man working there some objective has been achieved. Using Kanter's (1977) theory and model of tokenism, this theme can be interpreted a number of ways. The classic application of Kanter's theory is that the smaller the proportion of

"tokens," the less likely it is that they will have any power or agency in terms of effecting change on the workplace (Spangler, Gordon, and Pipkin 1978) or, more importantly for this study, of enacting an authentic self (Nelson 1993). Kanter also argued that having a member of the under-represented group can allow the dominant group to consider their organization "gender-neutral," thus allowing for trivialization of any minority complaints that might arise. Of course, this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy because the minority group learn quickly that complaints are not well received. Yoder (1991) argued that while Kanter's theory appears to be a rationale for hiring more tokens up to the extent at which a true gender-neutral workplace emerges, there is danger of a dominant backlash occurring once the majority of workers feel threatened by the changing composition.

But, how many tokens does it take to trigger a dominant backlash? And, are numbers really the salient issue? According to Turco (2010), this is dependent on the extent to which gender-specific characteristics are embedded in the workplace. As I point out in this research, cultural symbols (Reskin 1991), both positive, such as "motherhood," and negative, like "pedophile," are so intrinsic to the culture of ECE that perhaps even one man in the facility may be enough to evoke fears and suspicion in the incumbents.

Forms of the Male Role Model

Every participant in this study introduced the concept of the MRM into our conversation without being prompted to do so. The term is clearly a permanent fixture in the discourse regarding the issue of men in ECE. When asked to describe the concept of MRM that they themselves had introduced into the conversation, however, the participants typically asked me for my definition.

MRM is apparently in common use, but not in ways that would indicate there has been any degree of analysis of its meaning. People can readily incorporate the term into daily discourse without having to stop to think critically about what they are saying, much like the way that the use of stereotypes allows us to quickly communicate a set of ideas, knowing that the other person gets the essence of what we're saying, and move on.

The respondents' narrative would move along smoothly until I would ask for some clarification of the term. Then the conversation would take a turn similar to this exchange with Norman (second-grade teacher):

> Me: How does being a male role model positively contribute to the children's school experience?
>
> Norman: Depends on what you mean by male role model.
>
> Me: Well, I'm simply interested in the definition you had in mind when you said that it's good for children to be around male role models.
>
> Norman: Oh, I guess I just meant being around men.
>
> Me: OK. That's fine. I'm interested in anything about men that you suspect is likely to contribute to the children's learning experience.
>
> Norman: Well, as I said, just being around a man for a change is probably good in some way.

Even a direct request for a definition resulted in confusion.

> Me: Tell me what you mean by male role model.
>
> Katherine (elementary school principal): I'm not sure what you're asking.
>
> Me: Earlier, you said that it's good for children to have a male role model and I'd just like to hear your description of this.
>
> Katherine: I suppose I just mean all the things a male brings to the job.
>
> Me: Can you give me some examples?
>
> Katherine: You know, just the masculine perspective, the male side of things.

Once I reminded them that this was *their* phrase, they began to frame their responses in terms of what they perceived parents want for their sons and, sometimes, daughters. Two distinct forms of MRM emerged from the participants' narratives: one for girls and one for boys.

Modeling for Girls

For the girls in their classrooms, the participants unanimously declared that mothers wanted their daughters to be exposed to a "new man" (non-traditional) who would not behave in stereotypical masculine ways.

> Dave (third-grade teacher): They need to see that men are not the kind of people that will leave their families, um, that will beat their kids, that will withhold their child support, that will get drunk on Friday nights, or whatever.
>
> Barbara (kindergarten teacher): I would say it's abundantly clear that moms want their girls to have a male teacher who's warm and expressive, not cold and instrumental.
>
> Frank (second-grade teacher): I hope I rub off on the boys and I hope I leave the girls with a positive image of men.
>
> Me: Can you describe that positive image for me?
>
> Frank: Just someone who's nurturing, caring…open to being demonstrative with his feelings.

Not all participants were convinced that men could provide for the emotional needs of girls. Jan, a childcare center director, told me:

> Girls may not thrive as well emotionally in men's classrooms. They have, after all, grown up almost exclusively in the care of mom, or some other woman.

Nurturing children is not just seen as something women can do better, it is perceived as a talent that men lack. In fact, many seem to feel that men might do more harm than good in their interactions with children. Jennifer, who directs a local Head Start program, talked enthusiastically about having ***a*** man working in her center.

> Jennifer: He's great. I love having him around. I think the kids are a little intimidated by him…his size, his big voice. We have to be careful the kids don't get too frightened, of course, but he's great at getting them to settle down. We just have to keep the more vulnerable kids away from him, I suppose.
>
> Me: More vulnerable?
>
> Jennifer: Maybe vulnerable isn't the right word for it. I mean the kids who seem to be in the most need of nurturing, the most sensitive. Someone like Greg is not exactly the type you want handling girls.

Greg, to whom Jennifer is referring, is about five feet seven inches tall, weighs about one hundred forty pounds, and speaks with a musical lilt in a voice that is hardly audible over the cries and other sounds of the classroom. Compared to the other teachers, he is only slightly larger than most

and certainly does not have a "big" voice. However, this narrative demonstrates how members of an underrepresented group are evaluated in ways that accentuate their difference from the majority. Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) includes this phenomenon within her model of "tokenism." This is important in day-to-day functions, as in the case of Barry, a first-grade teacher:

> I had the strangest thing happen to me. I had a little girl who was getting picked on until she broke down and cried. I took her aside and wiped her tears and talked to her for a while until she felt better. Later in the day, one of the other teachers came in and asked me about the girl. When I told her what happened, she told me she had better take the girl out and talk to her to make sure she was okay. I was *really* insulted by that. She wouldn't have gone into a female teacher's classroom and taken the girl out. I wish I had told her to mind her own business, but I'd be in trouble.

Several participants echoed sentiments similar to these and one must wonder why girls, and not boys, are the ones who would be negatively affected by the change in caretaker gender. Boys, after all, have also grown up in the care of women and, arguably, would be as unaccustomed to adult male caregivers as girls are. Instead, boys are thought to potentially benefit from exposure to men and the presence of masculinity in the classroom. When describing the parents' position on boys' needs, the men recounted that parents, almost exclusively mothers, asserted that their sons were in need of exposure to traditional masculinity. Ostensibly, this was to compensate for a lack of male presence in the household. Some were single mothers and others pointed out that dad is a workaholic who is rarely present because of occupational obligations. The fathers with whom the participants did interact were, according to all participants, very concerned with making sure that their sons were mentored in the ways of traditional (hegemonic) masculinity. However, there was no evidence provided that the fathers were any more insistent on this point than the mothers. More importantly, no participant ever provided me with an example of parents indicating they hoped their son would be exposed to the "new man," so often cited for daughters, nor did any express a desire for a traditional male for their daughters.

Modeling for boys

Javier, a third-grade teacher, echoed what became a common theme in these interviews. He, like many other men in my study, was far more likely to have cultivated artistic, expressive, or contemplative behaviors over his lifetime rather than athletic ones. However, it was the latter, along with other stereotypical masculine traits, that appear to be preferred by parents and colleagues. The gender composition of both these reference groups – parents and colleagues – is dramatically skewed toward women.

> Javier (third-grade teacher): I've had so many parents, especially single moms, come in and tell me how happy they are that their son is going to have a male teacher. I asked one woman why that made her so happy and she told me she was becoming concerned because her son was getting into art and poetry a little too much. God, I love poetry and try to get all my students hooked on it. I didn't know what to say to her.

> Gene (pre-school teacher): When I was interviewed for the job, they told me that they felt every school should have ***a*** [emphasis mine] man on staff to provide boys with a male role model, but then I found out that they, the parents, really want a guy who looks and acts like a guy *should act*.

> Keith (first-grade teacher): You know, it begs the question, like well, what is their standard. 'Cause it's all, you know, in the eye of the beholder. What is their standard of masculinity? What is masculine to them? If it's the testosterone, beer drinking, football playing, bowling night on Wednesday, and poker night on Friday, you know, smoking the cigars men, that ain't me, you know. [Laughs]

It was not just the men teachers who addressed this. Sarah, an elementary school principal, seemed to be saying that the request for a traditional male is quite common.

> I get that a lot. Parents come right out and tell me they want their son in a man's room. Then they go on to explain that they don't just want any man, but one who will act like a "real man."

> Jan (childcare center director): Oh, there's no question, but that parents generally prefer a man who "acts like a man."

> Me: When you say, "acts like a man…"

> Jan: Well, I hate to say it, but a lot of people seem to harbor a deep fear of their sons being exposed to a gay teacher. I guess they feel if the guy's macho, then he can't be gay.

The various responses reveal that there are significant contradictions in the lives of men in ECE. This is further brought to light when comparing the men's sense of who they are with the persons they are expected to be at work. Most of the men do not see themselves as being macho, particularly athletic or competitive, or capable of imposing discipline. However, they present themselves as possessing all of these characteristics as they live up to the expectations embedded in the gendered ECE workplace. For example, as Dave tells us, the prevailing image of men teachers as disciplinarians may not resonate well with the men's self--definitions.

> You know, so, they say, oh, he needs a good role model, or he needs a strong hand, or something like that. Thinking that since I'm male, I'm going to have a stronger hand, which is not necessarily true.

George, a second-grade teacher, describes how he has to deal with the contradictions between his behavior as a father and as a teacher:

> It's hard, you know, I'm very close to my own children, physically, and love just doing things around the house with them, working on little projects, making snacks, the stuff that kids love doing. Then I come to work and get asked to take the rambunctious kids out to play while the other teachers stay inside and work on the projects I love doing.

Being asked to live up to these gendered expectations, thereby turning descriptive stereotypes (the ways things are believed to be) into prescriptive ones (the ways things are supposed to be), may be the result of what Gutek (1985) terms "sex role spillover," when gender stereotypes leak into the workplace culture. Clearly, these attributes are most closely associated with traditional, patriarchal forms of masculinity, what Connell (1987) has labeled hegemonic masculinity. It is provocative that these descriptions of boys' needs, which are in stark contrast with stated girls' needs, position boys as "other" in the cultural environment of the school. Participants feel that boys need some extra attention and, in general, agree with the assessment that boys lack genuine models of masculinity (Chodorow 1978), grow up without a living omnipresent example of masculinity, and must seek examples in the exterior social environment. Girls are

surrounded by adult women, both at home and at school, and have intimate contact with a contemporary form of femininity on a regular basis.

At about the halfway point in my project, I began asking participants to also describe the kinds of women role models they felt would make the greatest contribution in the lives of girls. Some named specific women, such as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, astronaut Sally Ride, Dr. Dot Richardson (Olympic Gold Medal Softball winner and orthopedic surgeon), and media star and mogul Oprah Winfrey. What do all these women have in common? They are living lives that are outside the confines of traditional, emphasized femininity (Connell 1987). This contrasts dramatically with the above list of traits for the MRM, which reinforces traditional masculine stereotypes. Even more striking is the fact that no participants ever named a public personality to help them communicate their vision of a proper male role model. In his extensive work on hegemonic masculinity, Connell has made it clear that, while we may have a definition of hegemonic masculinity in the abstract, it is "not the usual form of masculinity at all" (1990:83). In other words, it is difficult to identify an actual person who personifies the current form of hegemonic (or counter--hegemonic) masculinity. So, again, we are left with a rather ethereal concept that has limited usefulness in terms of promoting change.

To be at all useful, a more complete understanding of the concept of "male role model" must be found. Herbert Blumer emphasizes this when he argues that "…vague concepts deter the identification of appropriate empirical instances, and obscure the detection of what is relevant in the empirical instances that are chosen. Thus, they block connection between theory and its empirical world and prevent their effective interplay" (1954:5). There is no formal definition of MRM. Instead, there is a collage of prescriptions and proscriptions that add up to a tacitly understood concept – something everyone seems to acknowledge exists but cannot explain with any clarity or certainty. Second, the male role model as it is generally, albeit tacitly, apprehended has little potential to be of any benefit to boys because it reinforces traditional forms of masculinity that are not found to be conducive to academic successes (Brown, Chesney-Lind, and Stein 2006; Juelskjær 2008). This tangle of contradictions makes it unlikely that any benefits will be forthcoming for boys (or girls).

Sid, a first-grade teacher, summed up the contentious relationship men have with the concept of male role model:

> When I started out in teaching, I prided myself on the fact that I was going to be a role model for kids. Now, it's my greatest nightmare. It's an albatross around my neck.

Doing Masculinity in ECE

The participants in this study described the social organization of ECE as one in which the gender regime is closely aligned with the gender order of society. This finding would be only marginally remarkable if not for the unique status of the men employed in the occupation. Many scholars (e.g., Williams 1992; Allan 1993) who have studied men in ECE have concluded that the men teachers maintain access to patriarchal power and privilege in order to either structure the work environment to their benefit or to rapidly move out of the more feminized areas of ECE and move into more stereotypically "masculine" positions, such as administration. According to Connell (1987), this would be an example of men doing a "complicit" form of masculinity. Complicit forms of masculinity are those that directly benefit from the systematic, society-wide subjugation of women, without actively participating in women's subordination. Complicit masculinities structure the local gender regime in ways that support and reproduce the wider gender order and that produce a local hierarchy that privileges whatever masculinities the incumbent men display.

The data provided by the participants in the present study cast considerable doubt on the notion of "complicity." Instead, I contend that men in ECE are attempting to present a "subordinate," or alternative, form of masculinity, but are constrained by powerful negative sanctions embedded in the culture of ECE. The behaviors presented by the men are artifacts of the gendered organization, not tools of the men as they attempt to organize their work life. Donaldson (1993:656) has argued that the true test of hegemonic masculinity is not its ability to subordinate only women, but the ability to control other men. In ECE, this is accomplished in large part through the metaphor of the MRM, which pervades the culture at both the institutional and interpersonal levels.

James King (1995) suggested that we might be openly recruiting men into teaching while simultaneously covertly sabotaging them through scrutinizing those who "act funny." This scrutiny contributes to the men's adoption of "safe" behaviors around the children. Unfortunately, these same behaviors may also cause men to be seen as deficient in their potential to attend to the children's needs. This becomes a "self-fulfilling prophecy" (Merton 1948) as the men retreat into behavior patterns that are stereotypically masculine and clearly contradictory to our perception of motherly behavior, the oft-cited standard for quality of student–teacher interaction in ECE. When men behave in "feminine" ways, they come under scrutiny as possibly being gay. Yet, the particular social scene in which men operate is so feminized that "masculine" behaviors also draw attention. Strain is found in the ambiguities and ambivalence surrounding men who do not display stereotypically masculine behaviors or desires (Connell 1992). There is ample evidence that, starting at an early age, boys are more powerfully sanctioned for doing feminine things (i.e., acting like a sissy) than girls are for doing masculine things (i.e., being a tomboy) (Thorne 1993; Buchbinder 1994; Halberstam 1998). Later in life, men who do not fit the mold of hegemonic masculinity, are looked upon with suspicion or are even considered dangerous (Messner 1987; Connell 1992; Buchbinder 1994). Paradoxically, men who try to conduct their lives in non-sexist, atypical ways may find themselves under suspicion from both hegemonic men and many women (Kaufman 1993; 1994). Being different exacts a price for men and makes our lives very complicated and unsettling. A man who is not quite "one of the boys," because of his social position, his sexual orientation, his taste in clothes, or his lack of leadership quality, aggression, or drive, may be looked upon as a "failed male" (Thorne 1993:115-116) and ;treated with suspicion. It is this suspicion that makes the rules of masculinity visible (Connell 1987; Williams 1993; Buchbinder 1994), and this visibility is particularly enhanced when men are specifically asked to behave in stereotypical ways as a condition of employment, as in the case of hiring men as male role models.

Conclusion

In this article I have presented some findings from a series of interviews with persons associated with Early Childhood Education (ECE). The focus on men in ECE is in keeping with a tradition of examining the lives of individuals who have "crossed over" into gender-atypical occupations, where gender prescriptions and proscriptions are made most visible.

The conclusion reached is that ECE is indeed gendered in terms of the symbols in frequent use, the differential structural location of women and men, the internal mental work of individuals as they consciously construct their understandings of the organization's gendered structure, and the interactions among individuals (Acker 1992:252-253). This is not a particularly new or surprising conclusion, but it becomes salient when we try to determine the type of masculinity that men are constrained to perform (Butler 1990) within the gender regime of ECE. Instead of the men performing a complicit masculinity through which they would enjoy some of the perquisites and privileges of hegemonic men, they are attempting to live subordinate masculinities in order to challenge traditional gender relations. This takes on its most ambiguous and, therefore, troublesome form in the expectation that men will provide boys with needed male role models. This is problematic for men because the content of such a model is not clearly understood and seems to call for the men to provide one kind of model for boys while simultaneously providing a contradictory model for girls in the same classroom. In addition, the calls for men to behave in stereotypically masculine ways contribute to men's lack of fit in Early Childhood Education, where traditional feminine characteristics are highly valued. Finally, boys, who are the intended beneficiaries of the proposed increase in the number of men in ECE, may actually be dealt a disservice by an influx of more traditional masculinity into their school environment. Traditional masculinity has been shown to have a strong anti-intellectual component.

A direction for future research, that is strongly suggested by this project, is a careful comparison of the kind of role modeling that is being suggested for boys to the kinds that have been recommended for girls over the last several decades. One obvious contrast is that models for girls have been described in non-traditional (counter-stereotypical) terms, while those for boys continue to reinforce traditional (stereotypical) dimensions. Is it possible that, for girls, emphases on counter-stereotypical models, such as astronauts, scientists, and surgeons, are also producing a pedagogy that is more proactive and thus, has the latent effect of making teachers more engaged with girls than they are with boys? That would be a logical extension of this study.

References

AAUW Education Foundation. 2008. *Where the Girls Are: The Facts About Gender Equity In Education*. Washington: AAUW.

Acker, Joan. 1992. "Gendering Organizational Theory." Pp. 248-260 in *Gendering Organizational Analysis*, edited by Albert J. Mills and Peta Tancred. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Allan, Jim. 1993. "Male Elementary School Teachers: Experiences and Perspectives." Pp. 113-127 in *Doing Women's Work: Men In Nontraditional Occupations*, edited by Christine Williams. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Allan, Jim. 1994. "Anomaly As Exemplar: The Meanings Of Role-Modeling For Men Elementary Teachers." Dubuque, IA: Tri-College Department of Education Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 378 190.

Becker, Howard S. and Blanche Geer. 1960. "Participant Observation: The Analysis Of Qualitative Field Data." Pp. 267-288 in *Human Organization Research*, edited by Richard N. Adams and Jack J. Preiss. Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.

Blumer, Herbert. 1954. "What Is Wrong With Social Theory?" *American Sociological Review* 19(1):3-10.

Bradley, Harriet. 1989. *Men's Work, Women's Work*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bradley, Harriet. 1993. "Across the Great Divide: The Entry of Men into 'Women's Jobs.'" Pp. 10-27 in *Doing "Women's Work": Men in Nontraditional Occupations*, edited by Christine L. Williams. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Briggs, Charles. 1986. *Learning To Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview In Social Science Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, Lyn M., Meda Chesney-Lind, and Nan Stein. 2006. "What About the Boys?" *Education Week* 25(39):35.

Buchbinder, David. 1994. *Masculinities and Identities*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion Of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Chodorow, Nancy. 1978. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cohen, Theodore. 1991. "Speaking With Men: Application of a Feminist Methodology To the Study of Men's Lives." *Men's Studies Review* 8(4):9-13.

Connell, Raewyn. 1987. *Gender and Power*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Connell, Raewyn. 1990. "An Iron Man: The Body and Some Contradictions of Hegemonic Masculinity." Pp. 83-95 in *Sport, Men and the Gender Order*, edited by Michael Messner and Donald Sabo. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Books.

Connell, Raewyn. 1992. "A Very Straight Gay: Masculinity, Homosexual Experience, and the Dynamics of Gender." *American Sociological Review* 57(6):735-751.

Connell, Raewyn. 1995. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Donaldson, Mike. 1993. "What is Hegemonic Masculinity?" *Theory and Society* 22(5):643-657.

Dunn, Dana. 1996. "Gender-segregated occupations." Pp. 91-93 in *Women and Work: A Handbook*, edited by Paula J. Dubeck and Kathryn Borman. New York: Garland Publishing.

Epstein, Debbie. 1997. "Boyz' Own Stories: Masculinities and Sexualities In Schools." *Gender and Education* 9(1):105-115.

Frye, Marilyn. 1983. *The Politics of Reality: Essays In Feminist Theory*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.

Garfinkel, Harold. 1967. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Glaser, Barney and Anselm L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies For Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Gurian, Michael. 2009. *The Purpose of Boys: Helping Our Sons Find Meaning, Significance, and Direction In Their Lives*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gutek, Barbara A. 1985. *Sex and the Workplace: Impact of Sexual Behavior and Harassment on Women, Men, and Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Halberstam, Judith. 1998. *Female Masculinity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hansot, Elizabeth and David Tyack. 1988. "Gender in American Public Schools: Thinking Institutionally." *Signs* 13(4):741-760.

Harper, Dean. 1994. "What Problems Do You Confront?" *Qualitative Sociology* 17(1):89-95.

Juelskjær, Malou. 2008. "Resisting and Committing To Schooling: Intersections of Masculinity and Academic Position." *International Journal Of Qualitative Studies In Educatio*n 21(1):49-63.

Kanter, Rosabeth M. 1977. *Men and Women Of the Corporation*. New York: Basic Books.

Kaufman, Michael. 1993. *Cracking The Armor: Power and Pain In the Lives Of Men*. Toronto: Viking Canada.

Kaufman, Michael. 1994. "Men, Feminism, and Men's Contradictory Experience of Power." Pp. 142-164 in *Theorizing Masculinities*, edited by Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kimmel, Michael. 2006. "A War Against Boys?" *Dissent* : 65-70. Retrieved June 9, 2009 (http:// dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=700).

King, James. 1995. *Uncommon Caring: Male Primary Teachers As Constructed and Constrained*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Leidner, Robin. 1991. "Serving Hamburgers and Selling Insurance: Gender, Work, and Identity In Interactive Service Jobs." *Gender And Society* 5(2):154-177.

Maccoby, Eleanor E. 1998. *The Two Sexes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Merton, Robert K. 1948. "The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy." *The Antioch Review* 8(2):193-210.

Messner, Michael. 1987. "The Meaning of Success." Pp. 193-210 in *The Making of Masculinities*, edited by Harry Brod. Boston: Allen and Unwin.

Messner, Michael. 2000. "Barbie Girls Versus Sea Monsters: Children Constructing Gender." *Gender and Society* 14(6):765-784.

Miles, Matthew and Michael Huberman. 1984. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Nelson, Jill. 1993. *Voluntary Slavery: My Authentic Negro Experience*. New York: Penguin Books.

Oakley, Ann. 1981. "Interviewing Women." Pp. 30-61 in *Doing Feminist Research*, edited by Helen Roberts. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Pascoe, Cheri J. 2007. *Dude, You're a Fag*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Pollack, William. 1998. *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons From the Myths Of Boyhood*. New York: Random House.

Reskin, Barbara. 1991. "Bring the Men Back In: Sex Differentiation and the Devaluation of Women's Work." Pp. 141-161 in *The Social Construction of Gender*, edited by Judith Lorber and Susan Farrell. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Reskin, Barbara F. and Patricia A. Roos. 1990. *Job Queues, Gender Queues: Explaining Women's Inroads Into Male Occupations*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Rich, Adrienne. 1980. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." *Signs* 5(4):631-60.

Rotundo, Anthony. 1993. *American Manhood*. New York: Basic Books.

Sargent, Paul. 2001. "Real Men or Real Teachers?: Contradictions in the Lives of Men Elementary School Teachers." *Men and Masculinities* 2(4):412-435.

Sargent, Paul. 2005. "The Gendering of Men in Early Childhood Education." *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research* 52(3/4):251-260.

Sommers, Christina H. 2001. *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism Is Harming Our Young Men*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Spangler, Eve, Marsha Gordon, and Ronald Pipkin. 1978. "Token Women: An Empirical Test of Kanter's Hypothesis." *American Journal of Sociology* 84(1):160-170.

Spradley, James. 1979. *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin. 1990. *Basics of Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Thorne, Barrie. 1993. *Gender Play*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Turco, Catherine. 2010. "Cultural Foundations of Tokenism: Evidence from the Leveraged Buyout Industry." *American Sociological Review* 75(6):894-913.

Uhlmann, Eric L. and Geoffrey L. Cohen. 2005. "Constructed Criteria: Redefining Merit To Justify Discrimination." *Psychological Science* 16(6):474-480.

Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning From Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press.

West, Candace and Don Zimmerma. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society* 1(2):125-151.

Williams, Christine L. 1989. *Gender Differences At Work: Women and Men In Nontraditional Occupations*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Williams, Christine L. 1992. "The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages For Men In the Female Professions." *Social Problems* 39(3):253-267.

Williams, Christine L. 1993. *Doing Women's Work: Men In Nontraditional Occupations*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Yoder, Janice. 1991. "Rethinking Tokenism: Looking beyond Numbers." *Gender and Society* 5(2):178-192.

Sargent, Paul. 2013. "Reluctant Role Models: Men Teachers and the Reproduction of Hegemonic Masculinity." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):188-203. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Nina Veetnisha Gunnarsson
Jönköping University, Sweden

Helena Hemmingsson
Linköping University, Sweden

Lars-Christer Hydén
Linköping University, Sweden

Lena Borell
Karolinska Institutet, Sweden

Managing Family Relations and Controlling Information While Supporting an Allergic Child

Abstract This paper explores parental (particularly mothers') support in the daily lives of children with allergies in a Swedish context. An ordinary life is established by making comparisons to what other children without allergies presumably can do (and eat). Although the parents' goal is to support their child in managing allergies, neither their practical nor their interactional strategies work in a clear-cut direction to promote the child's ordinary life and identity. On the contrary, parents' accounts convey that they function just as much against an everyday life and the child's identity. When managing family relations, parents expect immediate family members (specifically grandparents) to understand and accommodate the child's needs.

However, claims of family responsibility are made through moral tales about lack of support from "generalized others." Family responsibility is also downplayed in parents' accounts as demands of support may put parents' moral self at risk. The strategy of information control in certain situations and (non-family) relations used to keep the child safe may risk stigmatizing the child, alternatively, making the child into a social threat. One of the conclusions that could be drawn from this study is that claims of family support may be contradictory to other cultural principles that ascribe responsibilities between families and individuals, as the principles of individual freedom and autonomy.

Keywords Everyday Life; Sweden; Parental Strategies; Childhood Allergy; Family Responsibility; Moral Practice; Moral Self

Nina Veetnisha Gunnarsson received her PhD in humanistic medicine (medical sociology) from Karolinska Institutet, Sweden. Her research interest is in narrative accounts and moral presentations of self and agency. She currently works as an Associate Senior Lecturer in Social Work at the School of Health Sciences, Jönköping University, Sweden.

email address: nina.gunnarsson71@gmail.com

Helena Hemmingsson is a PhD holder and a Professor in Occupational Therapy at the Department of Social and Welfare Studies: Division of Health, Activity and Care, Linköping University, Sweden. Her research and professorship has a focus on disability in everyday life, concerning children, teenagers, and young adults with disabilities and the opportunities and obstacles they experience at school and in transitions to working life.

Lars-Christer Hydén received his PhD in Psychology from Stockholm University. His current position is Full Professor of Social Psychology at the Department of Medical and Health Sciences, Linköping University, Sweden, and Director of Centre for Dementia Research (CEDER). His research primarily concerns the use of language and narrative, especially in the area of health, illness, and disability. He has published extensively in international journals and edited a number of books about narrative research.

Lena Borell received her PhD from Karolinska Institutet in 1992. She is a Professor of Occupational Therapy and also a Director of the Strategic Research Program in Health Care Research at Karolinska Institutet, Sweden. Her main research areas concern the experiences of living with cognitive impairments in people with older age and how they experience their ageing environments.

The consequences of living with a chronic illness such as allergies are not merely about individual or family responses to the illness and treatment regimes that have a direct connection with the individuals' and families' disease management (Prout, Hayes, and Gelder 1999; Gabe, Bury, and Ramsay 2002; Hansson-Sherman, Dahlgren, and Löwhagen 2002; Olin Lauritzen 2004). It is above all about managing family relations and relations with others as these shape and affect the child's everyday life and identity. In this paper we will explore parents', mainly mothers', accounts about the practical and interactional strategies they use to support their allergic child in their ordinary lives. Specifically, accounts about how parents manage family relations, family responsibility, and how they control the information they provide about the child, including who the child is, to others. For the parents, an everyday life means that their child can eat and do what other children without allergies presumably can eat and do.

There is an overbearing moral imperative, especially in "good" mothering, meaning that they have the uttermost "responsibility for putting children's needs first" (Ribbens McCarthy, Edwards, and Gilles 2000:800). Although parents hold themselves as being uttermost responsible for their child's upbringing and well being (Ribbens McCarthy et al. 2000; 2003; Harden 2005), parenting is not a private matter as much as it is a socially informed practice that influences parents' actions and decisions in everyday life.

Having an allergy as a child in Sweden is almost as common as not having an allergy, with an estimated 4 out of ten children being affected (Wickman

and Lilja 2003). Specific to the allergic conditions is its varying nature. Severity of symptoms and reactions can vary greatly with different allergies, the allergenic substance, situations, times and places, and between different individuals. It is often "naturally" changeable over the child's life-course, and children afflicted by an allergy at infancy or young age may outgrow their allergies by the time they start school. This is especially true for food allergies (Sampson 2004), although it is not uncommon that children's food allergies persist into adulthood and that some develop other types of allergies with age.

Moreover, as long as children are not exposed to the substance or substances they cannot tolerate, many of them do not have any symptoms. Therefore, they may not always be identified by themselves or by others as being ill. However, some allergens are easier to manage, avoid or remove; yet, in some situations it is difficult or even impossible. In addition, participation in important social events and activities may become difficult for children with allergies (Gabe et al. 2002), including visiting certain social places (Rudestam et al. 2004).

Food Allergy and Everyday Risk

Children with allergies are exposed daily to situations of risks (Tulloch and Lupton 2003) when substances they cannot tolerate – both in and outside of school – are present in social life and considered ordinary. In Sweden, school children are served midday meals, and it is often quite common that children are given cakes, fruits, and other foods and treats at school activities or told to bring food packages from home. Everyday life for the allergic children is fraught with notions of and encounters with food, as foods and meals convey important cultural and social meanings that organize the socially shared and relational everyday world of being and belonging with others (Douglas 1992).

For families with children prone to allergies, the risks of everyday life has a highly realized presence; however, embodied past happenings and future ponderings may also be highly "present" in parents' support. Nevertheless, it is often difficult for parents to know and predict how the child's allergy will develop or how severe the reactions may become in different situations and over time. Most people do not have to reflect upon their natural environment and the taken-for-grantedness of social reality. However, families with allergies may be compelled to think about and act more consciously upon such aspects (e.g., to manage and control risks of allergic reactions) on a daily basis.

Here, family responsibility may come into play as to what demands the parents can make on other family members, such as the children's grandparents. Finch and Mason (1993) state that people have certain views of dependence and independence in family relations that are important for how they negotiate family responsibility. They found that responsibilities between even seemingly constructed independent family units (such as parents and their children and the parents' own parents), although also simultaneously constructed as most socially liable to each other, can be such that adult children who are parents themselves still show reluctance about being dependent on their own parents for support. Demanding support from even such immediate family members is something people seemingly object strongly to (Finch and Mason 1993).

Thus, in exploring parents' support in the everyday lives and identity of their allergic child, we firstly describe how parents *establish the ordinary in their accounts*, and how a commonly used *practical strategy* in managing food allergies is constructed to work for "the ordinary." Secondly, parents' support is about how they *manage family relations*, in and through their accounts of family *responsibilities*. Thirdly, the way that parents *control the information* they give to others about their child's allergy, and of whom the child is (identity) is crucial in examining parents' support for an ordinary life.

The Study

Sampling and Data Collection

In the present study, nineteen parents were selected from a larger interview survey with 215 parents of 230 school children that had special diets in school because of diagnosed or suspected food allergies (see Gunnarsson et al. 2005). Inclusion in this and previous studies on the same empirical material (Gunnarsson and Hydén 2009) was based on the information that parents had previously provided in the telephone survey. A strategy of variation sampling was made (Patton 1990) in order to "represent" the variation found in the whole population of the children with special diets. The parents lived in different areas of, a mainly Swedish-born middle class, Stockholm suburbs and all children attended public schools. The municipality, in general, had a special interest and focus on allergy awareness in the nurseries and in the public schools at the time of this study, with an aim to reduce the risk of allergic reactions, for example, by prohibiting peanuts.

All of the participating parents perceived themselves as having the utmost responsibility for the child's allergy. Specifically, the participating parents were mainly mothers (18 mothers and one father). There is a typical gendered arrangement of parenthood in Sweden, despite the principles of equality that Swedish parents talk about when discussing parenting practices and parenthood (see Elvin-Nowak and Thomsson 2001).

Data collection was made through narratively inspired interviews in the parents' homes or workplace during 2002. A main broad question of, "Would you tell me how you discovered your child's hypersensitivity?" was the starting point in all interviews. For this article, the focus was on how the child's allergy had impacted the child and the family's daily life and how parents managed the child's allergy *after a diagnosis or parent-defined allergy* had been established (at the time of the study the children were between 6-18 years of age). The interviews lasted between one-and-a-half to two hours and most parents were interviewed twice.

All parents had attended upper secondary school, which the majority of the Swedish population do. Six parents had university degrees (one was still a student in her final year) and additionally, two parents had taken courses at the university. One mother was born in the U.S., one in the UK and one in Chile. At the time of the interviews, the parents' ages ranged from 33 to 45 years of age

and six were single parents. The majority of parents were from middle class backgrounds, four from upper middle class, and four from working class.

Twenty-three children suffered from a variety of different food-related symptoms and other allergy problems, for example, physical manifestations, such as eczema, gastrointestinal problems, and airway problems. Sixteen children had asthma, fourteen children suffered from eczema, and fourteen suffered from pollen or pet allergy. Eleven children had all of these problems: asthma, food intolerance and eczema, and pollen/pet allergen. Five children had only food-related problems.

Data Analysis

The interviews in this study were analyzed as narrative accounts and from the understanding of interviewing as a discourse between speakers (Mishler 1986), formed within a context where speakers make use of linguistic devices and create social meanings that follow socially shared conventions of speech acts and of social life (Atkinson 2009). The narrative accounts are based on pieces of factual information that are structured and organized as events and actions that the parents evaluate and make sense of in the process (De Fina 2009). People also construct social meanings in their accounts to help them make sense of the past, present, and future. In the analysis, we follow Scott and Lyman's understanding of an account as a linguistic device used whenever an action is subjected to evaluative inquiry, or a statement made by people to explain "unanticipated or untoward behavior" (1968:46). It follows that accounts often draw upon different discourse devices (in this study, for example, distinctions, reconstructed dialogues, generalizations, rhetoric messages, and moral tales) to explain and evaluate actions from self and others, for example, involving ways of making excuses and/or justifications of actions and behaviors.

Throughout the interviews, parents used various ways to show and voice what evidently was one of their primary parental goals in supporting their child's and the family's everyday life, illustrated in the following sentence from one of the parents: "we try to live as normal as possible." Most parents used the Swedish word "normal," but the conceptualized meaning was analytically translated to ordinary (Swedish: *vanligt*). Several parents made similar outspoken and often recurrent references to an ordinary life and child's identity in their accounts. Most parents organized and accounted for their strategies in ways that made what constitutes the ordinary as being self-evident and not something that had to be defined or explained (De Fina 2009).

How parents usually make use of different normalization strategies in managing allergy and asthma in order to have an everyday life, in spite of chronic illness or disabilities, to be as "normal" as possible has been well explored. For example, Prout and colleagues (1999) have demonstrated how parents (with a child with asthma) produced and maintained ordinariness in everyday life through normalization strategies, such as controlling symptoms with asthma medication, and, to a lesser extent, restricting school and family activities. Olin Lauritzen further showed that "there is not one, but several ways of normalizing" (2004:1307), but her study explores parents conceptions of their child's symptoms as being an allergy (and allergy as an illness) at the time when their child had just been diagnosed.

These kinds of normalization strategies are usually described and analyzed in an individualized family context. Accordingly, it is about the parents' strategies to manage foremost the symptoms and consequences of the illness in order to allow the allergy to have as little impact as possible on the child's or the family's everyday life (Prout et al. 1999; Gabe et al. 2002; Olin Lauritzen 2004). In this study, when parents discussed what they wanted and how they supported their child's "ordinariness," it was not about managing symptoms of the illness or its impact on their private family lives. At the time of the study, they had already adapted to their child's allergy and managed to make their (at home) private family life function well.

What was particularly evident at the time of the study, however, as all children had started school, was the challenge to manage the children's allergies in the "outside" world, namely, in relationships with others and in different social situations and activities. Most parents presented it as being problematic and expressed the difficulty they encountered in *making others understand the child's allergy and needs*.

Supporting the Ordinary Life

"They Must Also Feel Like Normal Children"

A mother of three children, each with different food allergies, stated that children "must feel like normal children." She talks about one of her daughters longing for a pet dog and she makes a generalized manifestation of children's "rights" to have their dreams:

> And she just nags, every single day, that she wants a dog, but it's just not possible. But, she must have her dreams. So, you can't just turn everything away from the kids either, but they must have their dreams, they also need to feel like normal children who can eat everything and can do everything.

Stating that "they must have their dreams, they must also be able to feel like normal kids" is a powerful statement the mother makes in connection with her daughter's daily nagging for a dog. Dogs and other pets are a common part of everyday life for Swedish families and the mother doesn't question her daughter's appeals. In her brief account, she switches from talking about her daughter, "she has to have her dreams," to "they have to have their dreams." She generalizes her daughter's dreams and makes it into a general notion that "normalizes" her daughter's wish. We are, thus, told that dreaming is part of an ordinary childhood, and that her daughter's dream is not comprehended as anything out of the ordinary. She presents it as part of being and feeling like a "normal child" who can "eat everything and do everything."

"Not Always Having to Bring Their Own Bag"

The parents' supporting strategies are often very practical. Because in supporting everyday life it means the parents often have to practically rearrange everyday life in different ways, in order to establish or reconstruct their child's everyday life and identity, in relation to and in situations with others.

However, the strategies that actually become supportive presuming parents' intentions of their

actions are not a clear-cut matter in terms of children with allergies. The most dominant strategy used to support the ordinary life in relation to food allergies can be read from the following example:

> It's important, I think, for the children to feel that it shouldn't always be like this, to need to come with their own bag. But, it should be easy. It shouldn't be like, anything special, they should be like other children.

Here, the mother creates a particular social meaning of what everyday life for the allergic child sometimes entails, that of having "to need to come with their own bag" with special sandwiches, cakes, and food that the parents prepare for the food-allergic child to take with him/her (referred from here on as "the food-bag strategy"). The mother, however, states this strategy as an antagonist to her idea of an ordinary life but also as a way of making everyday life (easier) practical for the family. "The food-bag strategy" is constructed in her account as a differentiating object that may separate the child with allergy from other children.

So, although specifically, children bringing their own food when going home to others or to places where foods are served is quite a typical strategy for many families in supporting their child's "ordinariness," the strategy was accounted for as working in conflicting directions. First, in support of an everyday life but also working against the everyday life.

"Then He Sits Without, I Think That Is Cruel"

To understand the importance of the "food-bag strategy" for the parents, it is important to note that several parents talked about how their child at one time or another had experienced being overlooked and left without anything to eat when other children were given something. Examples from the same parent above will be used (other parents also expressed more or less these same ambivalent feelings) to further illustrate how parents may feel and think about this:

> But, that he always has to feel so special, like in school, and then, perhaps someone in the class has something with them and offers, candy or chocolate (balls), or something, then he can't eat, then he sits without, I think that is cruel.

Here, the mother connects being overlooked and "without" to her son having "to always feel special," for example, differentiated. The mother found it to be extra "cruel" when he does not get anything at all. Being literally overlooked had a special emotional connotation for some parents, especially parents who, as this mother, have had allergies themselves as a child (and adult).

"But It Works Of Course"

Parents who used the "food-bag strategy" did not present it as optimal or something they "wanted" for their child, but nevertheless, at times, necessary.

The strategy was not only accounted for as necessary in the obvious sense of protecting the child from allergic reactions but also because it worked to protect the child from being overlooked and left out or without. In the previous example, we can read an ambivalence into the mother's feelings about sometimes having to send the child with "ice-cream or something," although as she says, "but it works of course":

> Some are quite sweet, really, and buy special things for him, both ice cream and hot dog buns, and things like that, such people exist and then you don't usually have to send something. It's just to check what they are having and others may have things, so it works, he can refrain something occasional then. But, sometimes, you feel that it's getting a bit tiresome to have to send ice-cream or something. But, it works of course, even if he thinks it is fun to be able to eat what others eat, it's how it is.

By showing several accounts from the same parent, the dilemma of the typical "food-bag strategy" is illustrated more clearly (although evident in other parents' accounts too). How to establish what is considered ordinary in the child's everyday life is not a clear-cut matter – because a strategy like that of "bringing one's own bag" is also accounted for as potentially working against the parents' supporting intentions.

Managing Family Relations in Accounts of Responsibility

In both family relations and interactions with others, what is formulated above all as problematic by the parents is to make others understand their child's allergy and specific needs, illustrated in the following sentence: "to make others understand what it means is the hard part."

In managing family relations, parents' accounts are mainly explanations and reflections about *family responsibilities*, specifically, legitimating and justifying their own claims on family members' understanding and support, and family members' inability or unwillingness to do so.

Claiming Family Responsibility – Moral Tales

Reflections and evaluations of what may be socially and morally justifiable to demand from others are intertwined with the parents' examples of difficulties in making family members understand (and thus, support and accommodate) the child's allergy. Parents give specific examples of situations when family members, typically grandparents, have either not understood or been "willing" to accommodate their child's illness and needs. As one parent explains:

> People don't always understand such things, and the worst is that it is usually the immediate family who is like this.

Further into the interview, the mother returns to the issue with specificity stating that it is "the immediate family" who does not understand, and a constructed satirical dialogue between herself and her mother-in-law is used to substantiate her previous statement:

> For example, my mother-in-law, she is a true expert with that. She can say that she's been standing and cooking dinner and so she wants to invite us to dinner, and then, it was a small amount of egg in it, but it was so little. – Yes, but you said there were no eggs! – Yes, but it was only one egg in it, and we are twelve people that will eat it. – Yes, but it doesn't matter!

Several parents mentioned disbelief in how family members or other people were particularly unable to understand that even the smallest amount of an allergen could make the child ill.

In a study about how family/kin negotiate responsibilities, Finch and Mason (1993) found people to be more ready to legitimately refuse support or help from family if family members had been established as being *unable* to provide support rather than unwilling to do so. Parents in this study seem

to prefer to view family members as being unable (rather than unwilling) to understand and support their grandchildren's allergy. In this study, we did not question the parents specifically about family responsibilities. It was the parents, themselves, who brought up family relations in their examples. Moreover, it can be assumed that portraying close family members, in particular, as being unwilling may be morally problematic considering how, for example, grandparents are constructed as the seemingly most important kinship for the child. Additionally, they are close in that they are the parents' parents. In saying this, it becomes interesting to mention that most moral tales about grandparents were actually made almost exclusively about the other parent's parents. One's own parents were constructed in much more "understanding" ways, as in being more knowledgeable and accommodating towards the child's allergy.

Nevertheless, labeling grandparents in general as being unwilling to support the child would be risky as it may undermine the importance and specific expectations of responsibility that parents at times place on grandparents, as compared to other family members and more distant relations. Grandparents are constructed as being in a special responsibility position compared to others, which Finch and Mason (1993) found indications of too. Nevertheless, in the following, we will show how parents work to just as much downplay their claims of responsibility, especially in terms of demands on the grandparents' support.

Downplaying Family Responsibility

Downplaying family responsibility may be shown in an example from a parent who discussed her oldest child's (without allergy) grandparents (similar accounts were also reported about "biological" grandparents on the fathers' side) who throughout both children's childhood have had a dog. Consequently, the younger son with an allergy had been unable to go and stay over at their home, together with his sister over the years, which he otherwise was welcomed to, and really wanted to do so. Below, the mother explains how, when the dog died, she had thought that the grandparents would prioritize their other grandchild ("we have a child to think about"), and that she would, thus, as a single mother, get the luxury of "getting some relief sometimes." She says this in mutual agreement with me saying, "you know yourself," to defend her thinking and wishes to be relieved of her mother role from time to time, knowing that I was a single mother too:

> And then [son's name] was so sad that he could never go with them, and so, and then their dog died, and then you felt like: "Oh, God, that's great!" Because it's nice, you know yourself, to get some relief sometimes. But, instead then of thinking that we have a child to think about, nope, then they went and bought a new dog! Then you get like, well thanks for that! [Laughter]

Here, the mother initially attributes some blame on the grandparents' decision to buy another dog instead of thinking, "we have a child to think about here". However, she then makes a "justification turn" and considers her own blameworthiness for making unjustified demands: "But you can't impose such demands." After this sentence, however, she immediately continues by quickly inflicting a "but" and again retaliates the potential blame to a general notion of dog owners' behaviors:

> But, you get a little…there is often a great egocentricity in it, this with animals, that is what I hear. That it is more important in some way than the grandchildren, I have a real hard time understanding that.

The mother, thus, considers both her own wrongdoings for making socially unjustified demands on them, but still holds on to what seems morally justifiable when weighing different relationships with each other, that of valuing one's grandchildren above that of an animal. To defend her judgments, she makes use of the generalized other in her account (Holdsworth and Morgan 2007), a general notion about dog owners' ways and morally questionable attributes that she places outside of her own thinking, "that is what I hear." Thus, she protects her own moral self in the process and tries to avoid the risk of being judged by me as a potentially "bad" person. The behavior that she presents as typical for dog owners is talked about as egocentric, but not in a personifying way, and she especially avoids connecting it to the grandparents themselves.

The parents' accounts illustrate a social reciprocity in family responsibility, which means that parents, when making responsibility claims on family members, must also take into account other family members and the family units independence, their needs and choices for an everyday life. Parents' responsibility accounts may then be read as they are also *responsible* for *other family members' everyday lives*.

How the parent portrays family members to others (e.g., the researcher) may reflect not only "badly'" on the family members about whom moral tales are told but also on the parents themselves. It can be taken as saying something about what kind of person the parent is (see also Finch and Mason 1993). Downplaying family responsibility is a discursive practice used to show that one is the kind of person that respects and supports the needs of others and not someone who lets his/her own needs override those of others (Finch and Mason 1993).

Conclusively, in managing family relations and responsibilities, parents' discursive moral work should perhaps be viewed as an important strategy in parents' support for an everyday life and parental responsibility. As it is the parents' obligation to ensure that the material and emotional welfare of the child is met, this also means to take on responsibility for the child's relations with others. Maintaining and protecting what are perceived as significant relations for the child, and working to restore family relations and moral selves in their accounts, is as much an end to their parental responsibility and support for the child's ordinariness as are the practical strategies they use.

Controlling Information About the Allergy and the Child

When children start school, they will encounter other kinds of relations (and situations), besides family, more independently. For instance, other children and their parents, in and outside of school, at peers birthday parties and social activities. Along with the "food-bag strategy" another important strategy for parents' support is *information control*.

The moral messages and tales about family kin and relations may be implicated in the way

parents *control the information* they give about their child's illness and individual needs to non-family members. It also includes controlling how others see and "mirror" the child, as counteracting potential social stigma and exclusion. If parents' experiences tell them that close family members, trained health professionals, and school personnel (they also frequently mentioned not understanding) have a hard time understanding, accommodating, and seeing the individual needs of the child (Kugelberg 1999), the controlling strategies they use become highly reasonable in relations with people without the socially binding ties of family or without expert childcare/medical knowledge. Any moral tales about family relations become an important discursive device that makes parents' information control rational and justifiable.

"The Balancing Act" of Controlling Potentially Fatal and Social Risks

Information control, in terms of parenting children with allergies, can be summarized as follows. Parents have to, at different times, over-emphasize the information they give regarding their child's problems and "otherness" in contact with others as to make others understand and keep the child safe or symptom free. Nevertheless, they must also do so without stigmatizing the child in the process and making him/her into a situational threat, abnormal or "too special," or someone that others may pity. Potential stigma may be the result of informing others about certain symptoms normally hidden from others that are highly stigmatizing in itself when revealed. One mother shares such sensitive information carefully, so as not to shame and belittle her daughter in front of her peers. The daughter's problem relates to the gastrointestinal tract resulting in her needing to use the toilet frequently:

> You have to talk to the adults without her hearing, so I can't stand and talk to them so that the other children hear. It can't be done because it doesn't work, it's like belittling her.

"I Say – Peanuts – He Dies"

The clearest example of the importance that parents ascribe to controlling what information they give about their child to others comes from a mother who has a son with multiple and severe food allergies (and additional allergies and asthma) who has had at least two severe allergic reactions (coconut) in the past, ending up in the emergency room. In the account below she draws on one of these events when her son had accidently eaten something with coconut in it. To understand her everyday logic of her risk calculations, it is important to know that throughout the interview she refers to and has closely in her mind a medical test that was done when her son was little. She had previously described the test in great detail (reading aloud from the test results). She stated that numbers from 1 to 5 indicate how severe a person's reaction is to a certain food item, with number 5 being the most severe. She added that her son has a number 4 for coconuts and number 5 for peanuts. She starts off her account with a forceful statement about the way in which she informs others about her son "as a person" – "so I say – peanuts – he dies." She also explains her dramatic formulations as a conscious intention on her part to make people take her son's allergies seriously, adding:

> To make people understand the meaning of it, that's the hard part. So, when I inform about [son's name] as a person, I say – peanuts – he dies. Then I don't know if that's for sure, but to be able to, in order to get other people to understand the meaning of it, that's the hard part.

For this mother and the child's father, the risk of their son having a potentially fatal reaction from eating peanuts is an emotional reality they live with on a daily basis. The past, present, and the future are intertwined in their parenting in a particular way. The danger is concrete, in the sense that the mother has a medical test to "support" her risk calculations. However, the risk is also hidden and hypothetical (in the present and also in the future) since their son has never actually eaten peanuts. Still, she has two severe accidental reactions (from a food that, according to the medical test, he is "less" allergic to) embodied in her, and her son's allergy is therefore more than an illness to manage. It also carries the social meaning of the most dreaded potential danger with parenthood, the possibility of your child dying.

"When I Tell This, Then You Think It Is a UFO"

Over the years of informing others about her child's allergy in the above way, proclaiming that with "peanuts he dies," she has also realized that her son's mere presence may be seen as a threat by others (she is aware of having partly triggered this response by her dramatic formulation). So, although it may work to keep him safe, it may work equally as a potential social barrier for her child. The mother uses a particularly strong metaphor to make her point about how her son may turn into an Unidentifiable Foreign Object (UFO) in the eyes of others:

> When I tell this, then you think that it is a UFO. But, it is the first [impression] that it became like: – Oh, who is this? Ugh, how awful, how will this work? So, the fear becomes so very, very great, and it's also not so fun.

Thus, to balance the potentially deadly threat that the mother had conveyed about her son, she emphasizes his positive attributes and tries to control other peoples' way of looking at him, thus, balancing his socially threatening image (Voysey 1975). She presents him as a person that is extremely pleasant and competent, for example, the kind of person anyone would want to get to know and be with. She reframes his social image in the following way:

> And as a person he is so damn nice. So, I always try to say that, OK, this is what he has, but he can also do so much damn more; he can do so much more. He's really super good at this and this, and this and this and this, look at that too, please do! Because otherwise it will be very tough to see this guy, so to speak. You, all the time, it is a balancing act in how you inform [him]. And that is how you live, among other things.

Controlling the information parents give to others about their children with allergies may be understood from this mother's expression of a "balancing act." If we were to use the mother's expression to summarize what the parenting support for an everyday life for children with allergies may boil down to, perhaps a *parental balancing act* is an adequate description. Nonetheless, like any account or narrative, there is always more to a story (and everyday life) than meets the eye, and the mother's ending quote should perhaps be added too, namely, "that's how you live, among other things."

Discussion

With regard to parents' support in the daily lives of their allergic children, the first aspect that arises in the parents' accounts may be conceptualized as parents having to manage and control a *double bind ordinary-risk situations*. Accordingly, the parent does everything he or she can to support an everyday life that, as much as possible, is equal to that of non-allergic children (establishing the ordinary). At the same time, however, the parents must be aware that this may potentially mean an increased risk to the child's health and for some, the child's life (danger with the ordinary). The practical "food-bag strategy" does work to protect the child from accidental allergy reactions. However, it is less clear-cut for the parents' support for a socially inclusive ordinary life and childhood identity (e.g., threatening the ordinary). This means that the *parents' strategies of establishing or constructing the ordinary* could actually discriminate a child in their relationships with peers and others, and potentially exclude him/her socially.

Neither of the constructed parental strategies, as analyzed in this study, works in a straightforward way for the purpose of parents' support. As much as they work against, they also work for their purpose of establishing an everyday life and child's identity. Firstly, to repeat, the "food-bag strategy" works well to reduce risks of allergic reactions. This, in turn, means that the parents know that the child is kept safe or at least "safer." Thus, it logically follows that they are more inclined to let their child "do and eat everything," and be like other children. Secondly, and likewise as important, it *protects the children from the risk of being overlooked*, "*forgotten*" and potentially *stigmatized* in certain social situations and activities in their schools and their communities. The description parents used for how their child felt was that it made them sad, sometimes very sad. From a parental and adult perspective, being overlooked, excluded, and left out among one's peers may have strong emotional connotations, evident in parents' voices and words, especially among parents who had allergies themselves. Thus, likely connected with their own embodied feelings and experiences. *Being overlooked* could work, as the "food-bag strategy," to *create the child's differences and otherness* in the outside world. Since we come to know who we are through the eyes of significant and generalized others, as pointed out by Mead (1934), it is thus through the gaze of others that the child may come to see herself or himself as different. Due to the fact that children with food allergies, in particular, are not exposed to what they cannot tolerate, they often neither have any subjective symptoms nor any visible signs of their disease. Their illness is thus usually not what makes them stand out as being "different."

Reciprocal Family Responsibilities

Parents in this study clearly see their own family as independent from the family unit of grandparents, but simultaneously construct the particular children-parents-grandparents everyday lives as intertwined. Not only concerning claims of practical support, but specifically in the more socially and mutually agreed and taken-for-granted way. For example, expecting them to understand the child's allergy and needs so they may be able to have their grandchildren come and stay with them. Parents show through their moral tales that they have certain expectations of the grandparents. These are constructed as socially and morally justifiable in their accounts, at least to some extent, such as in expecting grandparents to prioritize their relationship with their grandchildren above that of a dog. However, expectations of family support, although being morally justifiable, may still be contradictory to other cultural principles that ascribe responsibilities between families and individuals, as the principles of individual freedom and autonomy that parents also relate to in their accounts. The latter principles of social life are not negotiated and defended in the parents' accounts in the same way as their expectations and claims of family responsibility.

It may thus be possible to argue against Finch and Mason's (1993) conclusion about responsibilities in contemporary families. Specifically, that they are negotiated in the situation, therefore, not to be seen as bound by any fixed social rules. We do not argue against them being negotiated but to the latter conclusion because, alternatively, not wanting to show that one demands responsibility from family members may in fact be understood in itself as a non-negotiable social "rule." Perhaps prominent in societies where ideologies of individuality and personal freedom are strongly instigated, as in parents being individually responsible for themselves and their child and the outcomes of their own and their children's lives (and being "free" to choose how to live one's life) (Douglas 1992). How other family units and members choose to live their lives has to be respected and protected, and in so doing, this means the parents simultaneously protect their own family units' "rights" and choices (Douglas 1992).

In conclusion, the above discussion sheds some light on why parents cannot just demand others, close family or not, to change their lives to accommodate their allergic child. With an illness, such as an allergy, working towards an everyday life may thus mean a potential barrier to other people's (e.g., family) way of living, and the other way around; other people's everyday life may work as a potential barrier towards the everyday life and identity of children with allergies.

The moral aspect of allergy management has not been acknowledged much in previous research about allergies (see, for example, Prout et al. 1999; Gabe et al. 2002; Hansson-Sherman et al. 2002; Olin Lauritzen 2004), although it seemingly is important for how families with allergic children support their children. This study contributes to saying something about how parents' management of their child's allergy is just as much about being social and moral actors, consequently, having to consider other people, and their needs and choices in the process. The knowledge about how other family members and other people's lives are intertwined with the parents support could perhaps work to further support childcare professionals' interactions and communications with the children's parents.

Acknowledgements

This study was funded by grants from Anna and Edwin Berger's Foundation, the Kempe-Carlgrenska Fund and Queen Silvia's Jubilee Fund. The grant holder was the first author, and would like to offer many thanks for their financial support, having made it possible for me to write and finish this article.

References

Atkinson, Paul. 2009. "Illness narratives revisited: the failure of narrative reductionism." *Sociological Research Online* 14(5). Retrieved May 20, 2012 (http://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/5/14.html).

De Fina, Anna. 2009. "Narratives in interview – The case of accounts. For an interactional approach to narrative genres." *Narrative Inquiry* 19(2):233-258.

Douglas, Mary. 1992. *Risk and Blame. Essays in Cultural Theory*. London: Routledge.

Elvin-Nowak, Ylva and Helene Thomsson. 2001. "Motherhood as idea and practice: A discursive understanding of employed mothers in Sweden." *Gender & Society* 15(3):407-428.

Finch, Janet and Jennifer Mason. 1993. *Negotiating Family Responsibilities*. London, New York: Routledge.

Gabe, Jonathan, Michael Bury, and Rosemary Ramsay. 2002. "Living with asthma: The experience of young people at home and at school." *Social Science & Medicine* 55(9):1619-1633.

Gunnarsson, Nina Veetnisha et al. 2005. "Allergy-like conditions and health-care contacts among children with exclusion diets at school." *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* 19(1):46-52.

Gunnarsson, Nina Veetnisha and Lars-Christer Hydén. 2009. "Organizing allergy and being a 'good' parent: Parents' narratives about their children's emerging problems." *Health* 13(2):157-174.

Hansson-Scherman, Marianne, Lars O. Dahlgren, and Olle Löwhagen. 2002. "Refusing to be ill: A longitudinal study of patients' experiences of asthma/allergy." *Disability and Rehabilitation* 24(6):297-307.

Harden, Jeni. 2005. "Parenting a young person with mental health problems: Temporal disruption and reconstruction." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 27(3): 351-371.

Holdsworth, Clare and David Morgan. 2007. "Revisiting the generalized other: An exploration." *Sociology* 41(3):401-416.

Kugelberg, Clarissa. 1999. *Perceiving Motherhood and Fatherhood. Swedish Working Parents with Young Children.* Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.

Mead, George H. 1934. *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mishler, Elliot G. 1986. *Research Interviewing. Context and Narrative*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Olin Lauritzen, Sonja. 2004. "Lay voices on allergic conditions in children: parents' narratives and the negotiation of a diagnosis." *Social Science & Medicine* 58(7):1299-1308.

Patton, Michael Q. 1990. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. California: Sage.

Prout, Alan, Lesley Hayes, and Lesley Gelder. 1999. "Medicines and the maintenance of ordinariness in the household management of childhood asthma." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 21(2):137-162.

Ribbens McCarthy Jane, Rosalind Edwards, and Val Gillies. 2000. "Moral tales of the child and the adult: Narratives of contemporary family lives under changing circumstances." *Sociology* 34(4):785-803.

Ribbens McCarthy Jane, Rosalind Edwards, and Val Gillies. 2003. *Making Families: Moral Tales of Parenting and Step-Parenting*. Durham: Sociology Press.

Rudestam, Kirsten et al. 2004. "Children's asthma experiences and the importance of place." *Health* 8(4): 423-444.

Sampson, Hugh A. 2004. "Update on food allergy." *Current Reviews of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* 113(5):805-819.

Scott, Marvin B. and Stanford M. Lyman. 1968. "Accounts." *American Sociological Review* 32(1):46-62.

Tulloch, John and Deborah Lupton. 2003. *Risk and Everyday Life*. New Delhi: Sage.

Voysey, Margaret. 1975. *A Constant Burden. The Constitution of Family Life*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Wickman, Magnus and Gunnar Lilja. 2003. "Today, one child in four has an on-going allergic disease in Europe. What will the situation be tomorrow?" *Allergy* 58(7):570-571.

Gunnarsson, Nina Veetnisha, Helena Hemmingsson, Lars-Christer Hydén, and Lena Borell. 2013. "Managing Family Relations and Controlling Information While Supporting an Allergic Child." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):204-219. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Paula Sequeiros
University of Coimbra, Portugal

Reading in Public Libraries: Space, Reading Activities, and User Profiles

Abstract This single case research was developed within a public library in Porto, Portugal, Biblioteca Municipal Almeida Garrett. Its main objective was to understand how public library readers interact with space, the Internet technology, and reading resources, and how these interactions shape the representations of what a public library is. This case was chosen because the library has a recent and renowned building, high reader use levels, and Internet access.

The design of user profiles was an intermediate step, and then a partial result in the process of understanding provision and appropriation of technology, space, and reading resources (all media and supports) in a specific context. The construction of these profiles is presented and discussed in this paper.

A qualitative, single case study was designed according to Burawoy's Extended Case Method, departing from the framework of several theories – Feenberg and Bakardjieva's approach to Internet uses, Lefèbvre and Certeau's approach on space – and some library users and studies of Internet user profiles – by Rodrigues, Bakardjieva, and by other authors. A theoretical, diversified sample was constructed. User profiles were designed as a way of depicting common reading practices by grouping readers' characteristics according to Internet, space, and bibliographical resource usage. Along with this usage, social demographics, motivations, meanings, and feelings were enquired about to construct a thick narrative. Observation of all forms of reading practices, in-depth interviews, informal conversations, children's drawings, photography, and an architectural and social analysis of the building were used.

The library has diversified uses, tied to present-day everyday life conditions, and its space and management style are flexible enough to allow for different user appropriations. As to the general reading atmosphere, high satisfaction was reported, and the most appreciated features of social and architectural space were signaled by readers. User profiles reflect diversified usage modes, diverse relations to space, to Internet and bibliographic resources, and to other users.

Both the theoretical framework and the selected methodology proved fruitful for the intended purpose. These readers' profiles may provide a tool to understand and manage public library services, given the adequate fittingness. The same may be said about readers' evaluation of space, in general, or, specifically, about space appropriations, and, above all, about the production of stimulating reading atmospheres.

Keywords User Profiles; Single Case Studies; Space Relations; Qualitative Methodology; Public Libraries; Library Buildings; Portugal

Paula Sequeiros is a post-doctoral researcher with the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra and a researcher with the Institute of Sociology, University of Porto, Portugal. Her research interests include social studies of public libraries and the sociology of reading.

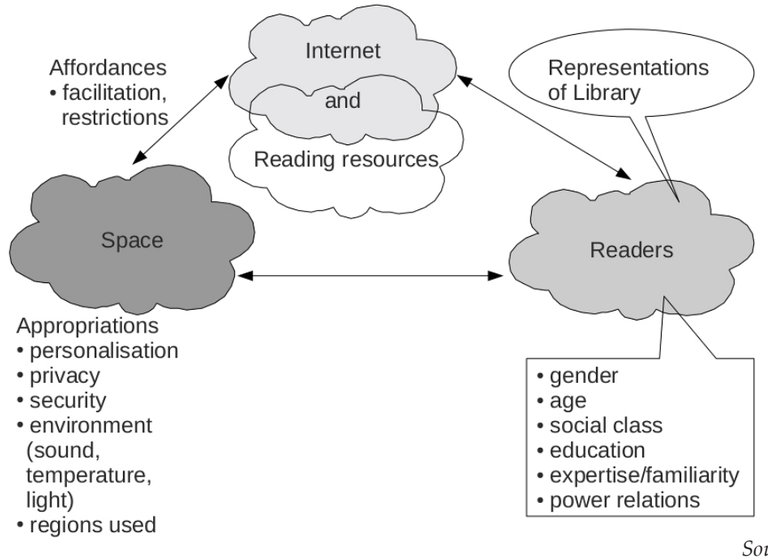
email address: paulasequeiros@ces.uc.pt

Library buildings are artifacts that shape reading practices; readers, inhabiting and appropriating these provided spaces, along with staff, reshape them constantly. While such a statement would not likely raise special contestation on a theoretical level, empirically grounded research on how such processes take place in public libraries is scarce. However, during this particular research process, understanding the interaction between all resources – space and reading materials, the Internet included – enacted through public readers' activities, was considered an important step in the study of library users. As social relations and space relations are dialectically interdependent and interactive, space may be not only an arena for social relations and conflict expression but also a contingent location for their formation.

While researching how space, readers, and the Internet (Feenberg 2002) interacted in a particular public library, and how this reflected on readers' representations of what a public library is, I began by aiming to understand the spatial social relations, the actual reading practices, and the interrelations of all three concepts – space, readers, and the Internet (Sequeiros 2010). This was meant to provide context for the main research objectives and those concepts were to be the main dimensions (or facets) of the research object. Having identified different modes of usage both for library resources and for space, a design of readers' profiles followed. This multidimensional design was aimed to depict the main characteristics of readers, how those usages interrelated, what meanings readers constructed around their own practices, and it was ultimately aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the whole framework through an integrated interpretation of results and an integrated presentation of conclusions.

The initial research question was formulated as: How do Internet appropriations, space use, and public library reading practices all interact, and how does this interaction shape users' representations of what a public library is? The following conceptual map drafts that question.

Figure 1. Conceptual map.



Source: self-elaboration.

As soon as the design of readers' profiles was concluded, they were compared with those previously published, which I knew of. The intermediate result of this comparison presented me with similar findings, as well as a particular profile, which derived from the theoretical-methodological option of including space as a fundamental dimension. As the outcome of this option became clear, I thought it would be advisable to discuss both the theoretical and methodological approaches to the research object and the results these approaches provided. This is why I treat space here as a fundamental dimension of the whole project, while presenting the associated results and conclusions.

Literature Review on Libraries and Space

Below is a list of titles, selected for being light-shedding on the concepts underlying the initial research question. Further reviews were made during the research process to enlighten issues raised from fieldwork.

Buschman and Leckie (2007) edited a comprehensive book on space and libraries, where history, gender, the public sphere sociability are some of the perspectives chosen to address the issues of public libraries.

Hart, Bains, and Jones (1996) refer to diverse categories of library buildings (*temples*, *cathedrals*, *office blocks*, *glasshouses*), which they associate with knowledge production, the arousal of attitudes and emotions.

Recently, some research focused on conviviality as a fundamental trait of a library's life (Audunson 2005; Audunson et al. 2007; Fisher et al. 2007; Aabø, Audunson, and Vårheim 2010). An empirically based research by Given and Leckie (2003), on readers' actual practices in the public space of two libraries, allowed the authors to state that talking was a frequent activity. They reported it as occupying a third place in a parallel with using computers, reading, and writing being first and second activities. Eating and drinking, while not formally allowed, were also observed, which, as a whole, led them to advocate that libraries ought to be conceived more as *interactive places* and less as *silent spaces*.

Christina A. Peterson (2005) focuses on the identification of activities (information seeking, recreation, teaching and learning, connection, contemplation), which informed the planning of a new library and the provision of differentiated areas, but she does neither aim at providing a theoretical framework nor at transferring results.

Terezinha Elizabeth da Silva (2006) associates library architecture to Foucault's concept of *heterochronies* and to the metaphor of human memory and feelings of reverence.

Tina Hohmann (2006) describes some popular buildings and features most appreciated by users.

Drawing profiles, through the categorization of people in the groups by common, shared characteristics, relevant to the research objectives, is a usual procedure when you want to deal with features of social groups and their practices. But, ethnographically based research on public library readers' profiles is equally scarce. Some published papers referring to academic and/or research libraries were not fit for the context under consideration.

Nagata, Sakai, and Kawai (2007) correlate lifestyle values and attitudes to library use in two libraries, and conclude that residents and library visitors present a different distribution of values from the lifestyle perspective. Yet, the reason why they correlate these two dimensions is not quite explicitly stated. What these groups valued is not clear either as far as attitudes towards the library are concerned. Advantages of using such a methodology appear difficult to be sustained from a pragmatic perspective. Bakardjieva (2005) reports some very interesting research on Internet users, although designed for another context. She grouped users into *infosumers* – rationalist users who repudiated online sociability; *instrumental relations* users – associating rational information seeking and exchange with social interaction; those looking for the debate of *ideas* – valuing informational resources, as well as intellectual sociability and political debate; *chatterers* – practicing forms of relaxed and sometimes humorous sociability; the *communitarian* – looking for information and support from people sharing similar identities. Bakardjieva's profile design may apply to similar research on libraries, given the analogies between library readers and Internet users. The profiles indicated in this paper eventually presented some similitude.

Research by Rodrigues (2007), in another Portuguese public library, points to five *modes of relation with the library* – instrumental, cultivated, self-taught, ludic, and convivial – which are very similar to the profiles further presented, except for the absence of the dimension of space.

To address the research question in a theoretically informed way, a literature review was made from which the main concepts were selected to draw a conceptual schema. This was further enriched both from literature and fieldwork issues, depicting the additions made to the problematic during the research process.

Theoretical Framework

Lefèbvre's theory on how space and social relations interact in the production and reproduction of space was a fundamental starting point: being simultaneously a condition and a result of social practices, "itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others" (1991:73).

Being a concrete entity, it should be conceived as a *space of representations*; being also immaterial and symbolic, abstract, the *representations of space* should be considered too.

Lefèbvre's main concern was to surpass space *visibility*, the formal and aesthetic dimensions that do not reveal but instead conceal space sociability by the saturation of images. To unveil the social relations of space, the researcher should consider the interlinked dimensions of form, structure, and function.

Recalling the importance of the opposition between dominated and appropriated spaces, Lefèbvre stresses that property and power issues are a fundamental issue. At this juncture, another approach concurs to the chosen theoretical framework: Michel de Certeau's work on how users

individually appropriate and practice space, eventually circumventing constraints, using strategies and tactical tricks, sometimes in unpredictable ways. His operational definition of place was also borrowed: "an instantaneous configuration of positions, implying an indication of stability … an order in accord with which the elements are distributed in relations of coexistence". Place holds "the univocity or the stability of a 'proper,'" "space is a practiced place" in the context of everyday life (Certeau 1984:173).

Aiming to analyze activities, "*programs* or series of practices through which space is appropriated," Certeau's concept of *region*, a "space created by an interaction," will also be useful (1984:126).

Synthetically, Lefèbvre's approach allows for a comprehensive and deep analysis of spatial social relations, providing a solid basis to relate reading activities to space use. Certeau's perspective on power relations, and his focus on the practiced space, provides guidance on the ethnographic empirical work and on the categorization of readers' actual practices.

Methodology

Pursuing a comprehensive understanding of the whole social reality (Donmoyer 2000), I followed an integrated, intensive, qualitative approach to analyze and interpret not only those practices but also the wider context of relations and processes, as well as the socially constructed meanings attached to them (Blumer 1969; Geertz 1973).

For the purpose of the wider, current research, I adopted Michael Burawoy's Extended Case Method (1998). While comparative approaches favor knowledge *generalizability*, usually through the extensive collection and comparison of data from different cases, a single case methodology makes a stake on knowledge *transferability*, creating knowledge from singular situations. Similar contexts may allow for knowledge transfer, providing there is enough *fittingness* for the produced conclusions.

Social sciences may develop further, in a parallel with personal knowledge accumulation propitiated by vicarious experiences, which enrich individual repertoires. Drawing on the result of single cases, these results may then elicit new questions and, desirably, extend theory.

This single case method allows for a depth of analysis difficult to attain with other methods. Furthermore, linking through theoretical interpretation the micro – unique situation – to the macro – society as a whole – this method will "tell us about **society** as a whole rather than about the **population** of similar cases" (Burawoy 1998 [my emphasis]).

Epistemologically, this approach is based on three fundamental concerns: *reflexivity* – theory does not emerge from data, reflection departs from the existing theory and questions its results in an inter-subjective dialogue with the persons and the processes observed, toward theory reconstruction and improvement (Burawoy 1998); *complexity* – human societies are complex, diverse, living in permanent change and so research should be the result of local, situated, and heterogeneous processes of construction (Nunes 2001); a *dialogical relationship with the observed*, searching for their own interpretations and socially constructed meanings, and a *commitment* with the purpose of the research (Haraway 1988).

The architectural design of Almeida Garrett Public Library is innovative and has been an object of study. Programmed as a library, it could provide clear clues regarding the conceptual fittingness of the architects' project to the municipality demands, whereas a re-qualified building could not.

It is discretely inserted within a public park, in the city of Porto. The relation with the park's traditional space was unclear at the time. Occupation levels are high, there appeared to be social diversity among readers; collections are updated, there is wireless Internet access from the inception, several computers are publicly available, and recreational reading is an important part of this library's activity – not common in Porto's heritage-centered municipal library. All of these made Almeida Garrett an interesting case, selected after consulting experts in the Portuguese public libraries' network.

A non-probabilistic theoretical sample was constructed reflecting the perceived diversity in the library, taking into account dimensions such as gender, age, occupation, ethnicity, visual, and locomotion disabilities. Readers were chosen as to the likelihood of providing interesting information for the research objectives, sometimes with the support of staff (as in the case of frequent visitors). As a qualitative approach was being used, no sample representativeness was sought; the aim was to elicit as much relevant data as possible instead.

Twenty-nine users, one library manager, one assistant librarian, the maintenance supervisor, and the architect were interviewed. When necessary, readers were asked to move and state their remarks on specific spatial features in the very places where they had sensed them. The process ended when data saturation was achieved – data being collected would not add new properties to the researched categories. The empirical research design focused on users' real practices, in the context of social inequalities and power relations.

Seeking a strong ethnographic support, observation was a fundamental tool. The readers' practices were registered in a log for several days during a period of three months, at different times of the day (Burawoy 1998) in 2008. Preferred places, activities undertaken, conflicts, accessibility, gender and age distribution, and attitudes; bodily postures were especially observed. Observation proved to be especially useful to overcome most readers' difficulties to verbalize how they used and felt this space.

Without it, the mezzanine's role as a privileged place for visual control could have passed unnoticed, and the association of the multimedia area to relaxed leisure, declared in an interview, would have stayed unconfirmed.

Photography of bodily postures, activities, facial expressions was a useful tool for a subsequent, detailed analysis (e.g., Figures 4 and 5).

National law allows photographing individuals' public activities in public places. Nevertheless, permission was asked.

I also explained photography purposes – scientific, not commercial publication – and that a collective space was the general target, not faces. No one opposed.

To analyze users' practices and discourses, as well as those of staff, management, and architects, alongside with an aesthetic and functional analysis of the building, I used in-depth, semi-structured interview techniques (Kvale 1996; Seale 2004). I also engaged in informal talks with several staff members, and their opinions, doubts, and clues proved to be valuable. Besides social-demographic data, readers were questioned on their place of residence, modes of movement, activities and frequency of visits, evaluation of functionality and comfort, emotions, privacy and surveillance, preferred/usual places, et cetera.

Children's drawings of the library were also used to supplement their interviews through more informal conversation (Eder and Fingerson 2002).

The use of this set of techniques allowed not only for the collection of diversified types of data but also for the triangulation of methods.

Envisioning reading in public libraries as a public service, I assume favoring the provision of democratic spaces to be enjoyed as places of encounter and discovery (Audunson 2005), be it for culture, leisure, information, or learning purposes. A commitment with the intentionality of the constructed research object and with the purposes of the research is also assumed in an effort to look at this social reality through the eyes of others, establishing a dialogical relation with the social actors in presence, and making a stance for a critical perspective that rejects unquestioned, single-sided, simplistic interpretations (Haraway 1991).

Constructing the Case: A Public Library's Space

The Almeida Garrett Public Library was inaugurated in 2001 and soon achieved high occupation rates. This is the second public library in the city, the older one being more directed to research, with only one small room with free-access to the shelves.

The library is inserted within a 19th century large public park in Porto. Its romantic design includes rose gardens, lakes, gigantic trees, and a magnificent view over the Douro River. Presently, it hosts a sports pavilion, a restaurant, and a children's park. The area is well-served by public transportation, and the library is half way from both city centers, the historical and the tertiary centre.

The three dimensions Lefèbvre (1991) posits as fundamental in social space analysis – form, function, and structure – were empirically applied to ensure that mere visibility is overcome and that social and power relations are unveiled. Further categorization of empirical data developed through qualitative, thematic analysis, partially emerging from the theoretical framework and partially constructed from empirical data coding (Seale 2004).

Concepts and Function

Figure 2. The main façade of the Almeida Garrett Library.

Source: photo by indicopleustes, Flickr.

The architect, José Manuel Soares, wanted to "bring the garden into the library," instead of imposing a building to the garden. Similarly, the control of natural light should neither block a relation with the surroundings nor veil the singularity of the place. These were the central concepts to the architectural program, as transmitted by the administration: free access to stacks; a library for "those who are about to have a first contact with books," as well as for students; a library where one could walk in or out freely, "in continuity with the public space." He planned a flexible space, adaptable through time. Inspired by the idea of a Jesuit church, he drew a central, collective nave, and lateral, small spaces, which might simultaneously facilitate individual appropriation and avoid dispersion.

Structure

Figure 3. The inner face of the main façade to the right, the park trees may be seen at the end.

Source: photo by Eva Lima.

Figure 4. Rear façade.

Source: photo by Paula Sequeiros.

According to some readers, the building's insertion in the park is acknowledged and appreciated as "it's integrated in Nature." Actually, only children use it frequently. Visitors may glance at neighboring houses, urban insertion was not concealed.

The library occupies two of the four levels, while an art gallery, a garage, and a technical area occupy the other two. Visibility over the whole surface is allowed in each floor.

Wireless connection to the Internet is available.

Soares stated that he tried to avoid a hierarchical distribution of services by floors: the hierarchy of spaces was strategically used instead to create decreasing noise levels as visitors progress along through them, still allowing for a global reading of space. However, power relations associated to space usage were to be observed in the multimedia region use – including the TV sets availability – in the use of the mezzanine or in the creation of a reading atmosphere. All of these are analyzed further, and are dealt with in detail by Sequeiros (2010; 2011).

Form and Design

The lobbies and staircase are overlaid with very white marble. In a brutalist manner, rows of halved pine-wood logs dress, as a curtain, the UV filtering glass main façade, dissimulating it amidst the garden. The remaining floors and furniture are made of light-colored wood, which also partially lines most of the interior walls, and walls are painted predominantly white.

Simple, pure lines, well-defined surfaces predominate. The ceiling has a wavy design for acoustic improvement.

This is an almost open space, though separate, specialized areas were conceived. Alongside the main floor runs a corridor leading to the adults' areas. The children's area, by the entrance and in a slightly inferior level, is separated from those by a glass wall, not reaching the ceiling, added later to soundproof the incoming noise. In the main floor there is a series of corners with sofas, tables in sets of two or four by the front, and back façades; at the far end, there are tables in rows and an area with computers and Internet access; in the middle, a mezzanine reveals an inferior level for multimedia and computers with Internet connection.

A patio mediates the space between the cafeteria and the children's area, so relatives may wait there and still watch over their children, which is in accordance with Eigenbrodt's desirable requirements of "communication, access, orientation and freedom of designing library facilities for everyone" (2008:101).

Evaluating and Sensing Space

A Place Within Reach

The location was also appreciated, most of the interviewed use public transportation to get there, some just walk. Many come from neighboring cities.

The building is generally accessible for those with limited mobility; a lift is also available to transport baby prams.

A computer workstation is dedicated to the blind or amblyopic.

Crossing the winding garden paths, however, may be difficult for blind persons who sometimes ask for personal guidance.

A Place to Feel

Further to an initial difficulty in qualifying space, readers resorted to hypallages (Lefèbvre 1991) when praising the light and transparency and the integration in the park. In my view, the often mentioned *transparency* and *openness* are, above all, the architect's well-succeeded translation of the concepts of free-access and continuity within public space underlying the architectural program.

Although adults are not frequent visitors, they declared that the garden transmitted a calming sensation.

No particular remarks were made on light, ventilation, temperature, or acoustic conditions, although both the architect and the maintenance officer acknowledged ventilation problems.

Readers expressed their great satisfaction to be able to enjoy such a high quality space, and devalued those issues.

I could observe how readers weaved their reading cocoons: reading gave way to an *absent impertinence*, (Certeau 1984), desensitizing from other physical stimuli: two peacocks paced unnoticed along the window-sills during one of the interviews.

Emotionally, although indulging in diverse activities, they collectively wove a *reading atmosphere* (Sequeiros 2010; 2011), a mixed product of the social spatial relations (Lefèbvre 1991) and of physical, sensory, emotional, and aesthetic features. Tranquility, organization, concentration, the possibility of integrating a stimulating intellectual labor ambiance were singled out as valued characteristics. Such an atmosphere, however, is not enjoyable if staying home.

For a few readers, with personal histories of surpassing barriers to become library users, their present status is proudly felt as an accomplishment: a woman, daughter of manual workers who toiled to get their children educated, and who became blind in her adolescence, now reads in Braille; a retired male reader, attending the Senior University, rejoices in watching young people study, a chance he didn't get in his own time.

A Public Place, Personal and Private

Figure 5. Studying in the mezzanine.

Source: photo by Paula Sequeiros.

A curious story of users' appropriation was registered: spaces, presently serving as reading surfaces all around the mezzanine, were originally designed to be waist-level shelves. As users were uncomfortable when picking books from them, and this is a coveted area for its central emplacement, they began removing those shelves and sitting there. The management did not oppose. Some particular forms of space appropriation and tactics of place-making could be observed, and displacing some pieces of furniture is an accepted practice. Children may bring in their toys and drawing materials. Chairs were moved according to personal tastes. Some users, particularly students, sometimes use tricks (Certeau 1984) to create additional space and to signal that they don't want company: they scatter books and personal objects on neighboring tables to reserve space. After all, this silent competition appears to be based on assumptions of a legitimated presence supported by the credentials of their occupational status: students are naturally expected to be found here.

Personal, private space created by reading is like a bubble, soft, but protecting. The rules of co-reading are passed along with learning to read. Bourdieu developed the concept of *habitus* to designate "a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks" (1979:72). It is this practical knowledge, this set of dispositions that entitles readers to naturally expect not to be disturbed.

"I need my private space, [but] live among a lot of people," a therapeutic community. In this library, reading "is never-ending, it means finding the words for things, resting, and reflecting…very pleasurable." "If I stopped leading the life I'm used to in public spaces, I would certainly miss a true pleasure and the real harmony I'm looking for" [woman, 40 years].

The need for privacy is differently felt, seeming to vary according to housing conditions, gender, and social class: a young woman dislikes being stared at "in an unpleasant way" by men; the homeless reader does not oppose to having his screen watched while surfing, "they're not going to take any bite away from me!" The sole idea of lack of privacy in the library makes the young couple, sharing a single social-housing apartment with twelve others, laugh out loud: home was the place where they lacked privacy the most. Petit states: "[t]he absence of intimacy is perhaps the best poverty indicator, even more than income" (2001:118).

Cell phones ringing is the most annoying intrusion reported, occasionally leading users to ask for staff intervention.

Aural technology is sometimes used to reinforce those personal, individualized atmospheres (Bull 2006). Wearing headphones also signals a wish not to be disturbed.

Almost all referred to a form of relational contract (Certeau 1984) to tacitly regulate co-presence: using a public space requires concessions over the personally reserved one.

Lockers in the lobby are rarely used. Security lock chain cables for portable PCs may be borrowed

at the reception as some thefts were registered in the past.

Surveillance by security guards and cameras, which are not spontaneously noticed, are felt as protective measures. The library is sensed as a safe space, as the surrounding garden is, in general.

A Place for Conviviality

Visiting the library is a social act: children are usually accompanied by adults, some adults and adolescents come in pairs or groups. At times, a certain small talk goes on, maybe around the latest news headlines, as the observed case around the sharp rise in bread prices. Co-presence is valued, even if others are not addressed to; usual faces may be memorized and discreetly followed.

The need to socialize is clearly felt by many. *Proximity without propinquity*, according to Park's expression (as cited in Tonkiss 2005), a withdrawal inherent to reading overlaps with the need for privacy characteristic of urban lives. A former typographer, nowadays a homeless person, says: "above all, I like coming here a lot when I'm feeling down, I come in and it seems I reinvigorate! Crossing that door seems like home to me, as if it was my own family, I feel superbly well!"

Some students and informal scholars declared that they look particularly for the togetherness (Bakardjieva 2004) propitiated by a collective atmosphere of order and concentration: "look, all the other people are also doing the same as I am, so [this is useful] to soften things a little [laughing] if it's something I don't like to do, that's what I try to think about" [male student, 34-year-old]; "there are some behaviors that are more or less predictable and there is a certain intrinsic order here that is motivating" [female student, 40-year-old].

The apparent social diversity is appreciated, senior readers like watching younger people and children, "different faces every day," the homeless reader declares to enjoy the social and age diversity.

Differences and Inequalities

The most economically dispossessed revealed a unique capacity to reflect on (and cherish!) the opportunities offered by a public library, revealing also that these perspectives were closely tied to their social positioning, what Haraway (1988) named the *vantage points of the subjugated*. They also expressed great concerns about probable budget cuts within the ongoing privatization of public services.

Some users referred to what they considered to be the legitimate practices (Bourdieu and Darbel 1966:60) within a library. They sometimes complain if other readers do not meet these standards, informally prescribing what they assume to be the adequate behavior. Which is clearly correlated with the predominating class status: manual workers are seldom found here, the average user is the student or the more educated, intellectual worker, as usually occurs at a national level (Freitas, Casanova, and Alves 1997; Fortuna and Fontes 2000).

I could not find evidence from field observation to support the generalized assumption on feminization of library spaces. However, a clear gender difference was perceived in the absence of middle-aged or elder women: gender differences within illiteracy rates do not seem to explain their absence; unlike men and younger women, their leisure is still most likely confined to domesticity. The single exception was a woman who became a frequent library visitor during her long residence abroad.

Nor did I find evidence of ethnic segregation in spite of the regular presence, then, of a noisy and large group of African adolescents.

The spot for the visually impaired is appreciated, though underused.

In spite of positive staff attitudes regarding social inclusion, some aspects call for improvement. The urban figure of the homeless person may embody subjective insecurity feelings, leading to fantasizing and amplifying real insecurity situations (Fernandes 2003). Symptomatically, no real danger situation was ever reported on the premises. As they began entering in groups to watch films, homeless readers were targeted as a problem by some users who complained about couches being used to sleep on, and TV sets being occupied for too long. Subsequently, one TV set was removed, one was assigned for documentaries, only two were left for feature films. I could observe that some normal users do sleep in the (comfortable!) couches upstairs, which is ignored by staff and other readers, generally.

The architect planned to avoid discrimination in the allocation of space, associated to floor status. Still, signs of social differentiation could be traced, attached not to space but to document physical support: multimedia, in the lower floor, requires less cultural capital than books (Bourdieu 1979), relaxed attitudes and bodily postures developed in this area are clear markers of a corporal *hexis* tied to class (Bourdieu 1977).

Readers' Profiles of a Public Library

With this vision of a library inside a wide park in the back of my mind, some metaphors arose as a meaningful way to communicate the characteristics of profiles. Leaning on Haraway's use of metaphors (1988), these devices were used to add more sense to the features of profiles, intending to rely on common situated knowledge (as characteristics associated to animals in folk tales). Simultaneously, they were used to rely on the perspectives of those observed, their values and meanings. These profiles were an original result of this case study, while showing some similarity to others previously published, as referred.

Bees

The purpose of *occupational users* is to actively occupy their time in a useful way, whether they presently have a paid work or not. Their stronger motivations: to benefit from an environment favoring study and from free resources. Tasks may be organized and planned in detail, from subjects to schedules. They may stay for the whole day, several days, a week: "I leave when the lights go off, [when] I have no choice! … Now that my day has ended, I may focus on something else" [male reader, 34-year-old, unemployed]. A female assiduous reader belongs to the so-called *residents*, the local librarians' nickname for the regulars. "The day goes by more quickly, it's more productive" [female, 28-year-old, unemployed].

They research and write on matters according to their education or curiosity, they train for job competitions. Unemployed or retired are words avoided in personal narratives, surely for the common social stigma; but their disposition and a work ethic, adapted to their present situation, all seem to shape their practices. Were they at an office or university, we would not hesitate to state they *are* working.

Some of the adults, all holding degrees, come to enjoy the company of others and the togetherness of the like-minded, which help discipline their work; some are elderly citizens: one man, strolling from one continent to another, benefits from the Internet access to update his biographical site; another one needs "something to occupy his time;" a woman comes mostly to use computing facilities she can't personally afford. For half of the interviewed, using the Internet is the main purpose of the visit, two brought their portables and listened to music with headphones; another two referred to the Internet as a secondary resource.

Other main activities vary, reading newspapers is the most frequent; a female reader is a multiple user (varied resources in diverse supports); one studies; another borrows books and trains computing and language skills, benefiting from an environment she considers more stimulating for studying than the therapeutic community she lives in; another one writes notes on the city's history.

Their activities stay anchored to the tables and become visually noticeable when writing, plugging laptops, changing belongings from one place to another. They occupy the same regions as *students* and *scholars*, further on referred to.

Butterflies

Strolling readers, unlike occupational ones, have no specific activity or purpose, just want to stroll around and spend time in a pleasant and accompanied way, although generally not interacting – resembling Wirth's (1964 [1938]) urban strollers. While strolling they glance at newspapers and magazines, music or video CDs, Internet pages, books, eventually picking items regardless of support. Less qualified (secondary school or less), they are manual workers, retired, unemployed people of different ages, some are children.

Most used areas are multimedia, couches, circulating zones. The mentioned homeless reader comes for one or two hours every day. His street companions persuaded him: "you watch a movie and when you go out you feel quite another person!" He enjoys age diversity, watching new faces, but, above all, reading the newspaper, especially – and most ironically – the one he got fired from. He appreciates closed spaces where he can feel safe.

Another 50-year-old stroller, a former car mechanic, acknowledges that others come in seeking "not to be alone," which he himself does not admit to be doing. Having used to read intensely, "maybe it was a refuge," he nowadays has an eye condition, reason he declares for preferring the Internet which he can't afford at home.

A 9-year-old girl comes every Saturday in the company of an adult sister and an elder brother. Regretting she can't stay longer for the Story Hour – her sister must cook lunch – she reads a little at home; her brother, 12-year-old, reads a lot, especially before falling asleep, and always borrows a film before leaving.

And yet, another interesting case: a very young couple comes in pushing two baby prams. Both 22-year-old and under the minimum educational level, the mother is enrolling as a reader, he guides her as an experienced user (here and abroad where he was raised). They live in a single room, sharing a single social-housing apartment crowded with unemployed or under-qualified relatives. They plan to come with the children and use the Internet every Saturday, which they value for the information on baby care, "more than the doctor says" during consultations, to look for baby games, and to send SMSs. She reads very little, but she reads aloud for the babies. He prefers films and music. They value this wide, clean, ordered space, quieter than a cybercafé, where they can finally find some privacy.

Sparrows

For *recreational readers* the library is mainly a recreation and conviviality space. *Sparrows* gaily engage in flock flights, peeping, and playing all the time. Most of the multiple readers interviewed occasionally bring their own toys in, they attend events, including reading aloud. They may meet and join other children in games, or participate in school visits.

Most used regions are the children's and the multimedia areas. Almost all of them also take a walk in the garden or go to the children's park.

"I read grown-up books about trucks, at school I only read teaching books, I borrow some and play with the computer [here]." As a regular player, an 8-year-old boy, created a user profile in a PC. He comes from an adjacent city with his parents.

"Here above it's more for reading, down there [multimedia] it's more for leisure, to be more relaxed" – an African immigrant, in his forties, comes to the library to enjoy several rest days. An international truck driver added another library card to those issued in European cities where he occasionally lived. He intends to email friends and relatives, scattered all over the world, and to spend time enjoying whatever documents are available. He is the only adult in this group. It's worth noting that, in spite of the dreams of a *leisure society*, and in spite of a growing number of people without paid work, leisure activities still carry the burden of a stigma under a dominating productivist ideology. While consumerist leisure activities are well-envisaged, that may not be the case of others, more tolerated than supported – as a user said, you should not do in a library "things libraries aren't meant for."

All the others are children who burst in accompanied by relatives and teachers. The interviewed are aged from 4 to 8.

They draw, play computer games, read books, or attend reading sessions. Almost all of them have books at home. They use chairs, cushions, or lie on the floor. They know what they're not allowed to do: to scribble on books, to step on top of tables. Laughing and moving at ease, sometimes they run. Some are scolded by the staff for using the ramp to get to the top of stacks.

On Saturdays, during Story Hour, the room becomes too narrow to accommodate all the children and their relatives. As the temperature rises, books and sheets of paper are used as fans.

The majority prefer to play with the computer. A 7-year-old boy, a multiple reader, draws a library grasping several crayons at the same time: "books are multicolored;" using several small squares, he orders the sheet's blank space in a fashion similar to the computer game he played with; he depicts himself and inscribes "I read" in the space signaled as *Library*; the external context is a smiling bright sun, stars, and his football club symbol.

Ants

Student readers come to study, sometimes in groups or dyads. Some of the interviewees are still attending their degree classes, one is taking a Master's course, they come to study themes in their specialty domains, their ages range from 24 to near 40.

They are motivated by conviviality, and by a relaxed environment, joining others equally occupied. The choice for this library and their reading are instrumental, as many university libraries don't usually allow group study. The library's bibliographic resources aren't much used.

They come mostly after lunch, carrying their own books, sometimes laptops, some use mobile audio to create aural privacy.

They mainly occupy individual tables, workstations with Internet access on ground or inferior floors, and, eventually, the vacant tables at the extreme end. Sometimes they use tricks to create extra space: clothes, bags, books are scattered, signaling they are not willing to share the next coupled table; they sometimes frown at people chatting, making clear that their labor is being disturbed. As Certeau signaled, these *tactics* are "a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus" and "[t]he space of the tactic is the space of the other" (1984:36-37). *Students* compete for space, silently, but actively, common-sense assumptions on adequate uses and users appear to legitimize their presence, taking their occupation as a *natural* and sufficient credential. Some express their contentment for an environment that has no complete silence and state a preference for a light background murmur.

Owls

Scholar readers, a small group in this library, indulge in researching some favorite theme – frequently local history – or to complete a formal education, studying autonomously, at their own pace. They are also drawn by conviviality. As experienced users, they know every corner. They frequently take notes from readings and write essays. Their presence, quite discrete, is highly regarded both by other users and staff. They're very likely to be *residents*.

An elderly scholar states how it pleases him to find answers in the library's collections for the "doubts that trouble" him, and how he enjoys watching younger people at study. He also made a point of declaring that such a cultural good should not be measured only according to financial standards, considering both its importance to the "cultural yield of the population" and its contribution to citizenship.

Cats

To keep up with the news, to read newspapers or magazines, is the purpose of *informed readers*. Elder users predominate; it is an almost exclusively male group. Usually, they do not use other media, just a few use the Internet for that purpose, their readings are instrumental, although perhaps, as detailed below, in surprising ways. Coincidently or not, several disclosed to be reserved persons and declined to be interviewed. No significant social interaction with other users or staff was observed.

They occupy the press corner, sitting on sofas. Their attitude is discrete, not so relaxed as in the multimedia area. Places remain occupied all day long with a high rotation, readers sometimes having to wait for their turn.

An elder male reader admits that, although he likes to read, he sometimes has short-memory issues. "Knowledge, it simply makes you grow, [but] that's not for me, not anymore," so reading simply became a part of his exercise to stay mentally healthy.

A man in his thirties searches the Internet, which he appreciates a lot, since it is free. He looks for a job and reads several newspapers, especially sports papers, compares the news, and sends e-mails.

The Residents, a Subgroup

Resident readers are the regulars, tending to concentrate around the mezzanine. It is a privileged spot to visually control the whole place. This was my first assumption, which the interview with the architect confirmed as very plausible.

This subgroup is mainly composed of scholars but also of *occupational* readers.

Some elder male readers benefit from the special care of a very attentive librarian: noticed absences may trigger her need to be further informed about their health. In her own words: "this is their second home," "they get accustomed to us, and we to them!" An anecdotal case may, in spite of its singularity, depict how they feel entitled to this special care: an elderly male reader once knocked at the staff entrance door, carrying his own sofa, and asking to have it placed beside his usual table.

They use the complaints book, a resource scarcely known to other users.

This familiarity, the frequency and duration of visits, their competition for personal attention, all facilitate their acting as a pressure group. They have a noticeable role in the tacit regulation of conducts, as in the production of a reading atmosphere (complaints on noise levels, on inadequate behaviors). Counteracting this, we may still hear some commentaries from less skilled personnel, judging them for "not doing a thing in life, besides going there," associating negative values to this form of leisure.

A single note on a particular kind of reader: the loners – I could trace numerous lonely people, people to whom a collective, common space like this is probably the only opportunity to feel accompanied and to be inserted in a lively atmosphere.

Conclusions

The adopted methodology proved to be adequate to support an in-depth, prolonged, and committed approach to understanding this social reality.

Conceptually, the comprehensive analysis of relations among public reading practices, space use, and readers' practices allowed for an integrated

vision of the usage of resources, associated to emotions and meanings. It also afforded clues as to a social analysis of those relations, according to the selected dimensions of class, gender, age, ethnicity, power relations, education, et cetera. Space appropriation proved to be a relevant dimension to analyze reading in a public library and to construct meaningful users' profiles. The consideration of spatial social relations rendered the *butterflies*' activities visible, space appropriation being essential to this profile, not previously documented, to my knowledge. The same occurred with the association of social inequalities and power relations to the usage of regions, as was the case of the removal of TV sets in the multimedia area.

The architectural program's concepts were translated into the building's design, they were perceived, even if communicated through linguistic devices, and appreciated.

Almeida Garrett's urban location is convenient, although probably not determinant, judging from the number of readers drawn from neighboring localities; easiness of public transportation is appreciated. The library building is finely integrated in the surrounding garden. Rather than a traditional library, it is being used as a civic centre. The library provides enough differentiation and flexibility for personal or group appropriation of space and resources, receives readers from different social conditions and with diverse expectations, propitiates different gradients of intimacy and publicness, and assures accessibility for some disabilities. Reasons to visit it, besides reading, are diversified and sometimes more relevant than reading: from conviviality (togetherness, not being alone, low-interaction and non-consumption, social diversity) to a self-fulfilling occupation, to enjoying a space of quality and safety, to gratuity, to playing, to having a place to study, to relaxing, to collecting useful information for everyday-life purposes, or to enjoying privacy.

Social and usage diversity must be deepened and cherished to stimulate the participation in a democratic space that fosters the co-presence and the connection of these differences. The reading atmosphere is welcoming for its scale, spatiality, materials, and social interaction, but should be extended to absent or under-represented social groups. This reading atmosphere should also be nurtured by the institution as a value to preserve.

The analysis of the different reading and social practices categorized above, and of their connection to space appropriation, may inform the management's decisions to improve services and to provide space. It might foster a clearer vision of a public library's role, of what readers appreciate the most, in general, and what particular groups value and need.

Acknowledgments

My doctoral research project was supported by the FCT, Ministry of Science, Portugal, and the POPH/FSE.

FCT Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO E CIÊNCIA
POPH

I thank those who contributed with their personal narratives, as well as the photographers who portrayed the library on Flickr and Eva Lima whose pictures I borrowed.

References

Aabø, Svanhild, Ragnar Audunson, and Andreas Vårheim. 2010. "How do public libraries function as meeting places?" *Library & Information Science Research* 32(1):16-26.

Audunson, Ragnar. 2005. "The public library as a meeting-place in a multicultural and digital context: The necessity of low-intensive meeting-places." *Journal of Documentation* 61(3):429-441.

Audunson, Ragnar et al. 2007. "Public libraries, social capital, and low intensive meeting places." *Information Research* 12(4). Retrieved October 17, 2011 (http://informationr.net/ir/12-4/colis/colis20.html).

Bakardjieva, Maria. 2004. "Virtual Togetherness An Everyday Life Perspective." Pp. 121-142 in *Community in the Digital Age: Philosophy and Practice*, edited by Darin David Barney and Andrew Feenberg. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Bakardjieva, Maria. 2005. "Becoming an Internet User in Bulgaria: Notes on a Tangled Journey." *Media Studies/Studia Medioznawcze* 3(22):103-117.

Blumer, Herbert. 1969. *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1979. *La distinction: critique sociale du jugement de goût*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Alain Darbel. 1966. *L'amour de l'art: les musées et leur public*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

Bull, Michael. 2006. "Investigating the culture of mobile listening: from Walkman to iPod." Pp. 131-149 *in Consuming music together: Social and collaborative aspects of music consumption technologies*, edited by Michael Bull, Kenton O'Hara, and Barry Brown. Dordrecht: Springer.

Burawoy, Michael. 1998. "The extended case method." *Sociological Theory* 16(1):4-33.

Buschman, John and Gloria J. Leckie, (eds.). 2007. *The library as place: History, community, and culture*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Certeau, Michel, de. 1984. *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Donmoyer, Robert. 2000. "Generalizability and the single case study." Pp. 45-68 in *Case study method: Key issues, key texts*, edited by Roger Gomm, Martyn Hammersley, and Peter Foster. London: Sage.

Eder, Donna and Laura Fingerson. 2002. "Interviewing children and adolescents." Pp. 181-201 in *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*, edited by Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Eigenbrodt, Olaf. 2008. "Designing Library Facilities for Everyone? Providing Space for Informational Participation." Retrieved July 1, 2010 (http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/conferences/bobcatsss2008/eigenbrodt-olaf-89/PDF/eigenbrodt.pdf).

Feenberg, Andrew. 2002. *Transforming Technology : A Critical Theory Revisited*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fernandes, Luís. 2003. "A imagem predatória da cidade." Pp. 53-62 in *Etnografias urbanas*, edited by Graça Índias Cordeiro, Luís Vicente Baptista, and António Firmino Da Costa. Oeiras: Celta.

Fisher, Karen E. et al. 2007. "Seattle Public Library as place: reconceptualizing space, community, and information at the Central Library." Pp. 135-160 in *The library as place*, edited by John E. Buschman and Gloria J. Leckie. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Fortuna, Carlos and Fernando Fontes. 2000. *Bibliotecas públicas, utilizadores e comunidades: o caso da Biblioteca Municipal António Botto*. Lisbona: Observatório Das Actividades Culturais.

Freitas, Eduardo de, José Luís Casanova, and Nuno de Almeida Alves. 1997. *Hábitos de leitura: um inquérito à população portuguesa*. Lisbona: Dom Quixote.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *A interpretação das culturas*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar.

Given, Lisa M. and Gloria J. Leckie. 2003. "'Sweeping' the library: Mapping the social activity space of the public library." *Library & Information Science Research* 25:365-385.

Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14(3):575-599.

Haraway, Donna. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.

Hart, Chris, Manmohan Bains, and Kathryn Jones. 1996. "The myth of material knowledge: Reading the image of library buildings." *New Library World* 97(1127):23-31.

Hohmann, Tina. 2006. "New aspects of library design." *Liber Quarterly: The Journal of European Research Libraries* 16(2). Retrieved January 07, 2010 (http://webdoc.gwdg.de/edoc/aw/liber/lq-2-06/hohmann.pdf).

Kvale, Steinar. 1996. *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lefèbvre, Henri. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Nagata, Haruki, Kanako Sakai, and Tetsuya Kawai. 2007. "Public library and users' lifestyle in a changing context." *Performance Measurement and Metrics* 8(3): 197-210.

Nunes, João Arriscado. 2001. "Teoria crítica, cultura e ciência: O(s) espaço(s) e o(s) conhecimento(s) da globalização." Pp. 297-228 in *Globalização: fatalidade ou utopia?*, edited by Boaventura de Sousa Santos. Porto: Afrontamento.

Peterson, Christina A. 2005. "Space designed for lifelong learning: The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. joint-use library." Pp. 56-65 in *Library as place: Rethinking roles, rethinking space*. Washington, DC: Council on Library and Information Resources.

Petit, Michèle. 2001. *Lecturas : del espacio íntimo al espacio público*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Rodrigues, Eduardo Alexandre. 2007. "A biblioteca e os seus públicos: uma proposta interpretativa." *Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas* (53):135-157.

Seale, Clive. 2004. *Researching Society and Culture*. London: Sage.

Sequeiros, Paula. 2010. "Ler uma biblioteca nas inscrições de leitores, espaço e Internet: usos e representações de biblioteca pública." PhD dissertation, University of Porto, Portugal. Retrieved October 10, 2010 (http://eprints.rclis.org/15815/).

Sequeiros, Paula. 2011. "The social weaving of a reading atmosphere." *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 43(4):261-270.

Silva, Terezinha Elisabeth, da. 2006. "Bibliotecas: metáforas da memória." *Encontros Bibli* 21(28):85-94.

Tonkiss, Fran. 2005. *Space, the City and Social Theory: Social Relations and Urban Forms*. Oxford: Polity Press.

Wirth, Louis. 1964 [1938]. "Urbanism as a way of life." Pp. 60-83 in *On cities and social life*, edited by Albert J. Reiss Jr. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Sequeiros, Paula. 2013. **"**Reading in Public Libraries: Space, Reading Activities, and User Profiles**."** *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9(3):220-240. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

QSR

Available Online
www.qualitativesociologyreview.org

For all sociologists for whom interpretative paradigm and qualitative research methodology are basic perspectives of studying social reality. In order to enable a free flow of information and to integrate the community of qualitative sociologists.

EVERYWHERE ~ EVERY TIME

Cultures of Narrative and Narratives of Culture

& Special Summer Edition

Volume IX ~ Issue 3
July 31, 2013

EDITORS OF THEMATIC ISSUE: Antony J. Puddephatt, Steven Kleinknecht & Carrie B. Sanders
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Krzysztof T. Konecki
ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Anna Kacperczyk, Sławomir Magala
EXECUTIVE EDITORS: Łukasz T. Marciniak, Magdalena Wojciechowska
MANAGING EDITOR: Magdalena Chudzik
LINGUISTIC EDITOR: Jonathan Lilly
COVER DESIGNER: Anna Kacperczyk

ON THE COVERS: Installation of Elena Tkachenko from Russia (2010) *Presentiment of love,* Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź (2013)

ISSN: 1733-8077