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Morality, Deviance, and Regulation: Pragmatist Motifs in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*

Abstract

Envisioning morality, deviance, and regulation as enduring features of human group life, and using symbolic interaction (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969; Prus 1996; Prus and Grills 2003) as a conceptual device for traversing the corridors of time, this paper asks what we may learn about deviance and morality as humanly engaged realms of community life by examining Plato's (420-348 BCE) *Republic* and *Laws*.

Focusing on the articulation of two model communities, with *Republic* primarily under the guidance of a set of philosopher-kings and *Laws* more comprehensively under the rule of a constitution, Plato considers a wide array of matters pertinent to the study of morality, deviance, and regulation.

Thus, whereas many social scientists have dismissed Plato's texts as the works of a "utopian idealist" and/or an "ancient philosopher," *Republic* and *Laws* have much to offer to those who approach the study of human knowing and acting in more distinctively pragmatist sociological terms.

Indeed, because these two volumes address so many basic features of community life (including morality, religion, politics, poetics, and education) in extended detail, they represent particularly valuable transhistorical and transcultural comparison points for contemporary analysis.

Although the products of a somewhat unique period in Western civilization (i.e., the classical Greek era, circa 700-300 BCE), Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* are very much studies of social order. Plato's speakers, in each case, clearly have notions of the moral order that they wish to promote, but, to their sociological credit, they also embark on more distinctively analytic considerations of the broader processes and problematics of humanly engaged life worlds.

Still, given the practical restraints of a single paper and the extended relevance of Plato's texts for the topics at hand, readers are cautioned that the present statement focuses primarily on those materials from *Republic* that most directly address deviance and regulation and mainly the first six books of *Laws*.

Employing Prus and Grills (2003) depictions of deviance as a series of generic social processes as a contemporary reference point, the paper concludes with a consideration of the relevance and contributions of Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* for the study of morality, deviance, and regulation as fundamental features of human group life.

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Keywords

Morality; Deviance; Crime; Regulation; Plato; Aristotle; *Republic*; *Laws*; Pragmatism; Symbolic Interaction; Agency; Community; Justice.

Although people often try to explain morality, deviance and regulation as matters unto themselves, this is an extremely myopic and counterproductive mode of scholarship. Before one can adequately understand deviance, crime, and the like, as well as regulatory agendas and associated treatment programs, it is necessary to understand the nature of human group life. This is because matters of morality, deviance, and regulation not only take place within the context of community life but also exist as meaningful essences only within the broader, interconnected realms of human knowing and acting.

It may seem odd to some readers, as well, that a contemporary consideration of morality, deviance, and regulation would take us back to the classical Greek era (circa 700-300 BCE). However, it is to be appreciated that contemporary notions of morality, deviance, and regulation are not the sudden and dramatic inventions of the more immediate present, but instead are the products of much more enduring realms of human interchange. Nor, likewise are sociological explanations of crime and deviance, that is explanations based on the nature of human group life, limited to the scholarship of the last century or so (i.e., following Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and other commonly recognized progenitors of the sociological tradition). Not only do important aspects of these conceptualizations clearly predate the classical Greek era (e.g., Egyptian, Babylonian), but they also seem destined to be relevant as long as there are people.

Because (a) virtually all realms of contemporary Western thought and activity are rooted in classical Greek thought and practices, and (b) Plato's texts have assumed a particularly central role in the ways that people have conveyed and sustained these notions to the present time, it is most instructive to see what Plato has to say on these matters. Still, because (c) scholarship has not been developed (as in sustained, expanded) in more encompassing, linear terms, and (d) much has been lost inadvertently as well as through censorship, ignorance, and diversionary intrigues, it is important to examine Plato's materials on morality and community life in more focused ways.

Plato cannot be expected to anticipate all the fluxes, flows, and disjunctures of Western social thought that would take place over the next 2,500 years. However, and more consequentially, Plato is attentive to the matter of locating morality (including socialization, relationships, activities, and regulation) within the broader context of ongoing community life.

Accordingly, deviance, crime, regulation, and such are to be understood not just with respect to people's notions of education, religion, poetics (fictionalized entertainment), and governing practices, but also mindfully of the ways in which people, as agents, take these matters into account as they participate in ongoing community life.

Although Plato does not provide us with specific ethnographic instances and, instead, seems primarily intent on establishing the foundations of a model state in both *Republic* and *Laws*, his speakers, more or less continuously, discuss fairly prototypic instances of human lived experience and assess their options and the viability of people pursuing particular lines of regulatory activity.

If one uses more conventional, Chicago-style interactionist ethnography as a reference point, it appears that Plato would not qualify as an ethnographer. However, when one asks about an “ethnography of philosophy,” Plato and (his student) Aristotle (384-322 BCE) would have few peers. In addition to establishing philosophy as a field of academic endeavor in the western world and developing the central texts within Western social thought, Plato and Aristotle also provide a great deal of historical and time-situated material that address the ways in which people more generally engage (i.e., learn about, make sense of, and practice) philosophy within the context of ongoing community life. I am not making the case that Plato should be defined as an ethnographer. However, because his texts address matters of human knowing and acting in notable detail, they represent invaluable historical comparison points for considering notions of morality, deviance, and regulation in more sustained terms.

Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* in Context

Not only are *Republic* and *Laws* the most extensive of Plato's extant texts, but also constitute those of Plato's texts that deal most comprehensively with the affairs of the state. It is instructive, thus, to put these texts in perspective, if only in the briefest of terms.

First, whereas (a) some of Plato's best known texts (e.g., *Timaeus*, *Phaedo*) have a pronounced theological quality amidst a broader philosophic base, (b) others address virtue in more central terms (e.g., *Crito*, *Socrates Defense or Apology*), and (c) many of his other texts represent sustained instances of dialectic engagement in which relativist, skepticist viewpoints are invoked as Plato's speakers engage the matters of human knowing and acting in a wide array of fields (e.g. *Cratylus* on language; *Laches* on courage; *Theaetetus* on knowing), (d) *Republic* and *Laws* have a more distinctive humanly engaged, pragmatist quality within a yet broader, multifaceted (theological, virtuous, and dialectic) consideration of community life.

Second, Plato's texts are not equally well known, nor have they been equally well received. Thus, although *Timaeus* has long been given a prominent presence in Christian theological circles (in large part because of Augustine, 354-430 CE) and *Republic* appears to have inspired a series of utopian texts and other treatises on political science following its reappearance after the crusades, and Plato's *Symposium* (on love) and *Socrates' Defense* have attracted much attention in philosophic arenas, many of Plato's other texts (e.g., *Laws*, *Sophist*, *Phaedrus*) are considerably less well-known and still others remain even more obscure.

Third, the fates of Plato's texts have reflected the transitions and disjunctures of social thought over the intervening centuries. Quite directly, scholarship has not developed in a systematic, coherent, and cumulative manner (see Prus 2004 for a more extended statement). Thus, Plato's texts, like those of Aristotle, not only have been subject to highly selective usage, but they also have been disregarded, denounced, and destroyed by people with little regard for scholarship as well as those intent on pursuing other educational agendas.²

Relatedly, despite their focus on human group life as something “in the making,” the American pragmatists (Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and

² Still, given the generalized emphasis on religion in Judaic-Christian and Islamic communities, Plato (who writes as a theologian at times) has been much better received than Aristotle (who with some exceptions, generally is more apt to be defined as an irreligious, pagan philosopher).

George Herbert Mead) also have given little sustained attention to the foundational pragmatist features of classical Greek thought. Deriving central conceptual inspiration from the American pragmatists, the symbolic interactionists similarly have failed to acknowledge their indebtedness to classical Greek scholarship (see Prus 2003a, 2004, 2007a, 2008a).

Although the present project is somewhat unique because of its historical or ethnohistorical quality, it is very much informed by Chicago-style symbolic interactionism. Further, whereas the immediate paper focuses on Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, this statement is part of a much larger venture that traces the development of pragmatist social thought from the classical Greek era to the present time.³ While it is Aristotle who lays the foundation of pragmatist social thought in particularly direct and sustained terms (e.g., especially see *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Rhetoric*), Aristotle has learned much from Plato. Still, there is much that can be gleaned more directly from Plato's texts.

Another caveat regarding Plato's texts may be noted. Thus, whereas one finds a number of tensions in Aristotle's works (e.g., moralism, objectivism, and pragmatism), that require some "sorting out" of emphases, Aristotle writes more directly for himself and is intensively concerned about providing highly coherent, focused, and enabling statements on the (pluralist) nature of human knowing and acting. Plato also generates a great deal of insight into the nature of human knowing and acting. However, in addition to the various objectivist and pragmatist motifs that one finds in his works, Plato at times also writes as a theologian, an idealist, and a skeptical dialectician.

Further, because Plato never speaks directly for himself, but presents ideas through others engaged in dialogical interchange, Plato's own positions on things have remained unclear. In presenting material from *Republic* and *Laws*, thus, I typically will refer to the viewpoints that Plato's speakers adopt in developing these texts.

Before proceeding further, it also should be noted that although Plato addresses matters pertaining to morality, deviance, and regulation in a number of his other texts, *Republic* and *Laws* are highly complex and detailed statements on their own. Indeed, virtually the entire text of *Laws* addresses the study of morality, deviance, and regulation. However, because Plato's coverage of these matters is so extended, the first six books of *Laws* will be given primary attention here.

Plato and the Social Science Venture

Lacking sustained familiarity with Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, most social scientists seem inclined to dismiss these works as denoting "utopian agendas" formulated by an "archaic, idealist philosopher." Definitions of these sorts not only are unwarranted, but, even more unfortunately, centrally obscure the genuine and considerable contributions that Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* can make to the study of human knowing and acting. Not only has Plato developed these texts in remarkably astute conceptual terms, but *Republic* and *Laws* also provide some highly consequential reference points for developing transhistorical comparative analyses of human group life.

³ For some published materials developed within this broader "Greek project," see Prus 2003a, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007d, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; Prus and Burk 2010; Prus and Camara 2010; Puddephatt and Prus 2007.

Whereas Plato seems intensely concerned about establishing model communities in *Republic* and *Laws*, he provides much more than a sense of direction and detailed agendas for doing so.⁴ Thus, to his sociological advantage, Plato considers people's involvements in and experiences with deviance and morality, justice and government, education and scholarship, poetics and recreation, and religion and philosophy as fields of activity that are developmentally interfused in sets of community-based processes. He also acknowledges the fuller range of human interchange (as in cooperation, conflict, compromise, loyalty, deception, and collectively achieved events) that constitute community life in the making.

Consequently, deviance, crime, regulation, and such not only are to be understood with respect to people's notions of education, religion, poetics (fictionalized entertainment), and governing practices, but wrongdoing and regulation also are to be approached mindfully of the ways in which people, as agents, take these matters into account as they participate in community life.

Moreover, explicitly engaging sensations, emotions, habits, speech, thought, activity, interchange, knowledge, technology, institutions, and other collectively-achieved matters, Plato is notably more attentive to "the realities of community life" than are a great many contemporary social scientists. Indeed, in trying to reduce human group life to abstract, effectively dehumanized, sets of variables and mathematical formulations, a great many social scientists end up with products (i.e., research and analyses) of a highly artificial quality (for critiques of these latter emphases, see Durkheim 1961 [1902-1903], 1977 [1904-1905], 1915 [1912], 1983 [1913-1914];⁵ Blumer 1969; Prus 1996, 1999; Puddephatt and Prus 2007; Grills and Prus 2008).

Still, Plato's texts also need to be approached with caution. Thus, rather than endorsing, defending, or challenging the particular moral standpoints that Plato's speakers assume at times, the emphasis is on indicating things that we might learn about human group life by examining Plato's texts in more sustained pragmatist terms. This means attending more thoroughly and precisely to his analysis of "what is" rather than "what should be" with respect to human knowing and acting.

The overarching objective, relatedly, is to contribute to an understanding of human group life in all of its enacted dimensions (processual, conceptual, and substantive) without promoting or endorsing, or being constrained or otherwise subverted by any particular moral viewpoint. Indeed, insofar as there is a moral agenda that characterizes the present approach, it is that of emphasizing an open,

⁴ Importantly, as well, whereas Plato explicitly acknowledges most of the ideal features of the model communities he addresses in *Republic* and *Laws*, Plato also attends, in highly detailed manners, to the processes, contingencies, and problematics of the moral order in ways that other utopists generally do not. Thus, while imitating Plato in various respects, a number of other authors also have promoted versions of utopian and other idealized states to be pursued. Among the better known instances are Augustine (354-430 CE) *City of God* [1984], Thomas More (1478-1530) *Utopia*, and Francis Bacon (1561-1626) *Atlantis*. Still others, such as Karl Marx (1818-1883) and John Dewey (1859-1952) who also promise idealized states, have left much less adequately articulated visions of their agendas. Things can be learned from these and other "utopists" and, like Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, their texts also connote reference points of sorts. However, although written centuries after Plato, almost all of these later formulations have a more exuberant, adolescent-like quality where these and related statements (e.g., Marx, Dewey) also are not more notably void of content when compared with Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*. Relatedly, even John Dewey, one of the primary progenitors of American pragmatism, with its associated emphasis on human knowing and acting, only marginally uses pragmatist social theory to inform his moralist (utopian) visions of society.

⁵ In contrast to his earlier and best known works (1947 [1893], 1958 [1895], 1951 [1897]), Durkheim's later works (1961 [1902-1903], 1977 [1904-1905], 1915 [1912], 1983 [1913-1914]) have a more pronounced pragmatist sociological quality (see Prus 2009a, 2011b).

sustained, pluralist study of human knowing and acting that is grounded in the actualities of human lived experience.⁶

In what follows, more particular attention will be given to the ways that Plato approaches morality, deviance, and regulation in *Republic* and (especially) *Laws*. Still, since morality, deviance, and regulation do not exist by themselves, but achieve a reality or essence only within the context of ongoing community life – a matter that Plato astutely recognizes, readers are cautioned that it will be necessary to engage aspects of religion, government, philosophy, and poetics, amongst other aspects of community life, in addressing morality, deviance, and regulation.

I will try to focus the discussion as much as feasibly possible, but to examine deviance and regulation without attending to these other realms of activity would be somewhat like trying to make sense of the human mind, or the human community even more broadly, apart from activity, interaction, speech, thought, sensory experiences, emotionality, knowing, learning, memory, developmental culture, or the settings in which people do things. To dispense with any of these matters would result in research and analysis of a distinctively artificial quality.

Nevertheless, this is essentially what is done in most contemporary quantitative analyses of crime, deviance, regulation, and other aspects of community life. Insofar as these studies depict some distributions of situations and outcomes as well as general trends across populations, materials of these sorts can have considerable value for developing certain aspects of policy and practice.

However, it should be openly and directly acknowledged that, the data on which these analyses are built are notably removed from the instances in which human group life is actually accomplished. Consequently, those developing projects of these sorts can do little more than “learnedly speculate” from a distance on the ways that people actually enter into and produce these aspects of human group life.

Ironically, although he may have written 2,500 years ago, Plato provides a great many highly instructive and enduring insights into the ways that living, acting, and interacting humans engage morality, deviance and regulation.

Still, because so few people have more than a superficial familiarity with Plato's *Republic* or *Laws*, it is important to establish what Plato actually says – that is, the issues he addresses and the ways in which he does so.

Thus, whereas his materials are developed primarily around considerations of Greek life up to his own time, Plato is attentive to a much broader set of human perspectives, issues, and practices in both *Republic* and *Laws*. Although writing as a philosopher more than a historian or ethnographer, Plato should be recognized as someone who is attentive to the processual flow of human group life as well as the nature of human lived experience. Further, in more characteristically anthropological terms, Plato also invokes cross-cultural comparisons of Greek and non-Greek life-worlds in the broader Mediterranean arena – presumably, somewhat informed by the ethnographies of Herodotus (485-425 BCE) *The Histories* and Thucydides (460-400 BCE) *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, amongst other sources available in Plato's time.

Further, whereas some may be inclined to dismiss classical Greek scholarship as archaic or antiquated, arguing that it is inappropriate to considerations of the present (i.e., invoking the longstanding chant that “new times demand new theory”),

⁶ Unless there is a sustained attempt to develop theory that is informed by an attentiveness to the things that people actually do and the ways that they do things, it is easy to slip into positions of (a) solipsism or totalizing relativism (in which, knowing loses all meaning) on the one hand and (b) abstract, dehumanized variable analysis on the other (see Prus 1996, 1999, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d; Prus and Grills 2003).

those who carefully examine Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* will find that these texts are filled with insights and comparison points that considerably enrich one's understanding of the present. Indeed, those who because of ignorance, arrogance, or instructed disregard dismiss the works of Plato, Aristotle, and Thucydides, amongst other Greek and interim Latin scholars, may be seen to lack memory (and the associated resources within) with which to more adequately understand the present.

Since things do not have inherent meanings but can only be understood in comparison with or in reference to other things, those who lack knowledge of the past are apt to have a particularly myopic sense of the present. Thus, as Durkheim (1977 [1904-1905]) pointedly observes, those who attend primarily to the present tend to confuse novelty with more enduring patterns as well as superficiality with quality. They also are more inclined to endorse things that have shown themselves to be intellectual follies in the past. Like people experiencing amnesia, we cannot expect scholars who have only superficial and fragmented notions of the past to have a particularly adequate appreciation of the present or, relatedly, much capacity to anticipate the future.

In this regard, Durkheim's (1977 [1904-1905]) observation, that it is not sufficient to be aware of only the things that happened in the preceding three or four centuries, but that one has to go back to classical Greek scholarship, has great merit. Although the Greeks were not the first serious scholars of record, it is in classical Greek scholarship, which the essential foundations of Western social thought are rooted. Moreover, Greek social thought not only provides the departure point of the contemporary social sciences and humanities, but also has maintained a central orientational quality in virtually every realm of present day scholarship.

Without denying the advances that have been made over the past 2,500 years, especially in the physical sciences and associated technologies, it is to be appreciated that scholarship has not developed in a systematic, coherent, continuous fashion. Further, because Greek scholarship has been selectively reconfigured, ignored, denounced, and willfully destroyed by people with other interests, there still is much to be learned from this literature. As well, because these texts are so richly detailed, some of these also represent exceptionally valuable "ethnohistorical documents" for the purposes of comparative analyses of a more distinctively pragmatist, sociological sort.

Given the objectives of the present paper, the material following is necessarily compacted. Because it is Plato's texts that are of central relevance here, I have tried to distinguish my commentary from more straightforward synoptic representations of his work. Further, while focusing primarily on morality, deviance, and regulation in this paper, I have endeavored to maintain the overall flow of the more immediately relevant parts of Plato's texts, providing "chapter and verse" references so that people might more readily locate specific materials for further consideration. Relatedly, attention will be given first to Plato's (earlier) *Republic* and then to *Laws*.

Deviance and Regulation in *Republic*⁷

Although one finds a much more extended consideration of morality, deviance and regulation in Plato's lesser-known *Laws*, Plato's *Republic* also provides some

⁷ In developing this statement, I have built extensively on Benjamin Jowett's translation of Plato's *Republic* found in *The Dialogues of Plato* (1937).

exceedingly important insights into deviance and regulation as well as related aspects of community life.

Whereas virtually all of *Republic* revolves around “the art of governing well” (as in just, wise, and otherwise virtuous manners) and all instances of injustice are seen as requiring correction, the material following focuses more specifically on (a) some concerns about and consequences of justice and injustice, (b) people’s attentiveness to divinity as a regulatory device, (c) the corruptive tendencies of poets, (d) the undesirability of litigation, (e) the dangers of dialectic analysis, and (f) tyranny as a social process.

Attending to Justice and the Utility of Injustice

In assuming the role of the principal narrator and speaker in Plato’s *Republic*, Socrates (I:331-342) not only emphasizes justice as the centralizing feature of a viable state, but also considers some of the realms in which justice may be invoked as well as some of the parameters of justice as a humanly engaged process.

Thus, while notions of justice are deemed useful, if not essential, in formulating and maintaining friendship, contracts, and other arrangements of community living, Plato’s speakers also directly acknowledge the problematic features of justice. Consequently, they attend to the ambiguity of the terms justice and injustice. Likewise, they note that while justice presumes knowledge and wisdom, by no means is justice synonymous with knowledge or wisdom. Similarly, by no means is justice a simple function of the particular circumstances in which the involved parties find themselves.

In the process, the speakers explicitly consider the point that rather than envisioning justice as a virtue unto itself, it is not uncommon for people to define justice as the rules, practices, and decisions that are established by those who are stronger (i.e., that “might is right”) and/or currently occupy positions as rulers (*Republic*, I:338-342).⁸ Relatedly, the speakers ask whether rulers are to be seen as infallible or are open to a range of errors in their governing practices.

While acknowledging that rulers may be expected to act in the best interests of the constituency, one speaker, Thasymachus (*Republic*, I:343-345), explicitly emphasizes the advantages that may accrue to the unjust and, by comparison, stresses the losses incurred by those who maintain just standpoints in their dealings with others. In this respect, he observes, those acting as criminals and tyrants may very well end up being the most successful and happiest of all, whereas those acting justly end up in miserable conditions and matching states of mind.

The dialogue (*Republic*, I:345-347) then shifts to those who not only seek to truly rule with justice but who also approach governing as an art and thereby seek perfection in their activities. In developing this viewpoint, Socrates (I:347) observes that there are three major incentives for people to assume leadership roles – money, honor, and the penalty for refusing to rule. After pointing out that good people have

⁸ Readers may recognize that the notion that “the ideas of the ruling class will be the ruling ideas” connotes Marx’s rhetorical rephrasing of a much earlier consideration of the more generic relationships of resources (and position) to influence work (also see Prus 1999). Interestingly, whereas Marx has some familiarity with classical Greek thought, it appears that his teleological claim that society is oriented towards communism is essentially a rhetorical device or that he did not know classical Greek scholarship (especially Plato’s *Republic* and Aristotle’s *Politics*) very well. Plato and Aristotle would have found Marx’s conceptualization to be intellectually preposterous (i.e., fictional and denoting a rhetorical tactic rather than an authentic claim).

no desire to assume roles as rulers and certainly are not motivated by concerns with money or public honors, Socrates says that the primary motivation of good people to assume leadership positions would be that of avoiding the penalty of being ruled by those who are inferior to oneself.

After other comments on the natural goodness of rulers, Socrates (I:348-349) reengages Thasymachus saying that he (Socrates) cannot support the claims that (a) justice is essentially a product of strength and position or (b) that it is wise to be unjust in dealing with others. In the ensuing exchange, Thasymachus stresses the point that, in real life, injustice paradoxically becomes a virtue and justice, in turn, becomes a vice. Further, Thasymachus adds, the unjust person may benefit not only from advantages that may be gained over the just but from advantages that can be achieved over other unjust people as well.

Working to dissuade Thasymachus and others who might adopt standpoints of this sort, Socrates (I:349-352) emphasizes the overarching wisdom of rulers adopting a just approach in their dealings with others. In addition to envisioning justice as virtue and emphasizing the art of governing, Socrates insists that injustice, be this in reference to states or individuals, has a destructive quality. Not only does injustice generate resentment and hatred from many sectors of the community, but it also, more fundamentally, makes all manners of cooperative activity problematic. For reasons of these sorts, unjust people not only become the enemies of others, but also, in these regards, become enemies unto themselves.

Further, Socrates (I:352) points out, even among groups of thieves and other criminals, there must be some elements of justice or trust if these people are to cooperate with one another. Socrates concludes this set of interchanges by arguing that some sense of justice is fundamental to the governing and continuity of all human groups.

Using this as a point of departure, Socrates (I:353-354) next makes the case that because people value the things they do, those pursuing justice also can expect to achieve greater happiness than those acting unjustly. However, then taking issue with his own position and his claims to this point, Socrates flatly observes that he has not defined what justice is and failing to have done so, is in no position to comment on justice and happiness or other related matters. It will be necessary to establish the parameters of justice more precisely.

However, before Socrates can provide a fuller account of the art of governing well through the creation of a model state (beginning in *Republic*, II:369), Socrates is challenged by two brothers, Glaucon and Adiemantus. They are not satisfied with the rationale that Socrates has provided in response to Thasymachus or, relatedly, Thasymachus' apparent willingness to succumb to Socrates' line of argumentation.

What follows is a highly instructive consideration of the differences between (a) providing a moral frame for action and (b) the matters of believing and enacting the prescriptions and proscriptions implied therein. Also of note are (c) the justifications that people may invoke when knowingly engaging in unjust practices as well as (d) other procedures people may pursue in attempting to avert culpability for particular instances of wrongdoing in which they were involved.

In pursuing Thasymachus' earlier position, Glaucon (II:358-362) says that he has never encountered a totally convincing argument for the superiority of justice over injustice. Thus, whereas people frequently (a) praise justice and (b) are quick to define instances of injustice as evil, they also (c) fully realize that those who act unjustly and are able to avoid penalty or censure are greatly advantaged over others. Accordingly, Glaucon states, those who act justly actually do so involuntarily. They do not act justly because they believe that virtuous or just activity is in their best

interests, but because they lack the capacities, opportunities, or courage to act unjustly.

Indeed, Glaucon insists, those who act unjustly and get away with it are typically praised for their successes. Conversely, just people, who, for one reason or another, are thought unjust by others in the community, will be treated in the most severe matters. Much more importantly, thus, than “being just” is “appearing to be just.” By maintaining these appearances, unjust people are able to achieve much greater success than by acting justly.⁹ At this point, Adiemantus enters the conversation, more directly addressing the relationship of “worldly justice” with “people's conceptions of divinity.”

Divinity, Regulation, and Injustice

Acknowledging his agreement with Glaucon's claims, Adiemantus (II:362-367) says that there is yet more to this matter. Parents and teachers, he observes, are forever admonishing children to be just, telling them that they will gain wide ranges of material benefits and social successes as a result of their good deeds.

Moreover, parents and teachers commonly reinforce this viewpoint by telling their charges that the gods also will be pleased with their virtuous behaviors. Indeed, these earthly instructors insist, that even more than people, the gods can be expected to reward the meritorious as well as punish the unjust. These advantages, young people are informed, will be even more evident and important in the (divine) life hereafter.

At the same time, Adiemantus stresses, people tell one another that virtue often requires considerable effort and sacrifice, whereas vice is thought easier and much more enjoyable. There also is the clear, popular recognition that dishonesty is more profitable than honesty and that those who are profitable will be happier, more influential, and more highly esteemed. By contrast, the less successful, just people can expect to be scorned for their comparative inadequacies and left to their own misery.

As well, Adiemantus observes, religious representatives are quite willing to go to the homes of the wealthy and help them become absolved from any wrongdoing by making token sacrifices, participating in minor ceremonies, and hosting feasts. The poets, including the highly revered Hesiod and Homer amongst others, also state that sins can be forgiven for those willing to make minor sacrifices and partake in associated amusements, praises, and services.

Further, when the younger people in the community witness activities and practices of these sorts among those who are highly esteemed in the community, the lessons are even more compelling. Ultimately, appearances are much more consequential than truth and those who learn “the art of concealment” are greatly advantaged over those who relate to others more exclusively in just terms.

Continuing, Adiemantus says that there still remains the idea that the gods cannot be deceived, as can others in the community. Still, he adds, if people adopt the viewpoints that there are no gods or that the gods exist, but do not care what

⁹ Although Plato's discussion of the advantages of impression management is much less extensively articulated than Erving Goffman's (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, it is still fairly substantial and pointed. Moreover, those familiar with rhetorical tradition (see Plato's *Phaedrus* and Aristotle's *Rhetoric*) will recognize of that the classical Greek scholars were highly attentive to impression management and addressed this in great detail (Prus 2008a).

people do, then promised threats of religious sanctions also would fail to serve as a deterrent.

Nevertheless, he notes, even those who are mindful of the gods can still take refuge in the works of the poets. If the poets can be believed, then people not only may achieve redemption for their sins through various, minor acts of bribery, but also, following the examples of the gods provided by the poets, would actually wish to engage in a variety of deceptive and other seemingly unjust practices.

Given all of these things, Adiemantus says, one may wonder why anyone who is more astute and/or successful would truly honor justice. Indeed, he says, how could successful individuals keep from recognizing justice as a fiction and refrain from laughing even as they encourage justice on the part of others.

In concluding his statement, Adiemantus assures Socrates that the position he has just articulated is shared by a great many people in the community, some of whom would have stated these matters in even more pronounced terms than he has done. Still, defining himself as a more conscientious individual, Adiemantus not only asks Socrates to address and defend the concept of justice in highly convincing terms, but also to consider the relationship of justice and injustice as well as the ways these matters are dealt with, openly and implicitly, by both the gods and people (i.e., in both religious and secular terms).

After acknowledging the thoughtful commentaries of Glaucon and Adiemantus, Socrates (II:368) says that he will address the matters of justice and injustice on both an individual and a state level. However, because the state is greater than the individual, he says that it is fitting to locate individual thought and action within the context of the community.

Amidst a much more extended commentary on the creation of the state and its components (omitted here, but more directly beginning on II:369), Socrates (II:377-383) explicitly addresses the corrupting influences of the poets Hesiod and Homer.

The Corruptive Potential of Poetics

While admitting that fiction can be useful in the educational process more generally, Socrates says that Homer (circa 700 BCE), Hesiod (circa 700 BCE), and those building on these earlier sources, are to be censored because of their lies and especially the false representations they make of the gods. Stating that their accounts of the gods are untrue, Socrates insists that God is to be represented as he truly is and, thus, as the source only of good. Even the punishment God inflicts on the unjust is only for the purpose of achieving a greater good. Likewise, he says, God not only is unchanging, but also is incapable of making false representation.¹⁰

Continuing along these lines, Socrates (III:386-389) also chastises the poets for the ways they have portrayed people. Not only have the poets frequently allowed unjust people to triumph over their more just counterparts, but the poets also have encouraged people to engage in various vices and thus, adopt undesirable characters. He is concerned about the effects that these highly distorted representations have on people and the ways that those exposed to these materials subsequently envision and engage important aspects of community life.

¹⁰ Notably, here, Socrates speaks of God in more overarching terms, as the primary generator of all things. Although Plato's speakers make occasional references to the Olympian gods, they do not subscribe to these notions of divinity (which they associate with the poets Homer and Hesiod). Instead, Socrates and Plato's other speakers generally follow the theology associated with Pythagoras (580-500 BCE).

Socrates does not propose to dispense entirely with fiction (and considers fiction to be particularly useful in childhood education), but says that it is only in “lying for the public good” that the state itself may escape impunity from condemnation for intentional misrepresentation.

Next, stressing the importance of temperance or self-regulation of the youth for the broader moral order of the community, Socrates (III:389-392) elaborates on, as well as condemns, the ways in which the poets have encouraged drinking and other improper behavior as well as anger, injustice, dishonesty and other undesirable qualities.

Socrates (III:393-403) subsequently provides an instructive account of poetics as “an art of expression” as well as a related consideration of harmony and music before addressing yet other features of community life. He then embarks on a brief discussion of medicine and litigation. Given the emphasis of the present paper, it is appropriate to make reference to litigation.

The Undesirability of Litigation

While recommending that people generally be informed on matters of medicine and law, Socrates (III:405) explicitly encourages people to avoid formal litigation, stating that this is an undesirable practice whether one goes to court in the capacity of plaintiff or defendant. Then, describing those who become caught up in the intrigues of litigation as more despicable, Socrates says that it is those who endeavor to use the law as an instrument with which to achieve the advantage for gains or a mechanism for avoiding culpability that are especially reprehensible.

Dialectics and Wrongdoing

Given Plato's extended use of dialectic interchange in developing his texts as well as Socrates' apparent insistence on value of dialectic reasoning for better approximating human conceptions of the truth, it may seem odd that Plato references dialectic reasoning among the things that could be considered undesirable in *Republic*. However, both in more general terms and mindful of contemporary scholarly intrigues with relativism and totalizing skepticism (as in postmodernism – Prus 1996), it is worth noting that Plato does not exempt academics from the moral ethos of the community.

For Socrates, dialectics represents a particularly consequential and sophisticated component of the education of the philosopher. In dialectic reasoning, the emphasis is on arriving at the conceptual essence of the particular matters under consideration by means of a thoroughgoing, comparative analysis of the similarities and differences of these and related things from all conceivable angles. Still, despite the great regard that Socrates has for dialectics as the essential tool for achieving truth in all spheres of human knowing,¹¹ Socrates (VI:532-540) also explicitly comments on the potential evil of dialectics.

Thus, Socrates (VI:53-539) says that the great danger of dialectics is that it provides a potent intellectual mechanism for dispensing with the foundations of all morality (and all knowing). This tendency towards totalizing skepticism, he says, is

¹¹ In part, Socrates' extensive reliance on reasoning practices reflects a fundamental skepticism of sensate phenomena for providing a genuine (viable) source of human knowing. Although Socrates does not sustain this position in *Republic*, this emphasis on pure reasoning, nevertheless, has served to idealize and characterize the philosophic venture from his own time to the present.

particularly alluring to younger people. Accordingly, they not only are more ready to use dialectic reasoning as the justification for violating all manners of virtue and morality, but also frequently do so with great intellectual intensity.

For this reason, Socrates says, after completing their education (and spending the last five years and engaging in sustained dialectic analysis) students of philosophy would be required to spend the next 15 years as office holders of a more common sort (e.g., military, business, more routine political offices), whereby they acquire a greater stock of knowledge about human lived experience, before presuming that they are fit to teach philosophy to others.

Tyranny as a Social Process

Before leaving *Republic*, it also is instructive to consider Plato's depiction of tyranny, or more precisely, the social processes by which people assume roles as tyrants. Whereas Plato is skeptical of all of the major forms of government (kinship, aristocracy, and democracy) because of the tendencies of each to become corrupted and/or ineffectual in various ways, it is instructive to acknowledge Plato's consideration of the processes by which people become involved in the role of the tyrant. To outline the processes in highly succinct terms, tyranny is seen to rise from the relative states of anarchy generated by the heightened quest for freedom, individualism, and personal prosperity fostered by democracy.

Although highly prized at times, democracy as Plato observes (*Republic*, VIII:563-569) is acutely vulnerable to its own emphasis on freedom. Thus, Plato argues that the unrestrained insistence on equality associated with democracy fosters a widespread and corrosive disregard not only of civic morality, but also of meaningful relationships more generally (as indicated in the following, highly clipped extract):

Say then, my friend, in what manner does tyranny arise? – that it has a democratic origin is evident...

I was going to observe, that the insatiable desire of this [the demand for freedom – RP] introduces the change and democracy, which occasions a demand for tyranny...

I mean that the father grows accustomed to descend to the level of his sons and to fear them, and the son is on a level with his father, he having no respect or reverence for either of his parents; and this is his freedom, and the metic [foreign resident, possibly a freed slave – RP] is equal with the citizen and the citizen with the metic, and the stranger is quite as good as either... (p. 562)

In such a state of society the master fears and flatters his scholars, and the scholars despise their masters and tutors; and the young man is on a level with the old, and is ready to compete with him in word or deed; and old men condescend to the young and are full of pleasantry and gaiety; they are loath to be thought morose and authoritative, and therefore adopt the manners of the young... (p. 563)

... see how sensitive the citizens become; they chafe impatiently at the least touch of authority and at length, as you know, they cease to care for the laws, written or unwritten; they will have no one over them. (Plato, *Republic*, VIII:562-563; Jowett trans.)

Continuing, Socrates says that insofar as those who contribute little or nothing to the community are given status equal to those who do more, democracy provides

the basis in which the drones of society may achieve numerical superiority over the more responsible members of the community.

Still, in their quests for yet more freedom and financial advantages and their disregard of others and the community at large, people in democratic states become susceptible to those who promise yet greater liberty and more personalized wealth. Thus, they are vulnerable to the emotional appeals of the demagogues, but even well-intentioned public benefactors may assume primary roles in the transition from a democratic government to one that becomes highly tyrannical in quality.

People are often identified as tyrants when they are thought to impose control over others, especially in seemingly unilateral and undesired manners. However, as Plato so clearly observes, it is most inappropriate to assume that this state of affairs arises wholly or even primarily through the intentions, charisma, genius, or efforts of the particular individuals who assume positions of impositional control:

The people always have some champion whom they set over them and nurse into greatness...

This and no other is the root from which a tyrant springs; when he first appears above ground he is a protector... (p. 565)

Then comes the famous request for a body-guard, which is the device of all of those who have got thus far in their tyrannical career – "let not the people's friend," as they say, "be lost to them."...

The people readily assent; all their fears are for him – they have none for themselves...

At first, in the early days of his power, he is full of smiles, and he salutes everyone whom he meets; – he to be called a tyrant, who is making promises in public and also in private! Liberating debtors, and distributing land to the people and his followers, and wanting to be so kind and good to every one!... (Plato, *Republic*, VIII:565-566; Jowett trans.)

Addressing the process further (VIII:566-569), the speakers observe that the leader commonly gains prestige by attacking those with property as well as participating in other external ventures. However, he ultimately ends up increasingly taxing people for his programs and thus encounters dissatisfaction in various sectors.

As well, having developed a passion for power and now experiencing greater challenges to his authority, the tyrant endeavors to dispense with his enemies, including those he merely suspects might be enemies. This process tends to perpetuate itself as long as there are those who will, or those he fears might, oppose his practices and position. Effectively ridding the state of its bravest and most committed people in this way, the tyrant becomes increasingly dependent on the more self-serving and mercenary minded people in his midst and envisions strangers as more trustworthy than his own people.

Likening the tyrant unto a child whom the parents have badly spoiled, Plato says that the tyrant now becomes a monster over whom the very people who raised and encouraged his prominence in earlier stages have lost control. Thus, like parents in this situation, the people who had supported the tyrant now find themselves subject to the slavery of their earlier desires and activities.

Republic in Perspective

Because Plato has given us so much material pertaining to deviance in *Republic*, it is useful to do some stocktaking before engaging *Laws* in more direct terms. First,

Plato not only is highly cognizant of (a) the ambiguity of the concepts of “justice” and “injustice” but he also is mindful of (b) “the discrepancies between what people publicly profess and what they actually believe” as well as (c) “the disparities between people’s overt activities and those which they conceal.”

Plato also recognizes the uneven and mixed nature of people's viewpoints on attentiveness to, and involvements in religious frameworks. He is mindful of the ways in which people define and manage wrongdoing within religious contexts. Thus, whereas Plato considers (a) the ways that religion is invoked, he also is attentive to the ways that (b) religion may be used as a deterrent to deviance, and (c) people use religion in the service of their own wrongdoing.

Likewise, Plato fully realizes that people's senses of deviance, morality, and religion, as well as education and politics, are imbued with fiction and that none of these fields of activity can be comprehended apart from the realms of poetic endeavor in which they are cognitively and behaviorally interlinked. Hence, he indicates ways that fictional materials enter into and jeopardize justice as well as complicate other aspects of community well-being. Accordingly, he condemns poets for their mischievous, often disruptive, distortions as well as their more generally inauthentic representations of things.

Not even dialectic reasoning (and associated philosophic discourse) is exempted from Plato's consideration of people's involvements in wrongdoing. Thus, whereas Plato stresses the centrality of dialectic analysis for more informed human knowing, he also emphasizes the dangers of dialectic extremism (i.e., totalizing skepticism) and the associated disregard of morality.

Still, it is Plato's attentiveness to social process in his analysis of the vulnerabilities of unrestrained democracy to the emergence of tyranny that perhaps most strikingly attests to the potency of Plato's depictions of community life.

Thus, whereas many people may desire or aspire to roles as rulers, dictators, power barons, leaders, and the like in the development and maintenance of governments or positions of dominance in other group settings, Plato emphasizes that people typically only assume roles of these sorts amidst the willingness, desires, encouragements, assistance, and devotion of others in the setting.

It is worth observing that although Plato characterizes tyrants as despicable, self-serving and unjust rulers, he does not resort to psychological or other pathological explanations as motivating features, nor does he subscribe to simplistic notions of domination and conspiracy. Instead, Plato observes that tyranny arises within the context of a complex social process in which members of the broader community assume an assortment of interconnected roles as agents (tacticians and targets).

Thus, Plato observes that many tyrants earlier had been noted for their benign intentions and were elevated (often unexpectedly) into prominence because of the activities of their supporters and other associates who enthusiastically insisted that these individuals assume leadership roles. Nevertheless, whenever people attain positions of prominence, they typically face the task of dealing with detractors, contenders, and other resistances.

Their supporters often play consequential, if not particularly central, roles in protecting leaders and disposing of people and things thought to threaten their leaders. However, the leaders also are apt to find themselves dealing with other problems on their own. And, as leaders become more intent on maintaining positions of power, they not only become increasingly sensitive to all challenges, questions, and hesitations, but they also tend to become more distrusting of the more capable

people in their midst because of the threats these people are thought to represent.¹² When this happens, with leaders becoming more singularly focused on maintaining their positions, seemingly oblivious to all matters but their own passions, desires, and fears, the stage is set for more extended and encompassing instances of tyranny.

Hence, whereas Plato's analysis of tyranny as a social process may seem highly prophetic when presented relative to Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin, and Saddam Hussein in the 20th century, the process clearly is a much more enduring and widespread phenomena.

Still, for sociologists attentive to symbolic interactionism, Plato's account of the emergence of tyranny is highly consistent with the broader "deviance making process" (Prus and Grills 2003) and provides further evidence of the more humanly enacted and generic features of political life (Klapp 1964; Prus 1999, 2005).

Encountering Plato's *Laws*¹³

Although *Republic* provides some notably valuable insights into the matters of deviance and morality, Plato's much less known *Laws* has even more sustained relevance to those attending to the study of wrongdoing and regulation. Indeed, because Plato's *Laws* so thoroughly addresses the fields of deviance and morality, it is almost impossible to provide a viable synopsis of this text within the confines of a single paper.

While some might be tempted to reorganize the material Plato develops in *Laws*, I have intentionally retained the overall flow of his text. Not only does this provide a greater sense of the interlinkages of deviance and regulation with other aspects of community life (especially religion, poetics, education, and government), but this also allows readers to more readily consult his text to gain a more comprehensive appreciation of his materials (also see Prus 2009a, 2011a).

Whereas Plato's *Republic* provides a particularly instructive base for comprehending related matters in *Laws*, there are some noteworthy differences in the two texts. Thus, while both *Republic* and *Laws* are intended as statements on which to model governing arrangements within the city-state, the emphasis in *Republic* is on developing "philosopher-kings" or guardians who would rule in wise, just, courageous, and other virtuous manners. In *Republic*, thus, there is great optimism that scholarship, particularly a highly rigorous training in philosophy, would provide the base for ensuring a viable state of affairs. In *Laws*, by contrast, the emphasis is more entirely on the necessity of establishing a detailed constitution that would ensure the population of a wise and just "structured leadership" amidst a shifting array of human administrators. Thus, while *Republic* is subject to the benign rule of philosopher-kings, *Laws* incorporates explicit constitutional mechanisms for "regulating the regulators."

As well, whereas philosophy is given extended consideration in *Republic*, Plato deals with education in much more general, fundamental terms in *Laws*. The composition of the speakers in *Laws* is notably different than that in *Republic*. Although Socrates assumes a central role in *Republic* amidst a set of Athenian

¹² In addition to the sense of paranoia that develops in the absence of trust (Lemert 1962), it also appears that, like "gamblers trying to break even at the race track" (Lesieur 1977), those who become preoccupied with the "quest for control" tend to become so absorbed by, or encapsulated within, their immediate challenges that they lose perspective on other matters.

¹³ In developing this statement, I have relied extensively on Benjamin Jowett's translation of Plato's *Laws* found in *The Dialogues of Plato* (1937).

participants, *Laws* is developed around a series of interchanges involving a Spartan, a Cretan, and an Athenian, each of whom provides perspectives on morality, wrongdoing, regulation, and other features of community life mindful of the more distinctive modes of their home governments.

Still, one finds a great many continuities in *Republic* and *Laws*. In both texts, Plato is notably attentive to the matters of human knowing and acting as well as the interlinkages of deviance and regulation with other developmentally engaged features of human group life (most notably politics, religion, poetics, and education).

[Athenian Stranger:] Tell me Strangers, is a God or some man supposed to be the author of your laws? (Plato, *Laws* I:624; Jowett trans.)

In responding to a question that introduces Plato's *Laws*, Cleinias, a Cretan, says that indeed his laws, like those of the Lacedaemons (Spartans), were inspired by a god (named Zeus and Apollo in these cases, respectively). While acknowledging these claims, the Athenian asks if the two strangers in his midst might provide accounts of their government and laws.

Thus, in an inquiry that is infused with aspects of religion, Plato begins a comparative analysis of governing practices that has great relevance to the more enduring study of deviance and regulation. Relatedly, although some might wish to dispense with religion when engaging the study of deviance and regulation, these fields of activity have not been developed or maintained in exclusive terms. As a consequence, sharper divisions can only be achieved by artificially imposing boundaries on human knowing and acting. Given his sociological sense of continuity and coherence, Plato maintains a developmental unity of community endeavor that many contemporary social scientists fail to achieve.

In explaining his state's position, Cleinias (*Laws*, I:625-630) says that the Cretan constitution was devised with the view that "war is the natural state of humans" – not only war between states, but also between the villages, families, and even individuals within families.¹⁴ Relatedly, the emphasis is on victory with defeat considered the worst possible outcome. Still, despite "all being at war with all," it is recognized that the rule of the better classes is desired over those who are inferior.

The Athenian interjects the viewpoint that what is considered "superior" and "inferior" may well reflect the outcomes of any contest; a point that the Cretan acknowledges "paradoxically is the case."

As the dialogue unfolds, the focus shifts more directly to the Spartans whose constitution it is immediately noted also presumes the viewpoint that "all are at war with all" and that courage is a paramount virtue. Notably, as well, whereas victory involving outsiders is considered essential, it is civil strife with its more immediate, intimate set of opponents that is seen to most truly test people's courage and related aspects of character.

In the ensuing interchanges, the speakers grapple with the seeming contradictions that the Cretan and Spartan positions entail. Eventually, however, they decide that the primary virtue in the Cretan constitution is "courageous loyalty in the face of danger." Although the speakers recognize that this notion of justice need not

¹⁴ Those familiar with Thomas Hobbes' (1588-1679) *Leviathan* (1994 [1668]) may recognize Plato's *Laws* as the primary source of Hobbes' ideas of government. Also, in contrast to many European Renaissance and post-Renaissance scholars who evidently (I have learned) did not know classical Greek texts in much detail, Hobbes had an exceptional familiarity with at least some of the works of Plato, Aristotle, and Thucydides, amongst others.

be shared by other city-states, it is this emphasis that represents the perfection of justice in both Sparta and Crete.

After observing that Cretan legislation has been highly successful in maintaining the integrity of the state and happiness of its citizens, the Athenian (I:631) outlines two sets of goods or desirables around which all constitutions should be focused. The first, more basic set of elements includes health, beauty, strength, and wealth. The second or more virtuous set of goods is defined by wisdom, temperance or self-regulation, justice and courage. Still, it is this latter set of goods that are to inform the ways that leaders attend to the first, more common set of human matters.

Rather than leave things at this more general level, the speakers (I:632) develop the position that the lawgiver is to develop legislation designed to regulate all features of people's relationships with others as well as all aspects of their activities and circumstances more generally. However, it is not enough to simply have legislation. It will be necessary to appoint a set of guardians. It is their responsibility not only to ensure that the laws will be maintained, but also that the regulators themselves will act in ways that attend to the virtues of wisdom, temperance, justice, and courage.

Following a depiction of the way that courage (I:633) is achieved in Sparta, the speakers address the desirability of having laws directed against the love of pleasure as well as against the fear of pain (I:634). Still more consequential is the idea that the youth are to achieve an intense commitment to the laws of the state; they are to be encouraged to accept these without question. Nevertheless, consideration of the problematic features of the laws may be permitted when older people discuss these in the absence of younger people.

While mindful of the thoroughgoing military (all being at war with all) emphases of Sparta and Crete, the speakers (I:636-641) next to embark on the consideration of temperance or self-regulation.¹⁵

The ensuing commentary on people's drinking practices may be seen as rather marginal to the creation of a constitutional government, but Plato uses this material to develop a more important statement on temperance. Reasoning that the development of self control is essential for a viable state as well as virtuous citizens, Plato uses people's involvements in drinking as a prototypic illustration of the importance of temperance or self-regulation in all serious and recreational aspects of community life.

Focusing primarily on excessive drinking in festive (especially banquet) settings, the speakers not only acknowledge variations in their own viewpoints on drinking, but also are mindful of the differences in acceptable drinking practices of people in other Greek and non-Greek states.

Relatedly, the discussion turns to people's behaviors at feasts and the importance of the host conducting himself in a sober, congenial, and considerate fashion, using the occasion to foster harmony on the part of those assembled within rather than allowing for disruptions and longer-term ill-feelings.

Then, introducing considerations of (a) education more generally and (b) the necessity of sustained practice to achieve competence in any activity one might pursue, the speakers agree that the primary objective of education is to enable people to become more perfect citizens.

¹⁵ Readers may appreciate that temperance or self-regulation represents a missing element in contemporary social theory in both sociology and psychology. It is implicitly signified at times, but it is essentially ignored, even by the interactionists.

Saying that it is tempting to envision people as the playthings or “puppets of the gods,” the Athenian (I:644-645) pointedly observes that people frequently find themselves in the situation of pulling the cords of reason against the strings of the affectations (dispositions, habits, desires) they more naturally experience.

It is in this context that people's experiences with sobriety and intoxication may be seen as central to the development of temperance or self-management. Thus, the speakers observe that as people drink not only do their passions for pleasure intensify, but so also do they lose their capacities for reason (and the related matters of memory, perception, and judgment). These things make them vulnerable to more reckless ventures.

Still, whereas drinking may be seen as injurious to one's body as well as one's mind, the speakers (I:646-650) suggest that this activity may still be useful in other ways. Hence, drinking may be seen to provide a testing ground – in which, after becoming intoxicated and engaged in shameless pleasure, the participants may be instructed in ways to approach these situations and, subsequently, more effectively manage these tendencies.

Observing that people who drink are prone to exaggerated senses of self worth and the brazen disregard of fear, as well as a heightened disrespect for the law, drinking at festive occasions provides a mechanism which may be astutely used by others to train people's characters without some of the greater dangers, risks, and losses of self and others that equally characterize the learning of temperance in other settings (as in business, war, or politics). Relatedly, the speakers note those who take the time to study people's behaviors in drinking situations and work with the participants, helping them to overcome their limitations in these settings, may be seen as participating in the broader practice of politics.

The speakers subsequently give some attention to (a) childhood education with an emphasis on young people attending to the law (II:653-657), (b) the relativity of pleasurable entertainment as this is defined by different audiences (II:658-659), (c) a discussion of pleasure and endorsements of a virtuous life (II:659-665), (d) a brief commentary on the age of drinking (II:666), and (e) an analytic consideration of the criteria for assessing the viability of “imitations” or other representations of things (II:667-670).

The speakers (II:671-674) then reengage the topic of drinking, expressing concern about the problems of regulating an intoxicated collection of people. For this reason, drinking practices are to be carefully circumscribed by legislation. Thus, whereas drinking may serve as a means of fostering temperance, it is important that drinking not be used as a form of amusement only. Further, other pleasures are to be approached in a like manner, wherein people maintain control over themselves (i.e., their involvements, activities, circumstances).

Viewed thusly, temperance is not so much a virtue in itself (since self control could be used in pursuing all manners of objectives), but represents the centralized means of achieving and maintaining other virtuous states. That is, people who are unable to manage themselves cannot be expected to be virtuous in other, more sustained ways.

In Book III the speakers (III:676-679) ask about the origins of government, observing that over the course of human history there must have been thousands of cities that came into existence and subsequently perished – and along with them, a wide variety of governments would have been implemented, continued for a time, and subsequently dissipated. Further, the speakers observe that more substantial changes in governing practices do not just suddenly emerge, but only take shape gradually.

Conversing thusly, the speakers (III:680-681) recognize that the earliest peoples would have lacked conceptions of governments, laws, constitutions, and the like, as well as the advantages of written text. They reason that the earliest peoples would have lived by the habits and customs of their ancestors, probably under a lordship of some sort. Likewise, the speakers contend it would be the adults who would set the moral order for their children, teaching them to follow their own practices.

However, as people met and assembled with those from other groups, with each group rather inevitably preferring their own customs to those of the others, some arbitration processes likely would have taken place. It is here, in the ensuing interchanges, that one may see the beginnings of legislation.

Still, the speakers (III:682-683) indicate that these processes would have been far from smooth or sudden. Amongst other things, they suspect that any emergent legislation would have been importantly facilitated by reference to religious authorities. As well, the speakers suggest that wherever smaller kingdoms cooperated with one another to assist one another in dealing with natural or human obstacles, there would have been a further tendency to develop rules of a more overarching sort.

Focusing on the three Dorian kingdoms as a case in point, the speakers (III:684-688) also acknowledge the more fundamental pressures placed on legislators to develop laws that do not jeopardize the vested interests of the involved parties. As a result, even in the midst of cooperation, harmony remains a precarious quality and is vulnerable to people's desires for their own successes as well as their inclinations to pursue matters in ways that are more familiar and/or more entirely in line with what they define as their own interests. For this reason, the speakers stress it is most important that legislation be guided by wisdom of a more mature or virtuous, worldly sort (as opposed to a more immediate, self-centered or youthful set of emphases).

Continuing along these lines (with the Athenian leading most of the discussion in *Laws*, but doing so in consultation and agreement with the Cretan and the Spartan), the speakers (III:689) insist on the importance of all who occupy any position of authority attending to the basic moral order of community life.

Spelling their concerns out in more concrete terms, the speakers (III:690) assert the following priorities as fundamental to sound governing practices (and more reliable obedience).¹⁶ Thus, in the ordering of just claims, one is to recognize the authority of: parents over children; the noble over the ignoble; the elderly over the younger; masters over slaves; stronger over weaker; wiser over ignorant; and winners over losers. Defining this set of principles as fundamental to all stable governing practices, the speakers contend that people who do not act mindfully of these maxims can expect to encounter difficulties as rulers regardless of the particular communities at hand.

Still, the speakers have another concern and this revolves around the concentration of power. Although this is especially a problem when rulers do not respect the moral order of the community, difficulties can arise whenever one person assumes more totalizing control of the governing process. It is here, the Athenian says, that the Spartans have been so wise in establishing a council of 28 elders who have the capacity to offset the individual tendencies of the king in the most fundamental matters of state.

¹⁶ To their sociological credit, the three speakers in *Laws* are attentive throughout to the interdependencies of leaders and followers. See Prus (1999, 2003b) for some contemporary considerations of "power as intersubjective accomplishment."

In the text that more immediately follows, the speakers (III:695-699) discuss political practices in Athens and Persia. In the process, they (III:690) state that viable legislation should stress, in a clearly descending order, the development of (a) human virtues, (b) goods for the body, and (c) wealth and property on the part of its citizens.

Commenting on the excessive liberty of the Athenians, the speakers (III:700-701) adopt the viewpoint that the openness of education was not the problem, but rather it was the heightened expressivity of music and associated poetic license that resulted in people developing conceits about artistic expression. Views of these latter sorts subsequently fostered a generalized disregard of morality which, in turn, was accompanied by ensuing lawlessness and disobedience. Thus, while stressing freedom, harmony, and wisdom as central to well governed states, the speakers are distinctly concerned about the results of excessive freedom and expressivity.

At this point in the dialogue, Cleinas (III:702-703) informs the others that Crete is planning to establish a new colony and that they would be extremely eager to put into practice a state of the sort they have just been discussing. Accordingly, he asks that they continue to lay out the terms of this model city-state.

Engaging the task of developing a model city-state with a greater sense of purpose, the speakers (IV:704-708) first consider location and geographical terrain as well as neighboring states, resources for a self-sufficient colony, and the composition of the colonists (e.g., races and cultural backgrounds).

Subsequently, the speakers (IV:709) acknowledge three sources of causation commonly invoked to account for human affairs. Thus, whereas some claim that “chance” is the major determinant of human affairs, others insist that “God” is the primary cause, and a third set of people contend that “people are able to do things because of the techniques” they have developed.

Attending primarily to the last viewpoint, the speakers (IV:710-711) explicitly begin to approach the construction of their model city-state in much the same way that artists might engage one of their works.

To establish a more immediate, functioning government, the speakers say that it will be necessary to have a tyrant as governor; that other kinds of governing processes are too cumbersome to implement at the outset. Still, they insist on someone who is young, courageous, and noble as well someone who possesses a good memory, is quick to learn, and who, in addition to these other virtues, possesses temperance of a more distinctively preservative sort.

Still, something more is required and this is the close council of an astute legislator wherein the tyrant and the legislator work together to establish a viable constitution. By creating a situation in which “the Leader rules,” the speakers thus view tyranny as the quickest and most effective means of generating a viable, working government. The difficulty, however, is to ensure that they find someone who has the capacity to balance control with wisdom.¹⁷ If this can be done, however, then the best laws and best constitution may be implemented. However, the ideal to which they collectively and openly strive in developing their model city-state is the existing Lacedaemonian (Spartan) government, which they observe, in various ways, assumes the qualities of a tyranny, a democracy, and an oligarchy.

¹⁷ Readers may note some parallels with the philosopher-king that Plato discusses in *Republic*, but the leader that speakers have in mind here is defined as a somewhat rougher, less philosophically refined individual who, nevertheless, can readily assume the role of an effective guardian.

Then, after noting that all cities should be named after their gods, the speakers (IV:713) propose to call the perfect state the City of God.¹⁸ Stating that they (IV:714) must do all that they can as humans to imitate a more divine form of government and regulate the entire city by recourse to law or *nomos*, which they define as the distribution or ordering of the mind, the speakers set out to define the central principles of law.

The speakers subsequently take direct and concerted issue with those who say that justice reflects the interests of the stronger and that the governing party makes whatever laws have authority in any state. From this viewpoint, they observe, all legislation becomes a contest for power and the ruling class lives in perpetual fear of uprisings from those who feel they have been wronged. Thus, the speakers (IV:714-715) insist that leadership should not be accorded to the richest and strongest but to those who are most loyal to the constitution of the state. The laws of the state are to be above the rulers and the rulers of the state are to be servants or ministers of the law.

Then, reflecting on the on the omnipotence of God for “all that is,” the speakers (IV:716) takes explicit issue with Protagoras (“Man is the measure of all things...”) stating that “God is to be recognized as the measure of all things” and that they, the speakers (IV:717-718), intend to use this divine source as the base for their notions of community morality. Thus, they assume the objective of promoting virtue both on the part of all citizens and in their construction of the law.¹⁹

Continuing, the speakers (IV:719) next state that in contrast to the poets, who may express whatever ideas occur to them, legislators must be consistent in the standpoints they present and ensure, as well, that no two or more aspects of the law contradict one another. As well, wherever possible, the speakers (IV:720-724) insist that legislation be promoted through persuasion as well as command.

Thus, regardless of whether the laws are to be expressed in the briefest form possible or in more sustained detail, it is important to promote an understanding of the legislation as well as a sense of goodwill towards the law. This way, people not only would be better able to appreciate the reasoning behind particular laws, but also would be more favorably disposed to honoring it. Notably, in encouraging young people to honor the law, the speakers stress respect for divinity as well as their parents.

Still, more is involved and the Athenian proposes that the three planners subsequently consider (a) all things that relate to people's minds and bodies as well as (b) all manners of occupation and recreation. This way they, themselves, might better anticipate the nature of the education that would be appropriate in the setting.

After observing that next to the divine aspects of one's soul (*psyche* in Greek), the speakers (V:727-728) state that it is essential that people attend to their minds – to assume the task of developing excellence of people's minds in more distinctively human terms. While envisioning people as capable of knowing all manners of things, the Athenian delineates a number of ways that people commonly dishonor their psyches or otherwise fail to achieve excellence of mind.

¹⁸ It seems likely that Augustine, who held Plato in exceedingly high regard, was inspired by Plato in developing his own text *City of God* (1984).

¹⁹ Those familiar with Aristotle's works will recognize that Aristotle breaks from the Socratic emphasis on religion that Plato often appears to adopt. Thus, and much more consistent with the position of Protagoras here, Aristotle takes the viewpoint that all human knowing, acting, and cultural productions are the results of human endeavor. Hence, whereas he is willing to ascribe the term God to “the first mover,” Aristotle makes no claims about people having spiritual souls or modes of divine contact or inspiration. Also see Prus (2003a, 2004, 2007a, 2009a).

These include (a) the tendency to praise oneself; (b) the willingness to excuse one's own behavioral shortcomings by blaming others and otherwise try to avoid accountability for one's acts; (c) engaging in self-indulgent pursuits; (d) failing to persevere at tasks; (e) yielding to all of life's distractions; (f) preferring beauty to virtue; and (g) willingly pursuing or accepting dishonest advantages over others.

The great danger in dishonoring one's self in the aforementioned ways is that one becomes more like those who more routinely engage in wrongdoing. When this happens, the twofold result is that of (a) leaving and/or being rejected by good people on the one hand while (b) becoming more attached to and more like bad people.

[Readers may note the striking parallels of Plato's observations here with "labeling theory" (Lemert 1951, 1967; Prus and Grills 2003) wherein people acquiring images and reputations as deviants not only encounter exclusionary reactions from more conventional people, but also tend to become more firmly entrenched in deviant life worlds. Clearly, the notion of deviance or wrongdoing as in an emergent social process is a much more enduring observation than is commonly supposed.]

Continuing thusly, the Athenian also insists on the importance of people taking care of their physical bodies by being mindful of the excesses of various kinds. Thus, there is the encouragement to engage all things pertaining to the body in moderation.

Mindful of these matters, the Athenian (V:729) declares that the most important thing parents can bequeath to their children is not financial wealth and worldly goods, but instead the spirit of reverence and temperance. And, instruction in these latter elements is apt to be considerably more effective when accompanied by example than tutelage alone. Central to the matters of respect and self-regulation, thus, is a greater emphasis on others over oneself as well as corresponding emphasis on the law rather than oneself.

Still, while stressing the importance of people developing virtuous life-styles, the Athenian is well aware that this is a problematic matter at best. Thus, he (V:731) not only recognizes the evil that people may do, but also develops a sharp distinction between those who are "curable" and those for whom there is no realistic hope of reformation.

Stating that "no one would choose to do evil on a voluntary basis" (a claim that will later create problems for the speakers (see Book IX and their considerations of homicide and physiological injury),²⁰ the Athenian suggests that those wrongdoers who can be reformed should be pitied for their failings and forgiven. However, those who are incurable of wrongdoing should be treated in the most severe matters with the full wrath of the community behind these actions.

Then defining selfishness as the greatest of personal evils, the Athenian (V:732) says that honorable people stand above their own interests. However, this requires self-control, along with a more balanced, comparative sense of pleasure and pain. Recognizing that people's experiences of pleasure and pain are highly variable, the Athenian stresses the importance of encouraging people to pursue the noble life and of trying to imbue people's senses of pride and pleasure with virtue.

Elaborating further, the Athenian (V:733-734) defines the most pleasant and noble lives as those characterized by temperance, wisdom, courage, and good health. He contrasts these in turn, with the lack of self-control, foolishness, cowardice, and disease.

²⁰ Plato and Aristotle differ on this point. Whereas Plato shifts positions on this matter across and sometimes within the same texts, Aristotle (e.g., *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Rhetoric*) consistently insists that people's involvements in wrongdoing are to be approached in precisely the same manner as their other activities. Thus, like Chicago-style interactionists, Aristotle does not accept the idea that one needs one theory for the deviants and deviance and another for other people and their activities.

Then, following a brief commentary on the necessity of setting up offices as an enabling feature of the constitution (these offices help provide administrators with the authority to uphold the law among the general populace), the Athenian (V:735-736) also considers the task of dealing with people who are troublesome in some way.

Whereas those deemed “incurably evil” may be exiled or sentenced to death and those who are intensely discontent with the existing government may be sent off to establish their own colony, the Athenian notes that citizens of their model city-state are not likely to face some of these problems at the outset and, thus, the speakers may turn their attention to other matters. Subsequently, more immediate attention is given to distribution of property and population controls (V:736-739), the ownership of property (V:739-744), and city planning (V:745-747).

In Book VI, the speakers (VI:751-770) give extended attention to the appointment of the magistrates or guardians and associated office holders. Thus, the speakers deal with the types and numbers of managers to be required, their fields of responsibility, the means of appointing these administrators, the qualities considered desirable for these office holders, and the development of laws intended to provide guidance for each office.

As well, the speakers consider incumbent powers within these offices, their relationships to other supervisors, and the ways that office holders and the citizens at large deal with cases that they consider troublesome. [Although forgoing a great deal of the detail that the Athenian provides (in what he still describes as a superficial outline) of the offices of their proposed city-state, I have tried to capture the more fundamental features of the proposal the speakers consider.]

In discussing the appointment of the magistrates, the speakers (VI:751-755) observe that this is a matter that is much too important to be left to chance. They are concerned that the colonists likely would not have very good educations overall and, as a result, would be inclined to make mistakes in appointing these essential office holders. These errors in judgment not only could nullify important aspects of their legal agenda, but also could have disastrous effects on the community and the constitution.

While elaborating on the nature of their procedures, the Athenian proposes that they establish a collectivity of 37 guardians of the law. The guardians are to be at least 50 years of age, possess virtuous characters in all respects, and may serve until they are 70. In turn, the guardians are to propose a list of generals for approval by a vote. The generals, likewise, would develop a list of brigadiers for people to consider. Moreover, the Athenian (VI:756) plans for a council of 360 people to represent the four classes (90 from each) of the community. Notably, the Athenian intends to make voting compulsory, with those in higher classes to be penalized considerably more heavily for any failure to vote.

In describing this arrangement, the Athenian says that the state will be something between a monarchy and a democracy.

Then, commenting on the nature of equality, the Athenian says that it is necessary to recognize two different equalities. The first, more simplistic sense of equality reflects the simplistic comparisons that one might associate with proportions, measurements of weights, and the like. The second notion of equality, and one that is deemed most essential for justice, is that people be rewarded in proportion to their contributions.

While emphasizing the point that when this second sense of equality is not respected, justice will be eroded, the Athenian says it still may be necessary to invoke the first notion of equality in order to avoid popular discontent. Likewise, it may be necessary to rely on lots (draws of chance) on occasion. Still, even though

they may be compelled to invoke the first notion of equality more than desired, he stresses that they should rely on chance as little as possible.

In what follows (VI:758-766), the speakers observe that three major sets of supervisors are to be appointed to oversee the day-to-day regulation of the city-state. These include (a) priests and priestesses, (b) wardens of the country, and (c) wardens of the city and the agora (central setting for assembly, interchange).

Stipulating that the priests and priestesses are to be at least 60 years of age, with those from among the eligible candidates to be selected by drawing lots (i.e., pure chance) so that God's preferences might prevail (who could dispute such an arrangement), the Athenian also proposes that no one hold these offices for longer than a year.

Still, the holy ones are to be assisted (in translating signs and other messages from the gods) by a set of appointed interpreters that represent the broader community. As well, there are to be treasurers of the temples to oversee the property and care of these facilities.

Then, after asserting that everything is to be protected, the Athenian (VI:760-763) first establishes a set of agendas for the wardens of the country. In addition to fortifying defenses from external threats, the wardens of the country also are to increase accessibility of land to the resident population, as well as protect and develop resources and facilities for the state at large. Working on intensive two-year terms of service, these people also are to be intimately familiar with the territory and are to act justly in dealing with the people in their territories. Likewise, they are encouraged to envision themselves as "servants of the state."

The wardens of the city (VI:763-764) and wardens of the agora, in rather parallel terms, are charged with the care of the roads, public utilities, and building practices as well as the care and maintenance of the agora. Further, they have a responsibility to control, as well as the capacity to fine, those who misbehave in these areas.

Three other sets of directors also are to be appointed (VI:764-765) to oversee gymnastics, music, and education. Here, as well, the Athenian has an elaborate plan that not only pertains to the screening and appointment of these office holders, but also arranging for instruction for those in their care as well as the judges of the competitions that fall under their jurisdictions.

Still, the Athenian (VI:765-766) asserts that of all the great offices of the state, it is the Ministry of Education that is the most consequential. Whereas people may be regarded as tame animals, they still require instruction and discipline to become truly civilized. Otherwise, those who are insufficiently or inadequately educated may act like the most savage of the animals. It is for this reason that the supervision and care of the young, during their formative years, is so critical (more detailed considerations of the processes and problematics of education are provided in Book VII of *Laws*). The minister of education is to be elected by the magistrates and would occupy that office for five years before being replaced by another incumbent.

Then, observing that a city without courts of law would cease to have integrity as a city, the Athenian (VI:766-768) considers a system for dealing with disputes within the community.

After encouraging people to resolve their disputes informally, the Athenian proposes that those failing to do so should establish a more informal court or council of friends and neighbors to help resolve the issue. If this fails, the next line of action would be to take things to a regular court, with the possibility of taking a case to a third and final court of appeal.

The Athenian also proposes two other courts; one for cases involving private wrongdoing (i.e., claims of a personal sort) and the other for cases against the public good. He also encourages all members of the community to be involved in both the public as well as the more private, individual cases.

Then, after acknowledging the notably limited nature of their discussion of office holders, the Athenian (VI:786-771) also observes that they can expect laws to change over time. Thus, despite their best intentions and the practice of articulating their laws in careful, precise terms, they anticipate that some errors will be made and that legislators will learn from these experiences. Indeed, he suggests, adjustments of these sorts will be necessary for an improvement of the state. However, the existing laws would only be changed through the central involvements of the guardians. As both “guardians of the law” and “legislators of the law to be,” these people are to devote their lives to virtue.

Then, after providing a (seemingly diversionary) religious, mathematical justification for the number 5040, as an orientational concept for the community, the Athenian (VI:771-785) embarks on a more sustained consideration of marriage-related practices, processes, and contingencies, all of which also are to fall under the purview of their legislation.

The second half of Book VI (772-785) deals with marriage-related legislation. Although focusing primarily on matters pertaining to marriage, these laws and practices also address aspects of family property and life routines. [Essentially prescriptive and proscriptive in thrust, these materials lack more sustained philosophic considerations of human knowing and acting. Still, they provide a sense of the ways in which people may attempt to regulate morality in what is often assumed to be a more intimate, relaxed area of community life. While some of these notions may seem extreme, it may be acknowledged that somewhat parallel restrictions may be invoked in religious settings and other moral contexts.]

The Athenian (VI:771-773) begins by proposing a series of religious assemblies and associated events that not only provide occasions to honor the gods, but also represent opportunities for people from all parts of the city-state to become acquainted with one another. Notably, this includes dancing games in which the youth of the community become more familiar with one another so that they will have knowledge of the fuller appearances and temperaments of others when making a more viable selection for marriage.

Noting that men are to marry between the ages of 25 and 35 and women somewhat younger (16 to 20), the Athenian emphasizes that the man should be mindful, first and foremost, of what is best for the state rather than himself in selecting a wife. In this regard, the rich are encouraged to marry the poor, the quick minded to settle with the slow minded, those who are quick to anger should match up with those are more complacent and so forth so that the community maintains a greater overall consistency. Still, the speakers recognize the limitations of being too insistent on matters of personal attraction.

As well, the Athenian (VI:774) states that men who remain unmarried after 35 years of age not only are to be fined, proportionate to the class in which they belong to, but they also are to lose all honors that would be appropriate to someone of their ages and positions in the community. Effectively they are to be treated as social outcasts for failure to assume their marital responsibilities.

After stipulating that marriage festivals are to be fairly modest events, the Athenian (VI:775) clearly discourages drunkenness within the marriage. Next, the Athenian (VI:776) says that when people marry they are to establish homes separate

from those of their families – a house that the man (VI:778) would have had built prior to the marriage.

In the midst of this broader commentary, the Athenian (VI:776-777) also considers the property accompanying the couple, but dwells most particularly on people's relationships with their slaves.

While observing the topic of slavery has been the subject of wide ranges of viewpoints and debates among the Hellenes more generally, the Athenian says that citizens who have slaves are clearly advantaged over those who do not. Still, the task is one of getting the best and most loyal slaves possible. Moreover, he notes that people often adopt two opposing standpoints in dealing with their slaves. Thus, whereas some define slaves as corrupt and completely untrustworthy and tend to treat them severely, he also observes that others define and treat their slaves in quite opposite ways.

In trying to develop policy for their state, the Athenian proposes (a) that people try to obtain slaves with more diverse backgrounds in order to deter these individuals from developing natural affinities with one another and conspiring among themselves against their masters. He also stresses (b) that slaves be treated justly, if not even more justly than the way citizens treat one another, in all possible respects. As well, he proposes that (c) slaves be punished rather than verbally admonished when they have done wrong, thereby more consistently reaffirming their places in the slave-owner relationship. Somewhat relatedly, he suggests that (d) people maintain more consistent control by providing direct commands, maintaining interpersonal distance, and avoiding jests in dealing with their slaves. This way, the Athenian says, life will be considerably more agreeable to both the slaves and their owners.

After a short discussion of city planning and walled defenses of the city, the speakers (VI:779-781) discuss dining arrangements of married males and females. After noting that the men are accustomed to communal dining tables and the women are not, they consider similar practices for women but decide that it would be inappropriate to propose something that is likely to encounter extended resistance on the part of the women.

Then, following a brief commentary (VI:782-783) on the (cross-cultural) diversity of people's practices in making sacrifices in religious ceremonies, noting that these range from the use of humans as items of sacrifice to people who abstain from all animal-based food, the topic then turns to the human desires for food, drink, and sex. Mindful of both the variability of people's relationships and the desirability of procreation, the Athenian (VI:783-784) subsequently proposes that they select a set of women to serve as overseers of marital matters. These women would assemble on regular occasions and share information that they have gleaned about others in the community that might in some way relate to people's marriages and associated behaviors. [Although not so entirely different from many instances of gossip to which people may be more routinely subjected, this seems one of the more invasive modes of regulation that one finds in *Laws*.]

Relatedly, those who do not produce children in the first 10 years of marriage may, after consulting with the women overseers and families, divorce for their mutual benefit (the subsequent status of these people is left undefined).

People who have other, dispute related problems in their marriages might receive counseling of sorts, admonishments, and other threats from the women overseers. Those of whom these women considered incorrigible may be written up and taken to court. Unsuccessful defendants would lose all privileges of citizenship.

The Athenian also proposes that these considerations would apply to married people as long as they have a family (i.e., offspring living with them).

This material on marital relations serves as a prelude to subsequent discussions of child rearing practices and people's involvements in the educational process in Book VII.²¹

Books VII-XII in *Laws*

There is much more material of relevance to morality, deviance, and regulation in Plato's *Laws* than can be considered here. What follows most immediately, thus, is a brief overview of the contents of Books VII-XII.

Book VII considers the objectives, procedures, and problematics of educating the young in ways that contribute to the well-being of the state as well as people's more individualized characters, virtues, and accomplishments. Book VIII more diversely addresses religious festivals, military exercises, laws pertaining to marriage, and legislation pertinent to marketplace trade and occupations more generally.

Focusing on cases involving death and physical injury, Book IX deals with the matters of agency, culpability, exemptions, and sanctions. Attending to the interconnections of religion, morality, and deviance, Book X is developed mindfully of the ways that people do things and how these might be regulated in both preventative and remedial terms.

Book XI attends to a variety of legal matters, including property, people's wills, and family-related settlements, as well as slander, witnesses, and advocacy roles. The concluding segment, Book XII, considers an assortment of topics pertaining to property, military matters, relations with other states, and the matter of "governing the governors."

Whereas Plato's speakers have a great deal more to say about morality, deviance, and regulation in books VII–XII, I have selected four topics for our more immediate consideration. These pertain to (a) culpability and agency in cases involving death and injury (wounding); (b) religion and wrongdoing; (c) regulating the regulators; and (d) the taking of religious oaths. Although best comprehended mindfully of materials presented in Books I–VI, this latter set of topics provides some additional insight into Plato's *Laws* and his related considerations of deviance and regulation.

²¹ Focusing primarily on "the education of the young," Book VII has more relevance for the study of the deviance and regulation than is commonly supposed. Thus, whereas contemporary social scientists have given relatively little attention to the early development of people's characters, habits, and viewpoints, Plato's speakers will argue for the necessity of attending more directly to the nature of people's childhood experiences for comprehending people's subsequent participation in community life.

Still, it should be acknowledged that whereas Plato's speakers engage education of the young in a more concerted manner in Book VII, education is seen as a pervasive and enduring concern that not only pertains to morality, deviance, and regulation, but also has important implications for the sheer continuity of the community.

Further, while the speakers are intent on maximizing certain moral objectives (and virtues) in the city-state they are proposing, they also seem aware of the precarious nature of their venture at every point in their discussion. In the process, thus, they provide a great deal of insight into the highly variable ways in which people engage the matters of human knowing and acting.

Culpability and Agency

In Book IX, Plato's speakers address a broad array of criminal court cases (yet other lawsuits are considered in Book XI). To this end, they identify particular categories of crime, stipulate punishment, and indicate how offenders are to be judged and by whom.

While it is instructive to attend to the particular crimes the speakers identify and the related specifics of punishment and judgment practices for appreciating their notions of morality more specifically, I will focus somewhat more directly on (a) the rationale the speakers provide for developing their definitions of crime, regulation, and associated procedures and (b) their explanations of people's involvements in wrongdoing and people's general receptivity to regulatory endeavors.

After introducing their overall agenda for dealing with lawsuits, the speakers (IX:853) observe that it is embarrassing to have to legislate against crime in a state that is well regulated and in which virtue is so clearly emphasized. Nevertheless, some wrongdoing seems inevitable. If they were dealing with divine offspring, such things would not be required. However, as human legislators dealing with other human offspring, it seems impossible to avoid legislation on wrongdoing. Thus, the law is necessary for dealing with those whose unjust tendencies cannot be subdued in other ways.

Still, in developing legislation, the three speakers intend to approach the law variously as a means of (a) anticipating problems and (b) deterring (by informing as well as threatening people) unjust acts on the part of those who may be so inclined, as well as (c) punishing those who actually violate the law.

The first law that the Athenian (IX:853-856) proposes is a prohibition against robbing the temples. Although it seems most unlikely that any citizen would engage in such reprehensible activity, there are apt to be others, such as their servants or the servants of strangers, who might do such things. No offense of this nature is to be tolerated and the Athenian outlines an elaborate procedure for the trial and the associated determination of guilt. Non-citizens found guilty of offenses against the temples are to be branded, beaten, and exiled, but any citizen found guilty of these offenses is to be put to death.

The second major law pertains to activities that threaten the well-being of the state. Thus, people who try to destroy or overthrow the government, or otherwise plot against it are to be punished with death. Relatedly, any magistrate who fails to act against someone behaving in this matter will be considered nearly as bad as the original offender. Also, highly culpable are other people who know about these threats to the state, but who fail to inform the authorities.

The court proceedings in these cases would parallel those invoked to deal with the temple robbers. Likewise, when the majority of the citizens present find the person guilty, the punishment is to be the death of the offender. Still, the speakers observe that, except in rare cases, the children of these and the other wrongdoers are not to be punished.

The third major category of law pertains to theft. After proposing the basic rule that the thief is to provide restitution that is double the value of the things stolen, the speakers (IX:857) quickly acknowledge that theft is not of one quality. Thus, theft varies relative to the nature of the targets (sacred or secular) involved, the objects and the value of the items stolen, the circumstances, and so forth.

More importantly, however, their attentiveness to the complexities associated with judgments in the case of theft, provides an occasion for the speakers (IX:858-859) to reconsider their larger venture.

Hence, they say that, like those collecting materials for other analyses, they too will be learning about legislation more generally. Accordingly, they will be consulting the constitutions generated by other legislators as well as taking into account the works of poets and other authors in their broader quest to implement rules and practices of the most honorable and just sort.

Still, as the dialogue unfolds, the speakers (IX:860) ask if the just and the honorable are synonymous in their emphasis or whether these concepts may be diametrically opposed at times. Then, referencing their earlier observation that people would not voluntarily do evil, the speakers ask if people can be justly punished for things they did not voluntarily do?

Recognizing that they are caught up in a series of contradictions, the speakers suggest that they need to consider the distinctions between voluntary and involuntary crimes.

Noting that all states and all legislators differentiate between voluntary and involuntary actions and have legislated accordingly, the speakers (IX:861) say that before proposing specific penalties for people's offenses they, as legislators, are obliged to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary actions. If they cannot do this adequately, they must find other means of achieving justice.

In discussing this matter further, the Athenian (IX:862) suggests that rather than defining things as "voluntary" and "involuntary" (given [a] their earlier claim that no one would voluntarily choose to do evil and [b] the problematics of more directly defining voluntary behavior) they would do better to focus on "injury" and "intent." Thus, whenever injury has occurred, the general practice will be to (a) admonish the perpetrators for the act, to insist that these people not do such a thing again – at least not voluntarily; (b) require that the perpetrators pay for the costs of injury and associated damages; and (c) encourage the reformation of the perpetrators.

Still, if certain offenders are considered "incurable," they are to be put to death. In this latter event, the Athenian points to the "double good" that is achieved. Not only will these individuals never cause others harm again, but their punishment also may serve as a lesson to others.

At this point, the speakers (IX:863-864) reengage the matters of voluntary and involuntary actions with respect to justice. The Athenian says that there are three states of mind that contribute to people's involvements in crime: passion, pleasure, and ignorance.

Although he only briefly addresses each, passions (e.g., anger, fear) are defined as intense, non-rational states of mind that people experience, but may only be partially able to control (i.e., introduce elements of involuntary conduct).

By contrast, pleasure is more focused and is apt to be deliberately pursued by means of persuasion as well as deceit. For this reason, crimes motivated by pleasure are seen as more despicable than those motivated by passion.

While ignorance may be of a simple, uninformed sort, the Athenian also describes (and more severely condemns) a conceited or haughty form of ignorance in which the ignorant person scorns more informed viewpoints.

Saying that these three states of mind may pull people in different directions in individual cases, all may have the effect of motivating people to engage in unjust activities. As a result, those who lack greater degrees of temperance or self-regulation are more susceptible to all of these dispositions.

Still, speaking more generally, the Athenian adds that it is important to distinguish between violent activities of a more open, and immediate, passionate sort and those of a more reprehensible type that are pursued with deceit and premeditation.

Then, noting that some people also may injure others as a consequence of states of madness, infirmity of mind, and such, the Athenian proposes that these people pay for the injury they have done, but, with the exception of highly serious injuries, be exempt from other penalties.

Recognizing that they have begun to speak of homicide, the Athenian (IX:865) suggests that they establish a set of laws pertaining to homicide. Observing that there are many different types of homicide, he begins by suggesting that those who involuntarily kill others in the course of athletic contests and public games (as in military exercises), as well as well-intentioned physicians, are to be exempt from blame.

However, others who, directly or indirectly, take the lives of others will be held culpable. Penalties would depend on the nature of the parties involved and their relationships with one another.

Then, attending to the structuring of the three speakers' own societies, the Athenian (IX:865-869) subsequently stipulates an array of sanctions to be applied to those who involuntarily take the life of another by reference to their statuses as slaves, strangers, and citizens. In like manner, he deals with involuntary death involving parents and children, siblings, and spouses. Still, he also differentiates more immediate instances of passionate homicide (seen as more involuntarily) from those involving premeditation, stating that the penalties are to be more severe in the latter cases.

Continuing thusly, the Athenian states that those committing homicide in civil war or in self-defense should be exempt from penalty, unless a slave is involved in the killing of a freeman. Still, in cases of involuntary homicide more generally, the Athenian proposes that the agents of another's death generally be required to undergo a "purification process," the conditions of which also vary according to people's circumstances.

The Athenian (IX:869-870) then turns to crimes committed voluntarily and with premeditation, wherein he suggests that the three major motivations are (a) greed or the never satisfied lusting for more in the way of material goods; (b) ambition and associated jealousies; and (c) cowardly fear, wherein people will stop at nothing to avoid responsibility for unjust behaviors.

After referencing the notion that people will be punished in life hereafter, the Athenian says that those who truly believe in this would have no need for a law but that there are others who do not take divinity seriously.

Subsequently, the Athenian (IX:871-873) considers the treatment of those guilty of homicide and the associated duties of the kinspeople of the deceased in the process. Likewise, he acknowledges the roles of those who plan homicides in concert with others or who induce others to take the life of a third party, indicating that these "background agents" are not to be exempted from guilt.

Extending the framework even further, those committing suicide subsequently are denigrated for their cowardly weaknesses and are to be buried in more destitute areas, away from other family members.

The Athenian (IX:874) also gives some attention to justifiable homicide, wherein people killing burglars, defending women and children, and saving their parents or other innocent family members from attack are to be held guiltless for any resulting deaths of the initial perpetrators.

After homicides, the Athenian (IX:874) observes that the next most serious matters are (physiological) injuries. The plan is to distinguish involuntary and voluntary deeds of violence that result in injury in ways that parallel their consideration of homicides.

Then, stating that no single person is able to know what is best for society, nor, if knowing, is always able and willing to do what is best for the society, the Athenian (IX:875) says that both the public and private good is better insured when the state maintains priority over the individual. Relatedly, he adds, laws are necessary because of people's selfish tendencies.

With this preamble in mind, the Athenian (IX:875-876) points out that those developing penalties pertaining to the injury of others have many things to consider. This includes not only the agent and the victim, but also the nature of the injury and loss, the circumstances leading up to the offense, the actual events, and so forth.

The problem is more complicated still, however, in that there is also the matter of how much discretion should be left to the judges of individual courts and how much should be decided in advance by the legislators. Recognizing that courts may vary greatly in quality, the Athenian proposes that they, themselves, establish more consistent parameters of justice.

Noting that some injuries have arisen in cases of attempted homicide, the Athenian (IX:877) says that the perpetrators involved in these crimes should be treated as murderers and subject the same penalties. Likewise, if children intentionally wound their parents or slaves deliberately injure their masters, these people also are to be put to death. Spouses who injure the other in attempted homicide are to be banished from the country forever.

When passion is involved, resulting in injuries that are the products of motivations that fall somewhat between involuntary and voluntary tendencies, the Athenian (IX:878-879) proposes penalties that are less severe than in other instances of attempted homicide. Still, these penalties are to be more substantial than those associated with unintentional injuries.

When injuries are unintentional, people are to be compensated by the perpetrators, but no other penalties are likely to be imposed for what may be seen as "chance events."

Then, noting that elderly persons are to be protected from younger people and citizens are to be protected from strangers, the Athenian (IX:879-880) proposes specific legislation to deal with cases of these sorts.

After stating that laws are to inform people of the ways of maintaining civil relations of others as well as provide a mechanism for dealing with those who are not so easily instructed, the Athenian (IX:880-881) says that criminals who do not respect religious proscriptions or the laws of the state are to be put to death.

Subsequently, the Athenian says that if any man is seen to strike one of his parents, witnesses who defend the parent from the attack can expect to be notably acknowledged for this intervention (especially when someone from a lower class intervenes on behalf of the parent). Conversely, those who merely witness the event, but do not defend the endangered parent, can expect to be severely punished. A similar law (IX:882) is to hold with respect to a slave striking a free man or women (in parallel circumstances) who mistreat other women.

Religion and Wrongdoing

Taken from Book X, the following materials consider the ways that people may locate their misdeeds within the context of religion. Whereas religion may be seen as a deterrent to wrongdoing, Plato's speakers are well aware that the matter is much more complex than this idea suggests.

Thus, in the process of trying to find ways of employing religion to encourage morality more generally, the speakers consider the uneven and problematic linkages of religion and wrongdoing. In the process they provide valuable insights both on the problems of encouraging young people to accept more virtuous life-styles and the ways that people might “use religion in the service of their wrongdoing.”

Noting that young people not only are particularly apt to engage in excesses, but also tend to be insolent in disposition, the Athenian (*Laws*, X:884-885) reiterates the speakers' viewpoint, that the worst crimes are those against religion. Still, he adds, before deciding on punishment, one should ascertain the more particular religious frameworks to which particular offenders subscribe.

He contends that no one would act in such offensive manners unless they (a) do not believe the gods exist; (b) do not believe that the gods, if they exist, care about people; or (c) believe the gods exist, but also think that the gods easily can be pacified.

Continuing, the Athenian (*Laws*, X:885) states that, when confronted with crimes against religion, the offenders are apt to defend their activities. Thus, they may insist that they should be understood before being punished and that they require proofs, variously, that gods exist, that the gods care, and that they are not easily appeased.

In developing a response, the Cretan (*Laws*, X:886) first states that the ordering of the universe constitutes a proof of divine existence, as also does the fact that all manners of Greeks and Barbarians believe in the gods.

Despite his own agreement with the Cretan, the Athenian cautions him that these claims will not be adequate in themselves. Indeed, the Athenian says, the poets and philosophers have greatly complicated matters. While the poets have introduced all sorts of dubious tales about the gods, their genealogies, and their behaviors, some philosophers have claimed that the heavenly bodies are no more than chunks of earth and stone and that these material essences have no regard for humans. Likewise, the Athenian observes, these (material) philosophers argue that religion is entirely fictional in essence.

Recognizing the limitations of merely legislating on the premise that the gods exist, the Athenian (*Laws*, X:887) suggests that they find some ways of persuading others that the gods do exist, that they care, and that they are genuinely attentive to justice.

Observing that there always are some people who have doubts despite their upbringing and their awareness that others believe, the Athenian (*Laws*, X:888-890) proposes that they consider the position of the philosophers who deny any divine intervention; who say the universe is the product of nature and chance alone or that all humanly known things are the products of nature, chance, and human endeavor. Summarizing the positions of these philosophers, the Athenian states:

[Athenian:] In the first place, my dear friend, these people would say that the Gods exist not by nature, but by art, and by the laws of states, which are different in different places, according to the agreement of those who make them; and that the honourable is one thing by nature and another thing by law, and that the principles of justice have no existence at all in nature, but that mankind are always disputing about them and altering them; and that the alterations which are made by art and by law have no basis in nature, but are of authority for the moment and at the time at which they are made. These, my friends, are the sayings of wise men, poets and prose writers, which find a way into the minds of youth. They are told by them that the highest right is might, and in this way the young fall into

impieties, under the idea that the Gods are not such as the law bids them imagine; and hence arise factions, these philosophers inviting them to lead a true life according to nature, that is, to live in real dominion over others, and not in legal subjection to them...

[Athenian:] ... what should the lawgiver do when this evil is of long standing? ... Should he not rather, when he is making laws for men, at the same time infuse the spirit of persuasion into his words, and mitigate the severity of them as far as he can?

[Cleinius:] Why, Stranger, if such persuasion be at all possible, then a legislator who has anything in him ought never to weary of persuading men; he ought to leave nothing unsaid in support of the ancient opinion that there are Gods, and of all those other truths which you were just now mentioning; he ought to support the law and also art, and acknowledge that both alike exist by nature, and no less than nature, if they are the creations of mind in accordance with right reason, as you appear to me to maintain, and I am disposed to agree with you in thinking. (Plato, *Laws*, X:889-890; Jowett trans.)

Mindful of the long-standing nature of religious skepticism, the speakers stress the importance of using the laws to persuade rather than threaten the citizenry. However, they (*Laws*, X:891) also observe that, once instituted, the laws can help maintain the very viewpoints they reference. Still, in the absence of other defenders of religion and virtue, the speakers envision their duty as legislators to encourage honorable viewpoints wherever possible.

Then, embarking on what will be a more sustained argument for the existence of the gods, the Athenian (*Laws*, X:891-899) develops the position that the soul (as a living, spiritual essence) must precede the material features of the universe. He contends that the physical (material) philosophers (who reduce everything to fire, water, earth, and air) are in error, because they neglect the spiritual, divine essence that must precede the existence of all other matter. It is only the soul that alone is capable of moving itself; of initiating change from within. Likewise, the Athenian states, it is the soul that has given motion to all other things.

Continuing this line of argument, the Athenian posits that since the soul inhabits all things that move, the soul is the cause of evil as well as good, and the unjust as well as the just. Presumably, however, the world is governed by the better aspects of the soul, or by the better soul (assuming that there are good and evil souls). Proceeding in this manner, the Athenian proposes that somewhat different souls or spiritual essences may be involved in sustaining all heavenly objects.

Hinging his position on the argument that "the soul must be the origin of all things," the Athenian (*Laws*, X:899) concludes he has said enough on the existence of the gods. He now turns attention to those who believe that the gods exist, but do *not* believe that they care about the condition and affairs of humans.

In an attempt to convince people that the gods do care, the Athenian (*Laws*, X:900) begins by asserting that the gods are good and possess virtues, as in courage, honor, and responsibility. Likewise, the Athenian (*Laws*, X:901-903) notes that the gods know all things that people do and that these divine souls have the power to do all manners of things both great and small.

Further, the Athenian stresses, it is important for people to remember that they were created as part of a larger creation rather than to presume that the larger creation was developed for particular individuals within. Indeed, the Athenian (*Laws*, X:904-905) explains, people are assigned to places that best enable them to contribute to the larger order of destiny. Relatedly, those who are more virtuous will

be rewarded while those who act in evil manners also will be punished accordingly. However, he adds, because people are unable to see the larger scheme of things, they may not understand the more exacting nature of divine justice.

Having arrived at this point, the Athenian (*Laws*, X:905-906) next takes issue with those who think the gods easily can be placated or appeased with respect to human wrongdoing. Emphasizing that the gods are people's greatest allies in the conflict between good and evil, he says that it is absurd to assume that the gods are so fickle or greedy that they can be bribed into instances of dishonor or injustice. Indeed, the Athenian asserts, as people's principal guardians, the gods would act in people's best interests.

Then, describing himself as zealous in his opposition to evil people, the Athenian (*Laws*, X:907-909) proposes imprisonment for impious persons. The nonbelievers who maintain a tolerance and respect for the religious viewpoints and practices of others may avoid imprisonment, but those who are more openly critical of the religious practices of others and subject believers to ridicule are to be placed in a reformatory for a five year term. Second time offenders would be sentenced to death. Other nonbelievers who commit offenses against divinity or humanity are seen as incorrigible and are to be sentenced to life imprisonment.

Next, noting that gods and temples are not easily instituted and sustained, the Athenian proposes that citizens also are to be forbidden from establishing personal temples as well as practicing sacrifices and other religious rituals in private settings (*Laws*, X:909-910).

Regulating the Regulators

Within a broader set of concluding discourses in Book XII, the Athenian (XII:945-948) directly addresses the matter of assessing the magistrates or guardians. To deal with this task, he proposes that each citizen should annually, and within the context of a religious ceremony, select three people not less than 50 years of age whom he deems the best in every respect. The three people obtaining the most votes (the Athenian provides a much more elaborate set of procedures), along with some assistants that they choose would have the (individual and collective) responsibility of assessing the magistrates and posting judgment of each of the guardians in writing in the agora.

Magistrates who thusly are accused of wrongdoing could challenge the assessors before another set of judges. However, if found guilty of misdeeds, the magistrates would be punished more severely than the original assessor's sentence had stipulated. Nonetheless, as the Athenian observes, a punishment of death cannot be doubled.

Still, more is involved in regulating the regulators and the Athenian (XII:947) thus considers procedures for "assessing the assessors" (i.e., those who assess the magistrates). First, however, the Athenian observes that those who had been selected as assessors not only would be given every possible civil honor, but they also would be recognized as the high priests and would assume prominent roles in all religious ceremonies. Likewise, the Athenian details elaborate plans for the funeral procession and burial of the assessors.

Nevertheless, the assessors also are to be subject to scrutiny, and if they are found undeserving all honors would be removed. Relatedly, any citizen who considers it appropriate may charge one of the assessors in a court composed of the guardians and a select set of judges. If found guilty, the assessor would be

disciplined. However, if the assessor were found innocent, the person bringing charges against the assessor could be sanctioned.

Taking Oaths

[I introduced this material on oaths to further stress the skepticism that Plato's speakers express about virtuous conduct on the part of the people with whom they would be dealing.]

After referencing Rhadamanthus, whom the Athenian says, (a) knew that all of the people in his time firmly believed in the gods and defined the gods as the source of all justice, and (b) therefore could quickly settle cases based exclusively on the oaths that people took to the gods to tell the truth, the Athenian (XII:948) says that (c) this is no longer the case.

Noting that (a) some people do not believe in the gods and that (b) others think the gods have no particular concern about people's activities, and (c) still others think that they can avoid all manners of punishment by making token sacrifices and/or offering other praises to the gods, the Athenian says that the oaths people take to the gods have no practical value and should be eliminated from courtroom testimonial. Instead of people generating false impressions of honesty and or perjuring themselves with the gods, he proposes that the parties involved should provide judges with signed written statements describing their positions.

Still, in the interest of promoting a more general sense of justice, the Athenian (XII:949) proposes that judges take an oath before rendering their decisions not only in courtroom contexts, but also in other settings (as in dance contests, music competitions, and equestrian events).

Laws in Perspective

Because Plato deals with so many matters pertaining to morality, deviance, and regulation in *Laws*, it is possible to highlight only some of these issues at this point. Perhaps most central for our purposes, though, is the realization that Plato's speakers approach morality, wrongdoing, and regulation as a set of interrelated community processes that cannot be understood apart from people's lived experience.

Whereas Plato's speakers also deal with "multiple levels of regulation" it becomes apparent that regulation is very much dependent on people doing things. Plato's speakers, thus, attend extensively to agent-based enterprise. Rather than subscribe to artificial (contemporary) distinctions between "macro" and "micro" analyses, Plato approaches morality, deviance, and regulation in much more unified or integrated terms and focuses attention on the interrelated matters of people knowing, planning, acting, coordinating, and adjusting their activities as these are developed in the flows, realms, and instances of human group life.

At the same time, Plato is quite aware that people do not participate in community life in equal ways (as in class, occupation, gender). Thus, he considers the differing ways that the people enter into the moral order of the community. Still, he insists that a just notion of equality requires that people be rewarded relative to the different levels (and amounts) of contributions they make to the community. Indeed, Plato identifies this (participatory) notion of equality as a fundamental principle of a just moral order.

While Plato has a clear emphasis on “preserving the state,” he also strives for a more virtuous community context. The worthwhile state in both *Republic* and *Laws*, thus, is one in which justice is given priority. As well, because it is the state that provides the foundational mechanism for all meaningful human relations and individual virtue, the community is much more important than the particular individuals within. Likewise, because human knowing and acting are enabled by others, people are to be understood as participants within the developmental flows of ongoing community life (rather than in a more purely individualistic sense).

In contrast to *Republic*, wherein the emphasis is on the wise and judicious rule of philosopher-kings, Plato's *Laws* with its emphasis on a constitutional government is much more skeptical about the matters of morality, wrongdoing, and regulation. Attending to the practical limitations of the laws, the legislators, and the office holders as regulators, Plato's speakers in *Laws* also are mindful of the ways in which religion, education, politics, and poetics may be used in the service of the constitution as well as the ways that people may use these matters to serve their own interests.

Thus, although Plato's speakers acknowledge the interrelatedness and interdependence of leaders and followers in both *Republic* and *Laws*, the speakers in *Laws* give more sustained attention to people's tendencies to act in self interested ways, to pursue objectives other than those that would foster justice or otherwise serve the state.

While mindful of people's biological essences and the emotional dispositions and other habits that humans develop from early childhood onward (especially Book VII), Plato's speakers also are aware of people's capacities for deliberative agency. Consequently, for instance, although Plato's speakers make reference to the gods at various points and insist on the importance of people developing and maintaining a religious emphasis, his speakers also are highly cognizant of the doubts and discrepancies with which people work in this area. Consequently, they stress humanly formulated and enforced laws, along with the development (instruction, learning, and enactment) of judgment, temperance, and other virtuous features of agency.

Although highly attentive to the importance of people developing temperance, Plato's speakers also envision self-regulation as an ongoing internal struggle. Whereas those who lack self-control are seen to be of little value to the state and others, as well as themselves, the speakers in *Laws* are cognizant not only of the learned qualities of virtue (including self regulation), but also of the importance of the continued institutionalized and direct interpersonal support of virtuous behavior in all sectors of community life.

Accordingly, even in the midst of a more sustained emphasis on temperance and other virtuous qualities, it is difficult to miss the extended array of managers or supervisors that Plato's speakers deem necessary to maintain a viable set of civil, just relations among the populace.

Plato is often dismissed as an idealist, but his speakers in *Laws* are clearly skeptical of people's tendencies to (a) honor the state-related concerns with justice, religious prescriptions and sanctions, as well as (b) respect interpersonal relations and (c) attend to their personal (self-regulation) well-being even in the context of a strong, pervasive “community consciousness.”

Conclusion

Although Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* provide the primary focus for the present paper, it is instructive to compare these texts with Prus and Grills (2003) *The Deviant Mystique*. Assuming a symbolic interactionist approach to the study of deviance, Prus and Grills (P&G) provide a detailed research agenda for examining "the deviance-making process."

Denoting a contemporary framework for considering the processes and problematics of morality, wrongdoing, and regulation that Plato addresses in developing *Republic* and *Laws*, P&G's text also serves as a reference point that allows one to more readily locate gaps in present day notions of morality, deviance and regulation as well as identify ways in which Plato's works might better inform current conceptions of human group life.

Still, since Prus and Grills' *The Deviant Mystique* can be discussed only in highly cursory terms in the present statement (see the Appendix at the end for an outline of this text), readers are cautioned that the ensuing analysis inevitably will be very general and sketchy. Thus, what follows can only be suggestive of the potential that these two sets of materials offer for more sustained comparative analyses.

Focusing primarily on people's involvements in matters of deviance and regulation, Prus and Grills, like Plato, approach morality, deviance, and regulation deviance as thoroughly embedded community essences. Rather than reporting on the frequencies of particular types of deviance and morality, P&G establish a framework for examining instances of deviance and regulation wherever these may take place.

Adopting the interactionist viewpoint that nothing is inherently deviant or virtuous, but that notions of deviance instead reflect the definitions of those designating particular matters in moral terms, Prus and Grills further insist on the necessity of locating the deviance-making process within the broader set of people's theaters of operation that constitute community life.

Like Plato, and unlike those who artificially reduce matters of morality, deviance, and regulation to abstracted, dehumanized sets of factors, structures, or forces that are statistically linked to occurrences of certain kinds of behaviors or outcomes,²² P&G stress the importance of examining deviance not only in processual terms, but also in terms that acknowledge the ways in which all members of the community may enter into the deviance-making process.

Mindful of their broader emphases on the ways that people participate in community life, Prus and Grills consider the ways that people *develop*, promote, and resist definitions of situations (as in thoughts, words, activities, appearances, outcomes) as troublesome or deviant in some way. They also attend to the ways in which people identify others as deviants of sorts and how those so identified deal with (resist, accept, negotiate) these designations.

Examining these processes in highly generic or transcultural terms, P&G deal with these matters in more explicit and extended conceptual detail than does Plato. Nevertheless, Plato provides a great many illustrations of these processes in *Republic* and *Laws*. These instances and the related insights he provides are particularly valuable because of their transcultural and transhistorical comparative qualities.

Prus and Grills also direct attention to the ways in which people become involved in deviance as well as sustain these activities both in conjunction with others and on their own. Here again, P&G are more specific in addressing these processes than is

²² For more extended considerations of the problematics of variable related research and analysis, see Blumer (1969) and Grills and Prus (2008).

Plato. P&G also are particularly attentive to ways that researchers could study people's involvements in subcultures. Although he particularly emphasizes legislators and regulators rather than those involved in wrongdoing, Plato still addresses matters of these latter sorts in *Republic* and *Laws*. Thus, his texts offer valuable comparison points in this area of study as well.

Further, whereas Prus and Grills provide an extended set of resources (concepts, literature, subprocesses) for studying people's involvements in deviant life-worlds as well as their participation in more solitary instances of deviance, Plato's materials draw attention to some other aspects of the involvement process that have been largely overlooked in sociological analyses of people's participation in deviance.

Most notably, this includes an attentiveness to the habits and the emotional states that people develop as they do things. Habits and emotional states are important because people take these with them into situations both as inclinations to act in particular ways and as resistances to other lines of activity. Likewise, the concept of temperance or self-regulation warrants scholarly attention as an ongoing set of struggles that people experience as they work their way through particular situations.²³

Prus and Grills also examine people's attempts to regulate deviance both in informal manners and through formal control agencies. Mindful of the objective of providing an ethnographic research agenda for studying deviance and regulation, P&G give explicit attention to the ways that researchers may study people's activities as "control agents" as well as the ways in which the "targets of control" experience treatments of various kinds and how those involved in deviance engage the disinvolvement process.

While lacking the conceptual detail that P&G provide in addressing this latter set of activities, Plato's discussions of regulatory activities, as humanly engaged realms of knowing and acting, suggest sets of "humanly engaged contact points" between aspects of morality, deviance, and regulation and people's involvements in education, religion, poetics and the like that may be productively examined through ethnographic research of the sort P&G discuss.

Although Plato and Prus and Grills developed their texts at very different points in the history of Western social thought and have pursued different agendas in developing their materials, the two sets of works are much more complementary than might seem on the surface. Thus, although P&G's *The Deviant Mystique* is more singularly focused on deviance and regulation and has a pronounced pluralist quality and Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* are intended as more encompassing models for communities in which justice (notably interfused with religious motifs) provides the

²³ Rather than relegate these matters to psychology (wherein researchers remain essentially wedded to abstract, dehumanized sets of factors), it is much more instructive to deal with these aspects of human knowing and acting in sustained ethnographic inquiry. This way, researchers may probe more extensively into people's tensions, struggles, activities, assessments, and adjustments as they deal with "what they think or are told they should do" and any inclinations and/or resistances that they experience prior to, during, and after having acted in certain ways.

Relatedly, it is essential that social scientists overcome the simplistic idea that "attitudes cause behavior." Not only do those adopting viewpoints of these sorts fail to recognize that people may hold multiple, often conflicting, attitudes towards all manners of things (including activities and objectives), but (as the interactionists stress) people also face the task of selecting and developing lines of action within particular situations.

As well, people often develop their activities mindfully of, if not also through more direct interchanges with, others. These other people as well, not only have habits, emotionalities, and viewpoints of various, possibly mixed, sorts, but, likewise, also are faced with the task of making choices within specific situations (and interactional contexts).

centralizing emphasis of community life, the two sets of materials share many analytic features.

Perhaps most centrally, Plato and Prus and Grills not only focus on (a) morality, deviance, and regulation as community essences in a fundamental and irreducible sense, but, like Plato, P&G also stress (b) the importance of the emergent, processual nature of human group life and the ways that people (c) enter into the process as agents as well as (d) sustain and reshape the settings in which they do things.

Relatedly, Plato and P&G not only envision (e) people as adopting multiple viewpoints on morality, deviance, and regulation, but they also emphasize the importance of (f) activity, (g) reflectivity, (h) relationships and identities, (i) persuasive endeavor, and (j) the full range of human interchange (as in cooperation, conflict, negotiation, deception, loyalty, instruction, and playfulness).

Building extensively on Chicago-style interactionism, Prus and Grills bring a powerful set of resources (pragmatist theory, concepts, and the ethnographic literature) to the study of morality, deviance, and regulation. They also detail an extended set of processes for inquiry into the deviance-making process. Furthermore, as Chicago-style ethnographers, they offer a definite methodology for pursuing the study of human group life that clearly is not evident in Plato's texts.

Likewise, although Plato clearly thinks in generic conceptual terms and more or less continuously invokes comparative analysis in developing his texts, P&G specifically emphasize the importance of developing "generic social processes" – as transsituational (transcontextual and transhistorical) reference points that people may use in pursuing comparative analyses with respect to all manners of human behavior and relations.

Although each of these interactionist emphases can substantially enable the study of morality, deviance, and regulation, by no means are Plato's contributions to the contemporary social sciences obsolete, redundant, or inconsequential. Thus, in addition to the many advantages noted to this point, Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* have yet more to offer to students of the human condition.

A great many scholars have dealt with topics that Plato introduces in *Republic* and *Laws* over the intervening centuries. However, seldom have they approached these matters mindfully of the pragmatist framework that Plato so broadly and effectively has used to capture the essential features of human group life.

Indeed, because Plato insightfully attends to so many humanly engaged features of community life in *Republic* and *Laws*, these two texts represent particularly valuable conceptual microcosms through which readers may gain a highly instructive sense of the more comprehensive set of social processes that characterize human knowing and acting.

As suggested in the comparison of Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* with Prus and Grills *The Deviant Mystique*, the issue is not whether the older or the newer is better. Instead, the task is to achieve a better understanding of community life by (a) examining human group life in process terms, as "something in the making;" (b) invoking comparative analysis in order to achieve a fuller appreciation of what has been learned across sets of transcontextual and transhistorical contexts;²⁴ and (c) striving for conceptual articulations of what may be known with greater levels of

²⁴ As well, because of the foundational relevance of Plato's works for Western social thought more generally, *Republic* and *Laws* provide mediums through which sociologists may more readily communicate with scholars on a broader interdisciplinary as well as a more extended international basis.

confidence as well as the sorts of things that might be more productively examined in future inquiry (also see Prus 2004, 2007c, 2007d).

Thus, although it is most important to study the ways that people do things in "the here and now," inquiries of a more contemporary sort are most instructive when envisioned in a historical context and subjected to more sustained comparative analyses of both a transcontextual and a transhistorical sort. In this respect, Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* represent particularly important pieces of the broader sociological puzzle.

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Appendix

The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Subcultural Realities, and Regulation

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An Ethnographic Account of Doing Survey Research in Prison: Descriptions, Reflections, and Suggestions from the Field

Abstract

This article presents an ethnographic account of my day-to-day experiences as a survey researcher in men's prisons in the United States. I outline challenges I encountered in the field and share personal reflections on interviewing people who are incarcerated. I then put forth a series of implications and suggestions for those who plan to conduct similar studies. Researchers' firsthand accounts of the data collection process and research settings are crucial because they provide instruction for other scholars. Yet, these aspects of doing research are conventionally ignored in survey researchers' scholarly publications. Accordingly, this article presents an examination of my work as a survey researcher through an interpretive frame, calls for reflective approaches to conducting quantitative research, and provides a primer on doing research in prison settings.

Keywords

Field Research; Survey Research; Total Institution; Incarceration; Prison; Ethnography; Reflective Research.

From winter 2005 through spring 2006 I spent an average of three to four days a week in the field administering face-to-face self-report surveys. These surveys were conducted for a study of 250 incarcerated men and were carried out in four minimum and medium security, adult prisons in the Midwestern United States.² Nearly half of those interviewed were subsequently invited to do a follow-up survey a few weeks after their initial interviews so the test-retest reliability of quantitative data could be assessed. The main research questions from this project focused on inmates' backgrounds and life circumstances prior to being sent to prison; and participation in the study was voluntary. Prisoners who chose to be interviewed were initially recruited in brief face-to-face meetings that explained the project's objectives and stressed the voluntary nature of their participation.

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² The initial protocol included plans to also interview female prisoners. However, the institutions that housed female prisoners could not accommodate this project because they were already overburdened with research requests.

As a novice researcher preparing to survey prisoners, I would have benefited from reading about other survey researchers' experiences. However, I found few published accounts that described the actual process of doing research in prison. Trulson, Marquart, and Mullings (2004) assembled a thorough guide for making inroads into official agencies to collect and analyze data. Unfortunately, few prior researchers have elaborated on the process of doing research in prisons once access has been secured. Moreover, published works that do contain descriptions of the research process have resulted primarily from qualitative (Crewe 2009; Davidson 1974; Davies 2000; Jacobs 1974; King 2000; Martin 2000; Owen 1998; but also see Liebling 1999) and participatory (Castellano 2007; Marquart 1986) studies of correctional settings. In contrast, descriptions of research settings are conspicuously absent from prisoner studies that rely on quantitative methods, and the actual process of collecting survey data in prisons is typically shrouded in mystery.

Clarke (1975) long ago argued that more space is needed in sociology for valuable insights from the research process that do not fit within the bounds of positivism and other conventional social science notions of data. Although many qualitative researchers have taken this admonition to heart (Emerson 1981), quantitative researchers continue to focus almost exclusively on data analyses and research findings within their written works. Whether it is the outcome of the author or the editor's decision making, there are at least two reasons why it is problematic to take what happens before quantitative data are analytically taken for granted. First, insights that can potentially inform and contextualize quantitative data analyses go untapped when the research process and research setting are ignored. Second, when written accounts fail to acknowledge the data collection process other scholars are deprived of opportunities to become sensitized to challenges and dilemmas they will potentially face in their own research. This second concern serves as a primary organizing theme for this article.

In the following sections I will share an ethnographic account of my work as a survey researcher in prison. I am pointedly descriptive, and given my emphasis on the research process I do not report empirical findings. I begin by tracing the history of ethnography in prison research. I go on to chronicle day-to-day dynamics I encountered in the field; and I then offer a sample of personal reflections. These sections are intended to demystify the actual process of doing survey research in prison. I then derive implications from my reflections, and I conclude by presenting a list of suggestions that recapitulates this article's main themes and illuminates some of the unknowns that those aspiring to do research in prison may face in their own work. My experiences are framed using themes that are salient in the qualitative literature, and the implications and suggestions I provide are generally applicable to both qualitative and quantitative researchers who work in prison settings. Yet, at times, I speak directly to other survey researchers in an effort to invite them to engage issues that are commonly taken for granted by those who do not view themselves as having a qualitative orientation.

As Ryan and Golden (2006) found when studying Irish immigrants in London, many interesting and important observations other than those captured by survey instruments emerge when working in the field. For instance, two themes intertwined with the collection of my data that went untapped by my instrument were researcher's presentation of self and us/them dichotomies among prisoners and staff. Recurring contextual dynamics such as these were fascinating and instructive, and I hope students and other researchers will benefit from reading about them.

The ethnographic tradition in prison research

Liebling succinctly notes,

Ethnography is the most basic form of social research—and resembles the way in which people ordinarily make sense of their world ... It can include observation, participation, interviewing and almost any other form of interaction between ourselves, the researchers and the social world. (2001:475)

When applying this notion of ethnography, a number of high profile prison studies and prison scholars stretching back to the 1940s have employed ethnographic methods. Devising an exhaustive list of prison ethnographies goes beyond the scope and objectives of this article. I therefore provide a sample of selected key works and outline a brief history of notable developments in the use of ethnography in prison research.

Donald Clemmer's *The Prison Community* was published in 1940 and is typically regarded as the first comprehensive sociological study of prison culture. It is one of the classic prison ethnographies, and it continues to be cited by contemporary prison scholars. Clemmer worked as a prison sociologist in a men's prison and his data consisted of close to ten years of observations and interactions gained from prisoners during the 1930s. The concept of 'prisonization,' which refers to the socialization of inmates into the prison culture, is one of the most enduring contributions from Clemmer's research.

The Society of Captives, typically regarded as the other classic ethnography of prison culture, was published by Gresham Sykes in 1958. Sykes based his research on data collected from a New Jersey men's prison over a three year period. One of the most prominent themes of this study is its conclusion that prevalent features of prison culture result from the conditions of restrictive prison environments. For instance, Sykes identified a number of deprivations that prisoners routinely face, including a lack of heterosexual relations and limited autonomy and security. Prisoners compensate for these deprivations by developing status systems whose norms and values comprise the prison culture.

The works of Clemmer and Sykes together provided the foundation from which prison culture has commonly been understood. Some of the more notable prison ethnographies from the 1960s to 1980s moved beyond prison culture and focused on core sociological themes such as gender, race, and ethnicity. For instance, Ward and Kassbaum (1965) published the first examination of women in prison. They initially set out to compare male and female prisoners' experiences, and among the main findings was that close to half of the women they studied engaged in homosexuality to cope with the distressing conditions of confinement. A few decades later Zimmer (1986) published a book that examined the resistance female correctional officers encountered upon entering male prisons in the aftermath of Title VII civil rights legislation. Zimmer found that women were met with substantial resentment from male staff who disdained the inclusion of women as guards in men's prisons. Ward and Kassbaum's study and Zimmer's research were similar in that they utilized in-depth interviewing and observation.

Race and ethnicity have been other themes of interest for prison ethnographers. Leo Carroll's *Hacks, Blacks, and Cons* was published in 1974 and provided the first examination of racial conflicts behind bars. Carroll posited that broader prison reforms improved conditions of incarceration and the treatment of inmates by staff. An outcome of these changes was that prisoner solidarity broke down because the

challenges of being imprisoned that previously brought inmates together became less pronounced. At the same time, social movements on the outside led African Americans on the inside to adopt a greater sense of black consciousness. Together these forces contributed to escalating racial tension in prisons and an increase in power by Black prisoners at the expense of White prisoners. Another book published in 1974 was *Chicano Prisoners: The Key to San Quentin* by Theodore Davidson, which provided the first examination of Chicano inmates' experiences behind bars. Davidson's work is noteworthy because it describes the formative years of the prison gangs that have more recently gone on to plague the California prison system.

The ethnographic tradition in prison research has continued into the present era. Within the last decade Lorna Rhodes (2004) conducted research in maximum security prisons in Washington State, while Ben Crewe (2007, 2009) examined a medium security prison in England. Each of these high profile prison scholars immersed themselves in their respective prison environments to examine the mechanisms, forms, and expressions of power and control exercised by prisons over prisoners.

Other recent prison ethnographies have given voice to a range of experiences and processes found in prison environments that are either misunderstood or overlooked. For instance, Barbara Owen (1998) expanded on earlier studies of female prisoner subcultures in her ethnography of a large women's prison in California, while Valerie Jenness (2010) collected ethnographic insights into transgendered inmates' lives and the institutional practices for classifying and housing them in men's prisons. Two final contemporary prison ethnographies that have received considerable attention were both conducted at San Quentin. John Irwin (2009) studied how male prisoners serving life sentences for murder became redeemed and empathetic individuals over the course of several years of incarceration, while Megan Comfort (2008) did interviews and observation in San Quentin's visiting room and found that inmates' female partners were profoundly impacted by institutional rules and limits imposed by incarceration. These restrictions often led to frustration and pain, though at other times they contributed to redefined relationships that were ultimately more desirable.

These brief synopses of foundational studies underscore the ethnographic tradition in prison research. The ethnographies included in this section featured ongoing relations between researchers, the research setting and the individuals studied, and the researchers frequently immersed themselves in the field and examined subjective experiences. By way of contrast, as a survey researcher, I primarily collected data using a survey instrument and engaged in more limited contacts with respondents. Similar to Jenness (2010), I did not conduct an actual ethnography in the traditional sense. However, also similar to Jenness, I gained ethnographic insights and engaged in reflective inquiry in the process of carrying out my survey research. I now turn to the interviewing dynamics and research settings that shaped my day-to-day experiences in the field.

(A) Typical day of interviewing in prison

My trips to prison featured the pervading sense of never having enough time. On most days, institutions provided me a maximum of two and a half hours to conduct two interviews. My meetings with prisoners had to be structured around meals, programming, recreation, multiple inmate counts, visitation, and other routine activities, which unfortunately left few open timeslots for interviewing.

Interviews took an average of one to one and a half hours to complete, which, depending on the day, left little to no time for delays. Human Subjects protections required that I interview respondents in a private room with no staff or other inmates present, and I used a laptop computer to administer self-report surveys. Unfortunately, the time it took to find a private room and set up my equipment regularly cut into my interviewing period. I elaborate more on day-to-day challenges in the following paragraphs.

There were many days when I arrived and learned the paperwork had not been submitted for my gate pass. On other occasions the wrong name or incorrect interviewing times were listed. These errors were usually remedied with a call to an administrator, though there were a few days when I was denied access and had to go home without ever entering the prison. Getting through security in a timely manner, finding staff who had been assigned to escort³ me to my interviewing room, and contacting inmates for their interviews were difficulties faced throughout the time I was in the field.

A new host of challenges was often presented once entrance to the prison was gained. For instance, I often showed up and learned that respondents were in the administrative segregation unit for disciplinary reasons. Other times inmates had been transferred to another institution, were temporarily away for court, or had been released from prison early. There was even an instance where a respondent escaped before his interview could be conducted.

Additional unexpected challenges emerged from my equipment. During the first wave of interviewing, there was a day when a frayed power chord caused the computer to suddenly die while I was conducting an interview. On another occasion the computer lost its charge and shut down because, unbeknownst to me, the outlets in my interviewing room had been disconnected from their power source for a remodeling project. While equipment failures are not limited to prison research, they pose unique challenges in prison settings.

For instance, minor problems can result in canceled interviews due to time constraints. Moreover, computer illiterate respondents may get confused or become frustrated when their responses disappear from the computer screen, and some may equate equipment failure with being unprofessional. Finally, inmates and staff alike may become suspicious of prolonged fidgeting with equipment and similar makeshift efforts to address technological difficulties.

Some prisoners may associate equipment failures with carelessness. In dehumanizing prison environments, a researcher's perceived lack of preparation may be interpreted as a lack of regard for the inmate and his time. Unforeseen equipment failures, therefore have the potential to break the trust that is essential when carrying out research in prison.

Interview settings varied across institutions and from one day to the next. I typically met with respondents in unoccupied staff offices, classrooms, parole-board rooms, visiting rooms, and conference rooms. Sometimes these settings were comfortable and conducive to interviewing. Other times they featured uncomfortable conditions such as no air conditioning on hot and humid summer days, excessive noise, poor lighting, and large windows that created a fishbowl dynamic.

A typical day of interviewing in prison was unpredictable and often frustrating (Rhodes 2009). Getting stalled at the front desk, having to wait for tardy inmates, dealing with equipment problems, and contending with other unpredictable

³ Each of the prisons I interviewed in required me to be escorted to the interviewing room by prison staff.

challenges and distractions cut into the limited window of time that was available to conduct interviews (Waldrum 2009). Unanticipated incidents often muddled a day's interviewing schedule and prolonged the project's time in the field. Cannell and Kahn (1968:575) noted the need for researchers to be spontaneous when conducting interviews. This is especially true when interviewing in prisons (Martin 2000).

Impacting the Setting

Qualitative researchers have noted that studying inmates interferes with the daily activities of prisons (Hart 1995; King 2000; Martin 2000; Newman 1958). Taking up office space was a fundamental way that my presence impacted the prison environment. There was one time when I overheard staff members in an adjacent room complaining to a corrections officer that my respondents had been waiting in their area for over two hours, yet I had been monitoring the area and knew the inmates had been there no longer than five minutes. These complaints seemed to be territorially motivated and served as a reminder that my presence was not always welcomed.

Some staff members were frank in expressing resentment toward my presence, but these reactions were not representative of how most prison employees responded. Many staff members seemed indifferent to my presence, while others took an active interest in the project and eagerly tried to help. For instance, correctional officers offered to give me tours of their institutions so I could learn more about prisons, and front desk officers were my best allies when paperwork was not submitted and improvised plans for my entrance were needed.

Inmates' reactions also provided insight into my effects on the setting. Many respondents were thankful for the chance to interact with someone who was not another prisoner or staff member (Copes and Hochstetler 2006; Rhodes 2009), and some inmates perceived participating in the project as a chance to give voice to their experiences. Several respondents felt important because someone from a well-known university drove all the way to the institution just to talk with them. In general, my presence seemed to be viewed favorably. The main negative effect I had on inmates was that sometimes they were woken up or taken away from an activity to be interviewed.

Peripheral and Invisible

Accommodating researchers is not a primary concern of most prisons (Hart 1995). Helping me was one of several responsibilities that staff members faced each day. The frequencies in which gate passes were not prepared, escorts were not lined up, respondents had not received passes⁴, and prisons had not been expecting me suggested my presence was more of a nuisance than a priority.

Subtle reminders that I was not the featured attraction in the prison environment checked any proclivity I had toward egocentrism. For instance, I once interviewed an inmate in a setting that had an adjoining toilet. A staff member entered the room at one point and walked by oblivious to the interview that was taking place. He loudly

⁴ Interview schedules were lined up with prison administrators at the beginning of each interviewing wave. The research protocol then called for prison staff to complete passes prior to each interview. Respondents were prevented from coming for their interviews unless they had a pass that allowed them to move about the institution.

urinated and then left. There were also times when employees forgot to escort me from the interviewing room back to the prison's entrance when my time was up.

Prisons are large formal bureaucracies. Each day volunteers, lawyers, vendors, teachers, and other visitors pass through their gates. In the flurry of activity, I was sometimes overlooked or ignored. While my presence clearly impacted the research setting at times, emphasizing my effects on the prison environment would be self-indulgent because I was occasionally invisible and always peripheral.

Inmate-Staff Tension

Researchers who spend time in correctional institutions will inevitably find themselves in the middle of tense interactions. Prisoners were typically cooperative and agreeable toward me and during interviews. However, some behaved disrespectfully toward staff for no apparent reason. Similarly, some prison employees appeared boorish when interacting with inmates, yet most of these individuals were pleasant and considerate with me.

It is possible dynamics I did not see produced the inconsistent behaviors I observed. What I perceived as arbitrary treatment by staff or unprovoked attitude by inmates may have in fact been rooted in ongoing relational patterns. Alternatively, situational features of prison environments may have given rise to these behaviors, independent of the persons involved (Goffman 1964). Conclusions about inmate and staff behavior would be dubious given the contradictory patterns exhibited and limits on what I saw. These observations must therefore be interpreted with caution because behavior occurs within broader contexts and may be guided by complex or unobservable forces.

The Presentation of Self

Employees in total institutions often separate themselves and prisoners into us/them dichotomies that reduce inmates to managed objects (Goffman 1961). These divisions between staff members and prisoners are often reinforced by inmate codes of conduct that forbid inmates from engaging in friendly relations with staff (Granack 2000; Sykes 1958; Sykes and Messinger 1960). Within the dichotomized prison world, researchers represent a third category that falls outside the inmate-staff social order (King 2000). Occupying this position allowed me to gain insights that might have otherwise been unavailable had either 'us' believed I was aligned with 'them.' Neutrality and maintaining outsider status can therefore be beneficial when conducting research in prison, but when this is not possible researchers should consider embracing their "multiple loyalties" to prisoners and staff as situations dictate (Nielsen 2010).

Doing research in correctional settings requires assistance and cooperation from prisoners and employees (Newman 1958; Rhodes 2009). I found that managing these dependencies entailed balancing and putting forth an objective front. Following King's (2000) advice, I presented myself as being committed to learning about prisoners rather than as an advocate for inmates or employees. Aside from being a truthful representation of my motives, this response satisfied staff members who asked why I was interviewing prisoners.

Newman (1958) suggested researchers should stress to inmates that they are not affiliated with the prison system in any way. Moreover, King (2000) recommended

that researchers engage in visible actions that substantiate their outsider status, such as being seen waiting for escorts from employees when entering and leaving the setting (Waldrum 2009). Both of these tactics were incorporated into my presentations of self.

The way I introduced myself in prison was also crucial and was not taken for granted. Prisoners and non-prisoners alike often incorrectly assume that criminologists are affiliated with law enforcement agencies and that sociologists are either social workers or activists. Most prisoners would have therefore been suspicious of my motives had I presented myself in the prison environment as a 'criminologist,' and both staff and inmates would have potentially misunderstood my objectives had I presented myself as a 'sociologist.' Accordingly, I introduced myself as a 'university researcher' because this title was most accurate and least likely to be misconstrued.

Being connected with a well-known university increases the likelihood of being taken seriously by administrators, line staff, and inmates (Jacobs 1977; King 2000; Martin 2000; Newman 1958). For instance, many staff members and inmates were devoted fans of my university's football team, which was not surprising considering that prisons are hyper-masculine environments (Sabo, Kupers and London 2001) and football is a hyper-masculine activity (Messner 2002). Several inmates said they participated in the study because they loved our team. Aside from football, some staff members were alumni, some inmates had hopes of attending the University in the future, and both staff and inmates knew people who were enrolled at the University. Several respondents said they volunteered because they had a family member or friend who attended the University. In some instances favorable reactions from those encountered in the field were likely elicited through the power that comes with having a university affiliation. Yet, as the preceding examples show a genuine respect for the university itself, this often motivated inmates and staff to assist in my research.

From presentation of self to self reflection

Up to this point I have shared challenges often encountered in the field and described how I presented myself and impacted the setting. My goal has been to offer a prelude to situations others might face when doing their own research. Clarke (1975) proposed that sociologists should examine how research affects the researcher as opposed to just focusing on its effects on the researched. Accordingly, I now take an introspective turn toward personal reflections on doing research in prison and their potential implications.

Toward Reflective Quantitative Research

Individuals who spend time in penal institutions typically have a range of strong reactions to prison environments. For instance, the word 'adrenaline' has been used to describe the rush of being a new correctional officer (Conover 2000) and teacher in prison (Gordon 2000:xix), while prison chaplains have been found to experience tension and identity shifts when reconciling their clergy and prison staff roles (Hicks 2008). A journalist recently disclosed experiencing utter sadness when observing incarcerated juveniles (Hubner 2005). Likewise, volunteers in an adult prison in Washington state (Gabriel 2005) and a juvenile hall in Los Angeles County (Salzman 2003) unexpectedly bonded with inmates and chose to renew their initial

assignments. Most notably over the years, inmates have expressed frustration and myriad other reactions to being locked up and the conditions of confinement (Abbott 1981; Hassine 1999; Martin and Sussman 2002; Rideau and Wikberg 1992; Santos 2003; Zehr 1996).

Taken together, these selected examples suggest that prisons profoundly affect those who enter them. Accordingly, it is peculiar that quantitative researchers have avoided writing about their own experiences in correctional settings (Liebling 1999), especially when considering self-report surveys have been administered in prisons for several decades. Whereas qualitative researchers have frequently reported being moved and personally affected by prison environments (Davies 2000; Fisher-Giorlando 2003; Jacobs 1977; King 2000; Pryor 1996). My review of the literature produced only one article that examined the effects of prison environments on individuals who conducted quantitative research (Liebling 1999).

Survey researchers are painstakingly thorough when describing their variables, equation models, and statistical analyses. Yet, reflective sections are typically absent from quantitative works (Ryan and Golden 2006). Some quantitative researchers may deflect attention from the data collection process and their own experiences to mask flaws in their research designs. In many other instances these omissions stem from the use of secondary data, although, even those who do their own surveys rarely provide reflection in their published works. These omissions tacitly imply that survey research and survey researchers are objective and detached from emotion. This is unlikely, particularly for those who study prisons (Liebling 1999).

If quantitative researchers do in fact experience emotions while doing research, why do they avoid sharing them? I propose that one reason quantitative researchers do not write more reflectively is because they believe this is what qualitative researchers do. Researchers need to transcend qualitative/quantitative divisions when conceptualizing their methods. Silverman correctly pointed out that “most dichotomies or polarities in social science are highly dangerous. At best, they are pedagogic devices for students to obtain a first grip on a difficult field: they help us to learn the jargon. At worst, they are excuses for not thinking” (1998:80). To the extent reflective work is considered the exclusive domain of qualitative researchers, simplistic quantitative/qualitative dichotomies will continue to be reinforced and invaluable insights from quantitative research will go unshared.

Entering a correctional facility is a sensory experience (Liebling 1999; Wacquant 2002), and qualitative researchers have convincingly demonstrated that emotions can serve as an additional source of knowledge (Nielsen 2010). Despite the fact that quantitative researchers have not given voice to this feature of the research process, others should be forewarned that doing survey research in prison is likely to affect them personally. They should therefore regard their emotions as key sources of insight into prisons and the research process. Toward this end, I present a sample of my own reactions below, and I then outline four implications for other prison researchers.

Interviewing in Total Institutions

“The prisons we inherit are settings of pain” (Johnson 2002:60), because incarceration deprives inmates of privacy, agency, intimate relations, and feelings of safety (Sykes 1958). Within total institutions, inmates’ daily lives are dictated by social controls that ultimately foster their subservience and estrangement from broader society (Goffman 1961). The following summaries of my research notes

affirm that deprivation and pain were acutely experienced by many of the prisoners I interviewed:

- Respondents spoke of difficulties stemming from being surrounded by criminals, being disrespected by staff, not having any privacy, boredom, being away from family, losing partners and homes, and having loved ones die while in prison. Irwin (1985) noted it is hard to maintain a decent appearance while in jail. Several respondents I spoke with looked unkempt and disheveled, suggesting similar difficulties exist in prison. I also saw countless sores, rashes, and other skin conditions, and I interviewed a few inmates with marks resembling cutting scars on their arms.
- Goffman (1961) depicted total institutions as places where inmates are openly mocked by staff and talked about like they are not present while they are physically in the setting. I observed both of these dynamics often. I also witnessed strip-searches of inmates on a handful of occasions. Strip-searching prisoners in front of a university researcher reveals the salience and shamelessness of the objectification of inmates in the prison environment.
- Imprisonment led some inmates to become completely detached from their support systems. For instance, a respondent from another state happened to get arrested while passing through the region. His impoverished family lived in his home state hundreds of miles away from where he was serving his time. I was, therefore, his only visitor while he had been incarcerated. This respondent described being lonely in prison and asked me to come back again in the future.

In many cases affliction was apparent simply from looking at inmates. My own observations of distress made interviewing challenging at times. Seeing the dehumanization of inmates in prison and additional problems often posed by incarceration made me feel powerless. Other reactions I had include sorrow, chagrin, and anger:

- Respondents frequently revealed painful backgrounds containing addictions, overdoses, victimization, stigmatization, unemployment, relationship and family problems, illiteracy, and poverty. I often wondered how and if they would overcome the obstacles they faced. I concluded many would not. These realizations left me sad.
- Prisoners sometimes say offensive things during interviews (Davies 2000). I spoke with inmates who made sexist comments and were self-proclaimed racists. I also encountered prisoners and staff members who made homophobic jokes. Some respondents committed acts I personally detest. Staff members were also offensive at times. Observing prideful expressions of these ideologies and behaviors by individuals who had helped me was both disappointing and awkward.
- Fleisher (1998) became outraged at the criminal justice system when seeing how it negatively affected the gang members he studied. I was angered by observations of how incarceration isolated and disrupted lives, stigmatized offenders, and often presented new challenges to people who already faced insurmountable problems.

I was also frustrated at times because some respondents should not have been sent to prison in my opinion. For instance, I interviewed individuals who were locked up for what I considered to be minor drug offenses. Given the potential harmful effects of incarceration (Elsner 2006), the average annual cost of over \$20,000 to incarcerate prisoners in the institutions I visited, and the increasingly high recidivism rates of drug offenders (Hughes and Wilson 2002), I often questioned the wisdom of using prison to sanction addiction.

Doing survey research in prison clearly exposes researchers to bothersome situations. However, within the negative ambience of correctional settings there are also auspicious circumstances. For instance, I observed positive moments resulting from rehabilitative programming:

- Some respondents sought to make changes in their lives and were pleased to have access to parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, and GED programs. One respondent completed his GED while incarcerated and then became a tutor for other prisoners. He exuded pride and planned to enter college upon his release. Emphases on high recidivism rates and other failures of the prison system typically overshadow the success stories (Johnson 2002; Maruna 2001). A substantial minority of the inmates I interviewed told me their lives were out of control and that coming to prison had been good for them. These revelations surprised me.

- A few of the prisons had dog-training programs. Cell dogs seemed to have a pacifying effect on prison environments and immediately attracted attention in any room they entered. One day an inmate stopped by the interviewing room to introduce me to his cell dog. It was hot and humid throughout the institution, and the dog sullenly resisted leaving the comfort of the air-conditioned office when it was time for him to go. His inmate handler, a correctional officer, and I temporarily bonded in an empathic moment.

The word 'prison' often conjures up images of oppression and monotony. My observations do not refute these connotations, though my year in the field suggests that prison environments are more complex. I found that many deprivations and pains experienced by prisoners are veiled and not readily apparent to outsiders. I also saw evidence suggesting that prisons sometimes improve the lives of those they lock up. I have provided a sample of my reflections to give other researchers a sense of what doing research in prison is like on an experiential level.

Implications

I now will examine four implications that can be drawn from my reflections. First, those who do research in prison must carefully consider how they will present themselves in the field. I recommend adopting neutral fronts to avoid being assigned a position within inmate and staff us/them dichotomies and making deliberate efforts to sustain an image as one who is not of the prison or the prisoners.

Future researchers should expect to engage in emotion management (Hochschild 1983; Nielsen 2010). For instance, there were times when I was frustrated by prison policies, angered by the actions of corrections officers, annoyed by inmates, and sympathetic to those who were incarcerated. I also met inmates and

staff members with whom I likely could have established friendships had we met under different circumstances. Regardless of how I felt, I kept my opinions and emotions to myself to ensure that neither prisoners nor staff had reason to associate me with 'them.' I also chose to contain my reactions when experiencing negative emotions and encountering language and behavior I found offensive.

A second implication for future researchers pertains to guarding against selective perceptions. When spending consecutive days in the field, it often seemed like the main people I spoke to each week were the prisoners and staff members I encountered while interviewing. Researchers may become susceptible to prison-tunnel vision when their prison-related interactions rival or exceed their interactions with free-society in frequency, duration, or intensity. Researchers must therefore critically examine the perceptions they take away from prison and maintain broader perspectives.

For instance, I previously referenced my chagrin when inmates and staff expressed offensive sentiments. It is important to remember that people who do not live or work in prison often hold similar beliefs. Asserting that people in prison are sexist, racist, and homophobic without also acknowledging the prevalence of these ideologies in mainstream society would therefore be skewed. I also made reference to a subset of respondents who spoke of making improvements in their lives while incarcerated. However, this does not necessarily mean that these inmates wanted to be in prison. The extent to which some inmates expressed being positively affected by imprisonment likely reflects how uncomfortable their lives were prior to prison rather than the comforts and desirability of prison life *per se* (see Ross and Richards 2002 for a thorough review of the discomforts of prison).

Researchers should also critically assess perceptions they take into prison. I spoke of my surprise upon observing prison success stories, which indicates that I mainly expected to find inmate resentment and evidence of failed prison policies. These presumptions were likely formed through living in a society that is becoming increasingly critical of its prisons, my exposure to media images that sensationalize pain, and my readings of academic works geared toward identifying and fixing the many problems that currently plague the justice system. Researchers need to place their observations and interactions into proper context to avoid unfair or incomplete generalizations and erroneous conclusions.

The third implication I examine pertains to research ethics. The Belmont Report outlines basic ethical principles for researchers in the United States, including the need for prisoners to be capable of making informed decisions that are free from "undue inducements" when they are recruited as research subjects (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1978; Kiefer 2004; Martin 2000; Overholser 1987). I referred to a respondent from another state that had not had any visitors and asked me to come back. Of all the interviews I conducted, his affected me most. Aside from feeling sympathetic, I later wondered whether loneliness constitutes an undue inducement to participate in a prisoner study. I am not sure and I continue to reflect on this conundrum. I believe others who do research with prisoners must also carefully weigh this concern. In the interim, I turn to the fact that I treated the respondent with respect and temporarily relieved him from his isolation.

A fourth implication for researchers involves power and objectification. My reactions and observations reflect my privileged positions as researcher and temporary guest in the prison environment. They may also hint at voyeurism. Jacobs (1977) questioned whether sidestepping inmates' pain to focus on his research goals was voyeuristic and pondered whether prison research should be done. I believe it should.

Increases in the United States' prison population over the past few decades have been unprecedented (Austin and Irwin 2001; Elsner 2006) and recidivism rates have been rising (Hughes and Wilson 2002). Yet, as these trends have become more pronounced, there has been an unfortunate decline in ethnographic prison studies relative to previous eras (Rhodes 2001; Wacquant 2002). Moreover, though prisons are fascinating places (King 2000), most people have misconceptions of what they are like (King 2000; Martin 2000). For instance, correctional officers and prisoners are often negatively stereotyped, yet they were mostly accommodating and helpful toward me (Liebling 1999). Research on prisons and prisoners should therefore be conducted to shed light on assumptions that are taken for granted and encourage wider dialogue on prison-related topics.

However, researchers must constantly and critically evaluate their motivations for studying prisoners. There are an infinite number of potential research topics one can pursue. I chose to interview prisoners, and the experience was captivating. Charges of voyeurism are therefore difficult to deny. I instead propose conceptualizing voyeurism as a continuum featuring the ideal types of exploitative voyeurism at one end and sympathetic voyeurism at the other. Researchers should be reflective and regularly determine where they fit on this voyeurism continuum. Those with exploitative leanings should consider pulling out of the field or revising their agendas.

Concerns about recent shifts in corrections and the fates of people in prison drove my initial participation in this project. Through ongoing reflections on my involvement and discussions with colleagues I consistently reaffirmed that my motivations were mostly sympathetic rather than exploitative. I also determined the project had more positive than negative implications for prisons and inmates, and I would have terminated my involvement had I concluded otherwise. Ideally, my research will contribute to the betterment of offenders' lives and the formulation of policies that reduce crime and recidivism. Regardless, I listened and treated inmates and staff with respect in an environment where dignity can be hard to come by (Waldram 2009).

Recapitulated themes: suggestions for students and others

I have described the day-to-day process of doing survey research in prison. I have also shared personal reflections. These observations and reflections are intended to generate deliberation on doing research in prison and to provide beginning researchers with a starting point. Several implications have already been stated, while others have been subtly implied. I conclude with the following list of suggestions to efficiently summarize my tips for those planning to survey prisoners (King and Liebling 2007 for a list of additional suggestions):

1. Learn as much as you can about prisons, prisoners, prison employees, crime, research methods, your survey instrument, and your particular research setting.
2. Expect the unexpected, be flexible, and establish contingency plans to deal with the potential challenges you are able to identify ahead of time.
3. Establish a contact person amongst the line staff each day to provide you with logistical assistance. The administrators who initially helped you gain access to the institution(s) will likely be inaccessible when you need help with day-to-day challenges.

4. Know and recognize your place. Prisons are large formal organizations responsible for maintaining institutional security and delivering services to hundreds of people on a daily basis. Though your research may be central to your life, it is not an institutional priority. Having to help you represents one more task for staff members who may feel overworked or under-appreciated. Assume your presence is a nuisance and tread respectfully.
5. Remember that formal organizations feature diffusions of responsibility and bureaucratized divisions of labor that sometimes create inconveniences and complicate efforts to remedy seemingly minor problems.
6. Be patient and polite; and avoid engaging in behavior that could be perceived as rude or indicative of entitlement.⁵
7. Take deliberate efforts to avoid being assigned a place in the inmate-staff dichotomy. You will find yourself in the middle of inmate-staff tensions. Contemplate and assess your presentations of self regularly, and remember that nearly all of your actions, words, and demeanors will be visible and possibly scrutinized by inmates and staff.
8. Introduce yourself as a 'researcher' rather than a 'criminologist' or 'sociologist.' If you have a university affiliation be sure to embrace it.
9. Expect that people will be curious about what you are doing and eager to ask you questions. Come up with ways to deflect the attention of those who are "too" curious.
10. Expect that other people will ignore you and be indifferent to your presence and dilemmas.
11. In general, expect a lot of kindness and a little rudeness.
12. Be sure to maintain broader perspectives, guard against selective perceptions, and pay attention to your emotional reactions. Moreover, recognize that you will experience a broad range of emotions and reactions, which will likely require you to engage in emotional management.
13. Critically, honestly, and regularly contemplate the ethics of what you are doing.
14. Critically, honestly, and regularly consider where you land on the sympathetic-exploitative voyeurism continuum.
15. Remember that interviewing is a social activity (Cannell and Kahn 1968; Jenkins 1995; Suchman and Jordan 1990).
16. Be reflective. Qualitative researchers have developed good habits when it comes to reflective inquiry. Most survey researchers have not (or if they have they have kept them to themselves). When doing survey research transcend the qualitative-quantitative divides to make your own work more dynamic.
17. Plan to learn more than you had envisioned. Anticipate the likelihood that your survey instrument may not capture your most compelling observations and devise a strategy for cataloging and channeling what cannot be quantified.

Final thoughts

In the preceding sections I have called on quantitative researchers to reflect on research settings and the research process more explicitly in their studies. Survey researchers regularly neglect writing about research settings and the data collection process in their scholarly publications. Their conventional practice of only focusing on

⁵ Though seemingly obvious, stories I heard about other researchers who were disrespectful suggest this needs to be said.

data analyses and empirical findings is detrimental because aspiring survey researchers are left to navigate prison settings and resolve emergent challenges without the benefit of knowing how others accomplished these tasks. This flagrant shortcoming in our discipline undermines efforts toward the ideal of sociology as a collective and cumulative social science.

My own background and my interactions with colleagues have taught me that others who are contemplating doing research with prisoners typically have two questions. First, they wonder what it is like to do research in prison. I have addressed this question by elaborating on my day-to-day experiences in the field and sharing a sample of personal reflections. Second, they want to know how to maximize the likelihood that their data collection will go smoothly. I have addressed this question by offering a primer on doing research that includes a list of suggestions derived from my own experiences.

I have attempted to illuminate some of the unknowns that will likely be faced by future scholars who conduct research in prisons. Yet, my experiences may not be representative of what others will encounter. For instance, my research focused on adult males housed in minimum and medium security level institutions in one region of one country. Although there are many similarities across institutional settings, it must be recognized that prison and institutional cultures can vary widely from one facility to the next. Those who study juveniles, female inmates, offenders in higher security prisons, and inmates housed in other correctional systems, regions, and nations will therefore undoubtedly confront their own unique challenges. Future researchers should regard this article as a beginning point rather than an exhaustive or authoritative collection of guidelines. Moreover, it should be remembered that while I provide an ethnographic account I did not conduct a traditional ethnography involving prolonged immersion and active participation in the research setting.

An unanticipated challenge of writing this article has been sharing potentially unflattering observations about the prisons, inmates, and staff members who accommodated me. I am reminded of King's (2000) suggestion that researchers be committed to learning about prisoners rather than advocating on behalf of inmates and employees. I have attempted to remain fair, and I hope my efforts to eliminate sensationalism in the presentation of my observations, reactions, opinions, and suggestions have been successful.

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More than an Activist: Identity Competition and Participation in a Revolutionary Socialist Organization

Abstract

How do activists manage life commitments and membership in a radical social movement organization? Starting with the assumption that activists are 'more than activists' who have personal lives that can affect their movement lives, I use identity theory to analyze how competition among identities influences participation in the organization to which they belong. I also assess how the collective identity of a revolutionary socialist organization affects the personal identities of activists. This movement identity is labeled 'socialist identity' which must then compete with other identities that the activist may possess. The methods used were modified life history interviews of former and current members, participant observations, and content analysis of the organization's documents.

Keywords

Social Movements; Identity Theory; Identities; Case Studies; Activists; Socialists.

The causes and consequences of participation in social movements have been central questions for scholars and activists alike (Whalen and Flacks 1989; Flacks 1988; McAdam 1986). Returning to the questions posed by Flacks (1988), I explore how 'making history' and 'making a life' can be understood from the standpoint of identity competition. More specifically, how does competition among multiple identities affect individual participation in a social movement organization? This case study examined identity competition in the context of a revolutionary socialist organization (RSO).²

Social movement, scholars' use of identity, expanded beyond a focus on individual identities to include the broader collective identities of social movements and social movement organizations (SMOs). They also focused on the internalization

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² Concealing the organization's name was also a requirement for Human Subjects Protocol.

of collective social movement identities by individual members. Therefore, it is necessary to establish the content of this collective identity and how it becomes internalized as an identity for members of the organization. The following examines competition between the socialist identity and other identities that make up the self of the RSO member. To conduct this research, I use empirical data collected through content analysis, modified life history interviews, and participant observation in a local branch of the RSO in Southern California.

I chose this particular SMO because of my own experiences with the RSO and an interest in understanding the dynamics of participation in organizations with radical agendas. I gained access to the group because I had been a participant for nearly eight years. Despite concerns about confidentiality that SMOs often have, my access to the RSO provided candor and trust on the part of the participants in this study.³

SMOs often frame organizational commitment within the organization's collective identity and ideology. However, individuals have multiple and divergent identities that may, or may not, be congruent with the collective identity of the organization. This internalized collective identity can form part of his/her personal and social identity (Polletta and Jasper 2001). Therefore, scholars assumed that if the collective identity of an SMO does not become part of the member's internalized identities, persistent participation is not likely if other identities are held constant. Further, the particular SMO may neither address the political concerns of all activists, nor foster sufficiently salient identities (Stryker 2000).

The RSO requires a high level of commitment from their members and entails identification as a socialist. Membership entails education in Marxist politics and involvement in weekly branch meetings, two weekly paper sales (in which members sell literature in different locations), periodic study groups, conference attendance, and involvement in other local movements.

Relevant Literature and Theory

A social movement organization is "a complex or formal organization which identifies its goals with the social movement or a counter-social movement and attempts to implement those goals" (McCarthy and Zald 1977:1218). According to research on participation, prominent factors that influence sustained participation in social movements are identity (Klandermans 2002; Whittier 1995), and biographical availability (McAdam 1986; Downton and Wehr 1998). I will briefly discuss these factors while concentrating on the impact of identity on participation in SMOs.

I use two approaches to identity: collective identity from new social movement theory (Melucci 1989), and identity theory from structural symbolic interactionism (Stryker 1980). While useful in the understanding of participation in SMOs, new social movement theory suggests collective identities define personal and social identities. Stryker (2000) argues this renders the concept of identity ineffective for understanding differential participation in social movements. What is needed is a perspective that considers multiple identities. Identity theory's symbolic interactionist perspective provides a theory of role-choice behavior that considers extra-movement commitments.

³ I base this statement on the RSO's internal documents related to security issues and my own experiences with the RSO. After September 11th 2001, infiltration by various law enforcement officials became a realistic concern.

Identities

Social movement scholars use the concept of identity in two ways: collective (Melucci 1989) and personal identities (Hunt and Benford 1994). The concept of social identity is often considered to be a part of one's personal identity (Stryker, Owens and White 2001). Therefore, I pay closer attention to the concept of social identity as it is presented by Stryker and Burke (2000).

Snow and McAdam (2000) argue that the discussion of collective identity is incomplete because there is an underlying assumption by social movement scholars that collective identities are the same as activists' personal identities. Social movement scholars tend to shy away from more nuanced discussions of identity and tend to use the term 'personal identity' in place of social-role identity (White and Fraser 2000). Because membership in an SMO often includes taking on roles, I turn to identity as conceptualized in identity theory.

Social identity refers to "parts of the self composed of the meanings persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary society" (Stryker and Burke 2000:284). Furthermore, Stryker explains that identities are "self-cognitions tied to roles, and through roles, to positions in organized social relationships" (2008:20). Additionally, opportunities to form identities become incentives to join SMOs because the organizations can fulfill the need to identify with a group. Joining SMOs allows one to assume roles within the organization and form an identity linked to the structure of the organization (Della Porta and Diani 2006).

Identity and Social Movement Participation

Identity competition is theoretically a factor in determining the nature of one's participation. Stryker and his colleagues argue that individuals organize social identities into a salience hierarchy in which identity salience plays a role in social movement participation (Stryker, Owens and White 2000). Identity salience consists of "the probability that an identity will be invoked across a variety of situations" (Stryker and Burke 2000:286). Salience is linked to behaviors associated with a given identity. As Stryker and Burke point out, "The higher the salience of an identity relative to other identities incorporated into the self, the greater the probability of behavioral choices in accord with the expectations attached to that identity" (2000:286). In other words, the more salient the activist identity, the more likely activist behavior will be sustained. Despite the cogent arguments for using identity salience to understand participation, there is little empirical research that explicitly uses this approach.

While social ties are important because of the support one may receive, some scholars have criticized the importance of social networks in recruitment and sustained activism. Nevertheless, as McAdam and Paulson (1993) conclude, these prior ties increase the likelihood of participation in social movements when they strengthen the activist's identity as an activist and strengthen linkages between identity and the movement. When identity is removed from the process, social ties lose their predictive power as they relate to social movement participation.

Collective Identities

Social movement scholars link collective identity to social movement participation and activism (Gamson 1991; McVeigh and Smith 1999; Klandermans 2002). Collective identity is the shared definition of a group that derives from

members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity (Melucci 1989); others emphasize the sense of 'we-ness' that is given meaning by actors (Gamson 1991).

Several scholars contend that activist identification amplifies the likelihood of participation (Downton and Wehr 1998; Simon, Sturmer and Loewry 1998). This activist identity represents the internalized meaning attached to one's role in a social movement or SMO. Taking on a role in the social structure may reflect a person's sense of self with differing levels of importance or salience, depending on what this identity means to a person. Additionally, (Simon et al. 1998), scholars have not studied how the activist identity competes with other identities that make up the self.

Studies of social movement participation have practical significance to activists. As Downton and Wehr point out, "knowledge of what leads to persistence could increase the movement's effectiveness and expansion" (1998:548). Understanding the effects multiple identities have on sustained participation in SMOs will help social movement and identity theorists gain a fuller understanding of identity processes in these organizations.

Methods

Due to the fluid nature of SMO collective identities, I collected data in an empirical case study of a regional chapter of the RSO. One benefit of the case study method in researching SMOs is the ability to use multiple methods to collect extensive and diverse data (Lofland 1996). Additionally, the collective identity of an SMO, even in the same national organization, would vary from region to region. For example, respondents from this chapter often discussed issues surrounding the border and immigration. This would be expected given the close proximity of the US-Mexico border.

I start by establishing and identifying the RSO's collective identity. In order to do this I conducted a content analysis of RSO documents. Movement documents are an important part of the discourse within SMO that defines who they are or the movement's collective identity (Johnston 2002; Lofland 1996). The documents that I derived data from include a *New Member's Handbook*,⁴ the RSO's weekly newspaper, and internal bulletins distributed between December 1st 2006 and April 2007.

In addition to content analysis, I also conducted modified life histories. The modified life history interview subjects consisted of ten adults, both male and female. I chose to interview five current and five former members in order to gain a more diverse perspective on involvement in the RSO. I gave all subjects pseudonyms to protect their identity. Table 1 describes the characteristics of the subjects that I interviewed. I chose as broad a sample as possible in terms of gender, age, race, and sexual orientation in order to capture diverse identities that may affect participation in this social movement organization.

For the five former members, I used respondent driven sampling to contact former members through my remaining contacts with current members. Along with demographic representativeness, I also attempted to recruit former members who had varying degrees of ideological agreement with the RSO because many still identified as socialists. Table 1 below lists the interview respondents.

⁴ Citation withheld to maintain the RSO's anonymity.

Table 1:
Demographics of Interview Subjects (all names are pseudonyms)

Interview Subjects	Notable Information
Kathleen	Current Member White, female, late 60's Married to another current member Active in other SMOs in the 1960s and 70's
Bruce	Current Member Non-white, male, early 20's College student (Social Work) Active for 3 years
Greg	Current Member Chicano, male, early 30's Part of national RSO leadership Member for nearly 10 years
Jeremy	Current Member White, male, mid 30's Married Social Worker Member for over 10 years Most seniority in local branch
Patrice	Current Member African-American, female, late 20's Artist
JoAnne	Former Member White, female, mid 20's Deeply concerned with sexual oppression
Abby	Former Member White, female, mid 20's Active for 5 years before leaving
James	Former Member Biracial (Indian nationality), male, late 20's Married a week after his interview High school teacher Nine years of membership
Jane	Former Member White, female, early 20's College student 3 years of membership

I entered the field as an insider, and therefore conducted full-membership field work (Adler and Adler 1987). As Adler and Adler explain, full membership requires a sort of strategic reflexivity: "They must look at the setting through a fresh perspective, to develop relationships with people they did not associate with previously, to change the nature of their pre-existing relationships, and to become involved with the setting more broadly" (1987:69-70). Moreover, there is a need to be somewhat more assertive in interviews regarding social movements. Researchers often encounter problems with probing for data relevant to the research question because committed activists often will only divulge information that they see as relevant. As an insider, I had to be mindful of the potential bias in the subject's responses, as well my subjective interpretation of them. As Blee and Taylor (2002) point out, this requires the researcher to take a more active approach when conducting the modified life history. This includes asking for clarifications when relevant events are given and pegging the recollections of respondents to historical events and life transitions.

Because much of the information gathered in modified life histories is given after the fact, gathering data from other sources is critical to maintaining validity (Blee and Taylor 2002). The second procedure that I used was participant observation in which I participated in the day-to-day activities of the RSO over the course of four months. Because I was already on the periphery of RSO, insider status had already been attained. This included attending meetings, distributing literature on public sidewalks, participating in study groups, attending informal gatherings and observing protest activities. Therefore, the most significant change in my behavior was the moving into the role of researcher. I gave a brief presentation to the RSO to disclose my role as a researcher.

Embarking on this project represented a significant increase in the intensity of activity on my part. Prior to starting my research, my activity was limited to attending public meetings. Therefore, several members were still 'strangers' to me who had experiences that were unknown prior to my observations and interviews. Thirdly, despite the length of time I have been a member, I was not considered a 'cadre' member.⁵ Therefore, when I took on the research role I was forced to take on a duality of consciousness of my role as both researcher and insider (Thorne 1975).

This dual consciousness came out over the course of the interviews when, from my perspective, subjects would make points that I disagreed with or what I thought were misunderstandings of certain aspects of the RSO. I had to remind myself that I was not playing out the role of an RSO member but that of a researcher and therefore did not make any attempt to correct or elaborate on comments by interviewees. As a researcher, I was always conscious of being a member and while acting as a member I was conscious of being a researcher.

Results

The central research question was: how does competition among multiple identities affect participation in an SMO? Individuals identify as 'more than activists' at the time of their membership in that they also identified ties to their relationships, occupations and families. If these identities are salient and compete with their socialist identity, they must consolidate these identities or subordinate them to their socialist identity in order to sustain involvement.

⁵ Cadre is a term used to describe experienced members that can train new members.

RSO Collective Identity

The RSO claims to be the largest revolutionary socialist organization in the United States. Nationally, the membership of the RSO is predominantly composed of college students. In the local branch, membership was composed of primarily working students and a few professionals such as teachers and social workers. The RSO sees itself as part of an effort to make the initial steps toward building a revolutionary party in the United States. Because of the emphasis on 'party building,' the RSO involves itself in most of the major movements of the day with the hope that they can find potential recruits, as well as push local movements to the left politically. Despite these ambitious goals, RSO members are cognizant of their marginal status in American politics.

I coded field notes, the RSO's newspaper, internal documents, and interview transcripts for three types of framing repertoires that shape the collective identity of the organization and describe its overarching ideology or master frame (Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994). The rooting of problems, issues, and concerns within a social system such as capitalism, patriarchy, or racial stratification usually characterizes an SMO as radical. The RSO identified the capitalist system as the root cause of misery and oppression in the world.

As one would expect, a socialist organization that makes the diagnostic claim that capitalism is the root of the various issues they mobilize around would also make a prognostic claim that socialism is the cure. Further, the RSO frames the vanguard party as a tool to achieve this goal. Yet, the RSO does not see themselves as an actual vanguard party but as a preparatory formation that is laying the foundations for a vanguard party.

Making the Socialist Identity Salient

RSO members are encouraged to identify themselves as socialists. This happens as part of the democratic centralist structure of the organization. I recorded the following excerpt during a political discussion before an anti-war fraction meeting in which democratic centralism was the topic. Harold opened the discussion by asking what we thought democratic centralism was. I responded first:

Me: It basically means that we all democratically decide what we are going to do, and then we all do what we decided to do.

Jill: Yeah it's true. We need to decide where to put our resources, but does that mean I can't go to a forum or something on my own if I want?

Harold: Whatever it is you do [political work on your own time] you are acting as a representative of the [organization].

Harold acknowledged the flexibility of the group's interpretation, but stressed the need to be aware that one is always part of the organization. This reveals that the RSO imposed the salience of one's socialist identity, from above, through democratic centralism.

Participation in an organization such as this can be challenging as well as time consuming. A large part of becoming committed to the RSO involved becoming a part of the structure of the organization. During my fieldwork, the branch committee (elected local leadership) suggested that I take on the role of membership

coordinator. A member of the branch committee told me to make sure that new members had a 'job' within the organization because it is important to train them to be good activists. One branch committee member argued that people are more likely to stay in the organization if they feel that they play a part in its overall functioning. Jane also described this process in an interview:

They do a good job of bringing you in and making you feel like you are contributing an important part. Probably because they give you some kind of vital function, even if you don't know what you are doing. I really sort-of liked the dynamic of that and how they treat you as an equal right away. (Jane, former member)

Taking on roles in the organization pulled members into different responsibilities that are difficult to refuse. The pull towards responsibilities was constant. Jane voiced extreme frustration with the pressure to take on an active role in the organization.

The responsibilities associated with taking on a role in the RSO can be overwhelming. Because the RSO is involved in several movements at a given time, an individual's involvement in the RSO, along with another movement, often results in double the workload related to activism. At the time of my observations, the RSO's local branch had 15 members who regularly came to meetings. The RSO was also involved in the anti-war, immigrant rights, and gay marriage movements during my time in the field. At demonstrations, RSO members were often the first to arrive and the last to leave. On top of this, RSO members involved in these coalitions usually have labor intensive roles and are often on the steering committees of major coalitions. RSO members often find themselves in these positions because of the movement related skills they learn moving from upsurge to upsurge during the course of their RSO careers. As a result, the RSO is always shorthanded and needs its members to take on as many responsibilities as possible.

One example of how busy the RSO can get, as well as what life is like as an RSO member, occurred in December 2006 and January 2007. In the anti-war fraction, composed of myself and four other members, we decided to push the [Local Peace Coalition] to call for a protest against the Iraq war. At the next [Coalition] meeting, Harold argued for a protest on January 17th. The [coalition] agreed, but said they lacked the resources to build the protest. The [coalition] explained that attendance at the meetings was down to about a dozen and simply did not have the manpower necessary for such a task. The following week at the RSO meeting, Harold argued that the RSO should make building this protest a priority of the entire branch. The branch agreed.

During the next two weeks, RSO members were involved in building this protest as well as fulfilling their routine RSO commitments. From making leaflets and protest signs, to securing a stage and permit for the protest, RSO members were involved in most aspects of this protest. My own role was to set up the stage, sell literature, and keep an eye on the Protest Warriors (right-wing counter-movement organization). The protest ended up being a success with 500 protesters in attendance, and gained newspaper coverage in which the article on the protest mentioned the RSO by name.

Membership in the RSO not only entails a high level of commitment to the RSO, but also to the movements in which they are involved. This level of involvement provides RSO members with experience, as activists. As a result, they often take on leadership roles. Greg, a member of the branch committee, explained that he appreciated that the organization develops people as individuals and as leaders:

It's a group that functions in a way that reflects a way to develop the individual as a leader, but also the importance of a collective approach to addressing the political questions of the day. (Greg, current member)

Greg appreciated the movement related skills that RSO members learn as a result of their emphasis on developing leaders.

Much of what can make life in this organization so stressful is the amount of time and resources one is asked to contribute.

They pile stuff on you, I mean it's unrelenting ... it's really difficult and that's one of the things that contributed to my disillusionment with the group over time. (Jane, former member)

For several members, the work for the organization was not overwhelming in itself. It was overwhelming because they had other responsibilities, and identities linked to them, that they also had to manage. The only way the work for the organization can be prioritized is if the identity associated with the organization is more salient than other identities these individuals possess.

Joanne also allowed other aspects of her life to be consumed by the needs of the organization. After I asked her how much time she spent doing work for the organization she responded with an amazing fifty hours per week at her high point. However, she points out that her intense level of involvement was the result of the absence of other identities that could challenge her socialist identity for salience. At her high point, she was not in school, and working off and on in part-time jobs. While at one point, life in the organization consumed most of her personal life, other commitments later emerged that challenged the centrality of the RSO in her life. More specifically, the emergence of work commitments forced her to reduce her involvement in the organization.

Additionally, a discrepancy existed between how the organization viewed a member and the member's sense of self. Abby felt that although she gave as much time as she could she was labeled as a 'slacker' by members of the group despite her achievements in college and maintaining multiple jobs that she felt were important:

When I was Abby of the [RSO], I was Abby the slacker of the [RSO]. And that was the role, that was the label for me. It's not something that I really was, I think people just expected it of me, it was like a self fulfilling prophesy.

I was so angry, and I had no way to tell people what I really thought about them because they could all throw me down in an instant. In the pecking order, I was the bottom. (Abby, current member)

Mary shared Abby's feeling of a lack of efficacy and perceived hierarchy. Because of those feelings, Mary felt that she did not have any efficacy in the organization and the more experienced members did not listen to her concerns. Jane explained that while she was a member she often made fundraising suggestions regarding fundraising and the style of the meeting flyers. As she put it:

Every idea I had got shut down. ... It's like, I'm not going to be in your group anymore because you don't listen to me. (Mary, former member)

This undermined her ability to carry out her role in the organization. It is important that the social groups and structures in which identities are rooted verify these identities. If one's socialist identity is not verified, it is not likely to be salient.

The Identity Competition of RSO Members

As stated above, RSO members possess multiple identities that are organized into a salience hierarchy. The key assumption of this research is the socialist identity is placed in an individual's salient hierarchy along with other identities. Competition exists among these identities for salience. I found that the multiple identities of current and former members of the RSO either undermine or compliment identities related to RSO involvement.

For many members, the socialist identity was the most salient so long as there were no other identities with which to compete. The process of joining the organization in order to find an identity and build relationships only affects staying power so long as the organization is essential to identity maintenance. An especially telling case is Jane, a former member. She joined after seeing an advertisement for a local meeting in a newspaper, at a point in her life where she was trying to rebuild her life after moving to the region. She did not have "much on the outside of school and work." This implies that neither aspect of her life was particularly rewarding or salient, and that she was looking for something that could be.

Personally, I was looking for something, something to do. I was trying to figure out what I believed in; I wanted to get involved in contributing to the community and going to protests and doing things that I felt strongly about.
(Jane, former member)

According to identity theory, an activist role identity can only be constructed if one is given roles in the group. Jane was able to take on roles and feel like part of the group, even though she did not fully understand what she was doing. She expressed that she felt as though she was learning to swim by being thrown into the water. The RSO encouraged her to do certain tasks, such as paper-sales, without her knowing what they were or why they do them.

Although constructing an identity related to activism pre-empted Jane's membership in the organization, the need for community and social bonds helped maintain her involvement while it lasted. She constructed new identities linked with new relationships while in the organization. Once the organization was no longer necessary as a place for support, the other identities eventually became more salient.

My other obligations [working 30 hours per week and fulltime college student] sort of swelled, and I let the [organization] sort of die off and wither away. (Jane, former member)

These obligations were difficult to manage while maintaining other areas of her life.

Jane's case also illustrates her differences with the RSO may have been political. She explained she felt forced into the activity without fully believing in or advocating for a socialist revolution. The need for a highly salient socialist identity may be an inherent part of belonging to an SMO. The revolutionary politics did matter

to Jane, implying that the internalization of the collective identity into one's personal identity can be difficult and intense in organizations such as this:

It is sort of a big deal to believe that revolution is possible. But, are you going to let your life get swallowed by it or are you going to let it become a part of it and I think it might be the political part for me that says, "Well I'm not sure if I necessarily agree with [aspects of RSO's politics]." (Jane, former member)

I, consistently, found identities that competed with one's socialist identity. These included occupational identities that included work, school, and identities tied to relationships such as families and friendships. How do identities rooted in the structure of the family and occupations affect participation in SMOs? The effect of these identities varied for different individuals depending on the salience individuals attach to these identities.

Family and Relationship Identities

A pattern emerged in the data related to how one acquired identities throughout the life course. For example, many individuals wait a certain amount of time before they decide to start families, which influences social movement participation (Van Dyke, McAdam and Wilhelm 2000). When RSO members do start a family, another identity may emerge to compete with their socialist identities. Extra-movement identities affect participation in both positive and negative ways.

Consolidating Family and Socialist Identities

Sometimes being active in an SMO is part of one's family identity. Several members were raised in households in which progressive or even radical values were instilled in them. For oppressed groups, a legacy and collective memory of resistance is often passed on from generation to generation.

My dad was pretty class-conscious, I guess you could say. I knew that he had been an activist in the 60's, I still don't know to what extent. My mom said he got involved in that "black power stuff." And that's why he didn't finish college on time. He would give us lectures on, you know, the meaning of my name, what it means to be Black in America, you know, historical things. So, I had some sense of injustice that was in the world and that my family had done something about it... (Patrice, current member)

The role family played in the construction and support of an activist identity also emerged in Kathleen's case. Kathleen was a current member and former member of other radical SMOs in the 1960s with her husband Harold. She shared that her involvement was facilitated by the support of her husband and family. Joining the organization made home life more pleasant and gave them a common interest and topic of frequent discussion. Her spouse also became active in the organization a little over a year before the interview. Before he became active, Kathleen's RSO commitments and time away from home were a source of stress. However, he understood the importance of Kathleen's work with the organization.

[Harold] understood what I was doing. He used to say, "You are doing this for both of us." (Kathleen, current member)

Harold expressed his own desire to be active vicariously through Kathleen before he eventually joined the RSO.

Despite the support she and others received, problems came up that led individuals to choose between family responsibilities and movement responsibilities. The deteriorating health of Kathleen's mother and sister influenced her to reduce her activity in the RSO. I asked her what the most difficult aspect of becoming active again had been:

I mean, I'm barely hanging on in the organization, and it's not because I have any disagreements. I have to do everybody's [needs]. (Kathleen, current member)

In Kathleen's case, the gendered nature of social movement participation came to the forefront. Gender structures all aspects of life and participation in an SMO is no exception (McAdam 1992; Van Dyke et al. 2000; Hasso 2001). She then pointed out that her return to activity became possible in the first place because of her 'empty nester' status. There was a space between the point when her children left for college and the increase in family responsibilities where she became more active. Now that she has to help her mother and sister, the time for the RSO is difficult to find. The salience of her identity as a daughter and as a mother changed with the necessity of acting out these roles.

It's really hard, because I want to do more stuff [for the RSO]. But, I have to be completely strict and not do it because I have to deal with the pile of [household] stuff on my desk. I mean, I'm still a member and [cutting back on RSO activity] stinks, but before that is my mother. (Kathleen, current member)

Competition between family identities and political identities are more complex and segmented than other identities. For example, Kathleen's children restricted involvement when they were young and facilitated her involvement when they left home. At some point in their lives, all members of her household were members of the RSO. In fact, she first came to RSO meetings because her children (then around 18 years old) were members. The dialectical interconnectedness of family identities and political identities underscores the feminist adage that the personal is political. Also evident in the case of Kathleen was the gendered aspect of family roles that often require a large amount of caring labor, which women are often burdened with by the broader social structure (Hochschild 2003). Caring labor, which accompanies many family roles, can consume much of the time available to participate in an SMO.

Nancy Naples' (1992) concept of 'activist mothering' provides a template for how activists consolidate gender and family identities. While Kathleen's commitments at the time of the interview seem antagonistic to her involvement and the goals of the organization, much of the caring labor she did while she was not involved in the organization was not only familial reproduction, but also reproduction of another generation of socialists. By raising 'red diaper babies,' Kathleen and Harold facilitated the continuity of the RSO.

Another instance of the impact of family identities is Steve's attempt to maintain his level of involvement after the birth of a child. In sum, Steve cut back on his activity in other movements, dropped out of RSO study groups, and only attended the weekly

branch meetings and paper-sales. Even then, he attempted to consolidate the responsibilities associated with parenting and the RSO. One afternoon, Steve brought his 10-month-old daughter with him to a paper-sale on a college campus. The division between his personal life and his movement life broke down; he had to attempt to combine the two where he could.

Some members placed RSO membership on the top of their salient hierarchy, despite the presence of other competing identities. For example, balancing RSO involvement with married life proved difficult:

Well it's always been a challenge [balancing married life and the RSO], the main thing that's been hard was that formerly my wife resisted me being involved beyond a certain point, or just didn't support my involvement and that ... she didn't forbid it or really resist it ... still I felt bad about it. (Jeremy, current member)

Later in the interview, I attempted to assess Jeremy's most salient identity. I asked him what his priority in life was and the politics of the RSO came to the forefront. Although there may be some bias in his response due to my own membership, this excerpt reveals the salience of the RSO in his life:

[The RSO] is it. I mean my priority is building socialism. (Jeremy, current member)

From what we can tell from this interview, his membership in the RSO may be the most salient. My field observations of Jeremy and other leading members were consistent with these findings. He easily put in more hours per week than every other member I observed, on top of the usual commitments. Jeremy attended union meetings, immigrant rights coalition meetings, cadre study groups, and trained new members on a weekly basis, all while operating as an RSO member.

Conversely, socialist identities extend into other social identities. Membership in an RSO affects relationships with others, whose political views differ. Furthermore, RSO membership can lead to conflicts with individuals that were in the life of an RSO member prior to his/her joining the organization.

I lost some friends. That was the big one. It sounds kind of weird and I still think some of them are good people, but they have really bad ideas [racism and homophobia] that they are not willing to confront them with me and talk about. (JoAnne, former member)

Similarly, Bruce stated:

Oh yeah. I've shifted things around and I've had to make sacrifices just in personal relationships, you know. It takes time. I know last semester was a big problem cause my girlfriend had Thursday nights off and I didn't have class and I would spend all day reading and go to meetings and stuff. ... My girlfriend didn't like that at all. (Bruce, current member)

Additionally, Abby expressed how her involvement prevented relationships from emerging:

I was single pretty much the whole time I was in the RSO because I could never go out and meet anyone. My only friends were people from work or the RSO. (Abby, former member)

At times, the separation between personal life and activism was extremely difficult for members; they lived with other members of the organization. Abby and Patrice both had separate, but similar experiences when they lived with RSO members at different points in their lives. In both cases, they felt as if they had no time for a social life and that the organization was all-consuming. For Abby, consolidating her personal life with her life in the organization was not seen as beneficial because she could not step back from the RSO. On the other hand, Patrice pointed out that this arrangement helped her maintain participation:

I mean my roommate and my next-door neighbor [being members] makes it really hard to just completely disavow myself from the [organization]. I mean there were days when I would say, "I'm not going to go to the meeting," and try to tell [my neighbor], and, not in a judgmental way, she made enough good arguments that I was like, "OK, I'll go to the meeting." (Patrice, current member)

Occupational Identities

Occupations and careers also form identities that can compete for salience with one's socialist identity. Identities such as 'grad student,' 'teacher,' and 'nurse' all are occupational identities rooted in the structure of the economic system. Career identities are also linked to stages of the life-course. Most RSO members are college students, which reflects the RSO's strategic decision to recruit on college campuses. These identities often shift from 'student' to 'professional' or other career linked identities. These shifts can lead to changes in the competition of these identities within one's salient hierarchy. Occupational identities do not always crowd out the socialist identity. Individuals can sometimes consolidate these identities.

Mary, a former member, found it difficult to maintain her involvement in the organization while simultaneously working and attending college full-time. Her job primarily got in the way of her activism due to the fact that she could not get the night of the weekly meeting off from work. Changes in Mary's responsibilities at work also played a role in her decision to leave the organization. She became a supervisor at the furniture store and further lost flexibility in her schedule and felt increased pressure to be a responsible employee. This revealed the salience that work had in her life because she was not concerned with being responsible to the RSO, but to her occupation.

It's a horrible thing, but, I mean, everything else comes [before the RSO] and all of those things juggle with each other. (Mary, former member)

Ultimately, her socialist identity was not sufficiently salient to sustain participation.

Many working students view their occupations as a means to gain an education, revealing a high salience of identities linked to education.

School is the first priority and then, unfortunately, it has to be work because I need to live and maintain going to school. So, unfortunately, work is first and everything else is pretty much third. (Mary, former member)

You know [school] has to be a priority because it has a set time. It's going to end. I think that if you are really committed to the politics it's an open-ended relationship. You can be committed at any point in your life. (Abby, former member)

Conversely, some activists put the socialist identity above their commitments to school.

Some RSO members organize their schedules around activism:

The day was set up around political activity, going to coalition meetings, doing paper sales, putting up flyers and ... and when those things were going on, I spent all my time doing [activism]. I would go to class when I had to go to class. (James, former member)

James' most salient identity, at this point in time, was that of a socialist. He attended a university known for its activism; so he could continue activism after high school. While at university, he joined the RSO. This amplified the activist identity that he was trying to construct. His response to what his life was like in the organization is an example of how both school and the organization assisted his activist identity construction:

It was interesting, I really enjoyed it. I liked being an activist and I went there less to be a student and more to be an activist. (James, former member)

James' label and satisfaction with the activist identity was supported by his RSO membership.

This illustrates the formation of a salient activist identity can override the pressures of school and become the most salient. His student status and flexible schedule facilitated his activist identity. Once James graduated, he no longer had this power and began to feel some of the stress when he took on a full-time job. Although full-time work made activism more difficult for James to maintain his level of activity, some members managed to steer themselves into careers that allow the necessary time for activism.

Several members described conditions where their work responsibilities and their RSO responsibilities were consolidated. For example, it was common practice too for RSO members to make copies of fliers while they were at work. Other members with flexible work schedules, such as the ability to telecommute, more easily managed commitments to the RSO.

Identity consolidation of work and activist identities does not work for everybody. For some, exposure as a radical activist at work can have negative consequences. One member, Patrice, was exposed by local television news coverage of a protest. Conflict emerged after a co-worker with incompatible political views saw the segment. This jeopardized their pre-existing relationships:

I didn't want to have to get into it with that one person at work who [held views hostile to the RSO] because, you know, I kind of needed [her], she was the only person that I was kind of friends with. (Patrice, current member)

In this case, her socialist identity extended into her work life involuntarily. This identity extension made her socialist identity function as a master status that was carried out across situations.

The RSO encouraged identifying oneself as a socialist at work. The organization also encourages the use of identity markers, such as buttons and stickers, to reveal oneself as a socialist. When one's most salient personal identity corresponds with the organization's collective identity, it should not be surprising that this identity becomes extended into their occupation.

Extending one's socialist identity into other aspects of life requires one to be cognizant of the context and consequences of revealing this identity. Accordingly, Greg pointed out that he has to be strategic about when to reveal himself as a socialist:

[Revealing oneself] requires that people be strategic about identifying themselves because, you know, in a society where there has been such hatred and violence directed at people with radical viewpoints there can be a situation where you need to be careful about identifying yourself. There can be situations where it can be problematic and therefore, I just chose not to or I chose to just avoid it if I can. (Greg, current member)

Despite the need to be careful, Greg did see possible benefits to an open socialist identity in that it can empower others:

[Being open] does allow me to communicate that it's OK to have these political views in our society and that they aren't marginal views, but they are views that reflect the experience of people and that people can kind of overcome that shadow, that cloud that's been cast on socialist ideas, merely because they've been ideas that have been under attack for so long in this country. (Greg, current member)

Greg acknowledged that revealing his socialist identity can empower individuals that are fearful of doing so in a hostile environment.

Although there are perceived consequences to being an open socialist at work, they do not seem to be perceived in academic settings. Several members majored in, or even received an advanced degree in a social science, and members that were in the humanities specialized in areas such as Marxist literary criticism that were complimentary to RSO involvement. Bruce described his experience as a Social Work major:

Every semester I get in front of class and announce a meeting, or a protest, or something going on. Sometimes I try to tie it in to something we are talking about in class, like if we're talking about Hurricane Katrina or something like that, or when we'd have a meeting... (Bruce, current member)

He then expressed his frustration that students in his classes were not receptive to his socialist ideas. Bruce initially majored in Social Work because he felt that it was supportive of his commitment to social change. In other words, Bruce attempted to consolidate these identities. Nevertheless, Bruce's socialist identity undermined his identity as a 'Social Work major.' In Bruce's interview, he provided a radical critique of the discipline of social work that was informed by his membership in an RSO. Although Bruce's socialist identity undermined his occupational identity of 'Social Work major,' other members found ways to consolidate their identities in complimentary ways.

Patrice, a current member, first described her commitment to a career in art. After she mentioned that she had a degree in art and was pursuing a career in it, I asked her how her membership in the organization affects other areas of her life including her art:

They compliment each other nicely actually. I'm making the fliers now for the meetings and I've made T-shirts, I do silk screening, so they are really compatible. The only thing that sucks is that in order to get a job I can't show any of this stuff. (Patrice, current member)

This consolidation of her artist and socialist identities was not perfect in that she could not use the artwork created for the organization in her portfolio. Despite this, her ability to bring another salient identity into her work with the organization reduces her alienation from those tasks.

The interview and field work data indicate that identity salience is a fluid and ever-changing phenomenon. Other areas of the personal lives of members were also affected, but were not as easy to categorize in terms of competing identities. In order to address this, I present a generalized discussion on balancing 'personal life' and activism.

Conclusions

The RSO's radical agenda, workload, and high level of activity present unique challenges for its members. Moreover, members of the organization internalize aspects of this collective identity into what I call a socialist identity. Although the development of this socialist identity is important, this identity is one among many that comprise the 'self.'

The default explanation within the RSO for why members leave after devoting so much time and energy have been political differences (e.g., no longer holding the RSO's political views) or questions that are unanswered (e.g., the 'hows' and 'whys' of socialist revolution), which contribute to their decision to leave the group. This research shows that aspects of the lives outside of the RSO affect participation. Finally, I found that the socialist identity of an individual must then compete with other identities. Most importantly, when RSO members possess an identity that rivals the socialist identity, the result is not always discontinued participation. Several members have consolidated their socialist identity into other identities they possess in order to prolong participation.

The most surprising and perhaps most important finding was that the long term involvement of an individual can occur even if significant parts of the RSO's collective identity have not been internalized into a socialist identity. This occurs because the socialist identity will find itself on the top of one's salient hierarchy if no other identities stand to challenge it. Likewise, a highly salient socialist identity can be challenged by the increased salience of other identities. Increased identity competition that individuals experience manifested itself in increased responsibilities and time commitments to extra-movement identities. If members manage to consolidate their identities participation can be prolonged.

As shown in the flow chart in Figure 1, identity salience is often a mediator for participation. Participation is likely to persist if members are able to consolidate other competing identities with their socialist identity. In other words, truly making the personal political facilitates participation. For example, several people attempted to

combine aspects of their family life and their involvement in the RSO. Others combined career identities to minimize the competition between occupational and socialist identities.

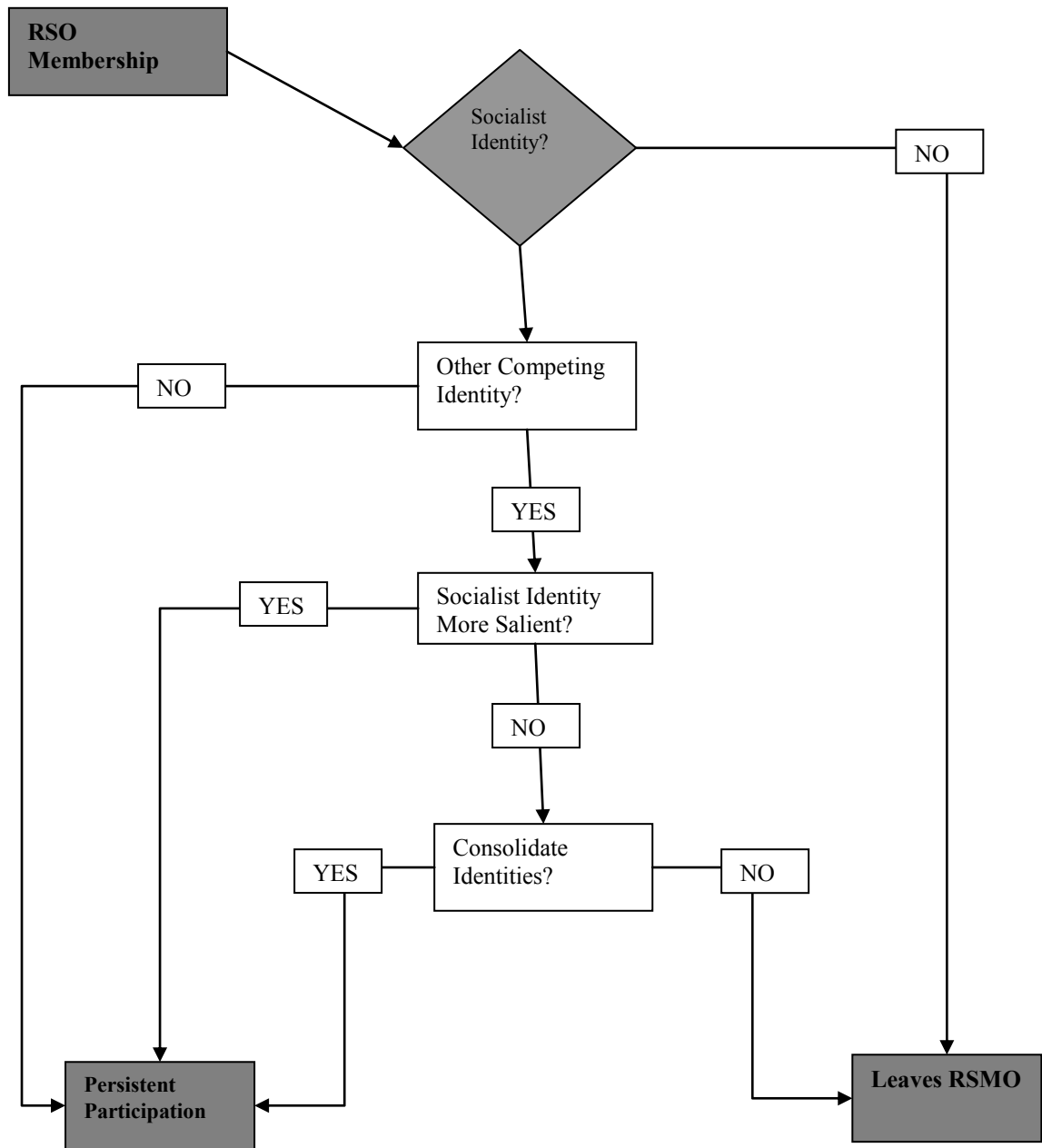


Figure 1. The impact of Socialist Identity, Saliency, and Competition of Participation

I believe that my analysis has taken a first step towards further understanding of the role of identity competition and identity-salient hierarchies in participation in SMOs. This research also adds insight into understanding social movement participation throughout the life-course. A primary shortcoming of these results is that there is a tautological explanation for participation. In order to solve this tautology, it may be necessary to couple the analysis of identity with an analysis of the political opportunity structures over time, and how these political opportunities affect the saliency of existing identities. Another possibility is that researchers could attempt to find the mechanisms that allow members to construct a salient socialist identity.

Despite this shortcoming, this analysis broadens the focus of social movement research from the political back to the personal, thereby reducing the myopia inherent in approaches that exclusively view activists as activists.

In addition, comparative and quantitative research on SMOs would add significantly to the body of literature on these types of organizations. This would require the creation of original data and possibly the need for a census of these SMOs. More research using the concepts of identity theory and SMOs as the units of analysis is necessary and will add to this important area of social movement studies. Most importantly, it is hoped that this research will lead to further social movement research that takes into account multiple identities and the impact they have on participation. Further research is needed to understand how identity influences social movement participation from non-actor to actor.

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“Keeping up with the Joneses.” A sociological content analysis of advertising catalogues with the eye-tracking method

Abstract

Is it possible to look at something without actually noticing it? Is it possible to see something in the picture that is not really there? The answers to these philosophical questions can be obtained by comparing the results of eye-tracking tests combined with interviews based on sociological theories. The answers, however, have more than the philosophical dimension in that they can provide insight into everyday processes of social perception and its application, also for commercial purposes. In the design phase of the present study, we chose a popular advertising folder available for free for the average consumer. While showing the selected photographs to the respondents (all the pictures included people portrayed during everyday activities), we asked them to pay particular attention to the situations presented. Afterwards, each participant took part in a standardised interview. In our view, the conclusions formulated on the basis of the obtained results are relevant not only to the investigated catalogue, but can also be treated as an indicator of how people usually browse through advertisements and what kind of inferences they make about the world on that basis. While most attention should be given to watching the advertisements, we constitute our dreams of a perfect life, environment and the items that furnish it.

Keywords

Erving Goffman; Eye-tracking Research; Visual Analysis; Qualitative Research.

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Our objective is neither to advertise nor to criticise the company whose products are presented in the investigated catalogue. We do not aim to evaluate its marketing actions, financial results, mission or policy. Rather, we intend to analyse the widely available paper catalogue by presenting and trying to interpret certain regularities we have observed. Moreover, we endeavour to reflect upon the force and extent of the catalogue's impact, which seems to reach far beyond the advertising of specific products. Just like George Ritzer (1999), who put under analysis one of the global fast-food chains and subsumed the discovered trends under the term 'McDonaldization,' so do we observe one of the global companies and the ways in which it presents its products. Is it possible to give a common name to the observed regularities? This question cannot be answered yet, however, it is not the search for the label that we consider most important. Instead, we intend to discover in what ways the said catalogue influences the everyday lives of its readers and to raise the general awareness of this impact.

In the present study, we decided to use the advertising catalogue of a global furniture and interior decorating company, which has been present in the Polish market for many years. Gradually, with time, a similar strategy of reaching an individual client with a printed advertising catalogue was adopted by other companies in Poland. However, the catalogue and the company we have chosen for the purposes of the study can be treated as the forerunner of this form of communication with clients in the Polish market. The catalogue is several hundred pages long (in the successive, annual editions of the catalogue it is about 200-300 pages). It presents the company's offer by showing, in an attractive way, the interiors of houses and apartments (in this respect the company "helps" the Poles with the arrangement by using the layouts of popular pre-fabricated blocks of flats in Poland). Apart from that, the catalogue contains the manuals for the company's webpage and makes available there graphic software, which can be used, for example, to design one's own kitchen equipment or check the optimal mattress hardness.

The recent changes occurring in this field are an interesting research topic. A considerable improvement could be observed both in the standard of Polish residential households, as well as in the level of importance attached to the place of residence. The studies carried out in recent years have shown that the average surface area per person has been increasing in recent years and in 2005 it was more than 26m², (Czapiński and Panek 2006:87). According to 2010 data, approximately 40% of Poles live in pre-fabricated blocks of flats (Pankowski 2010), 19% in houses built after 1989, and 81% declares they would like to live in a newly built home. Poles also keep paying more attention to the appearance, design and functionality of their residence (Pankowski 2010). Approximately 40% evaluate the material conditions of their household as good, and the upward trend in this category has been maintained for the last 10 years. In 2007, the number of people satisfied clearly exceeded the number of those dissatisfied, who in 2010 constituted 15% (Wądołowska 2010). We believe that one of the important aspects of these changes is the growing interest in the place of residence, which, to a considerable extent, is inspired by advertising catalogues like the one analysed in the present study.

Study

At no point does the catalogue say that the people in the pictures are family members. However, as confirmed in the in-depth interview stage, it can be concluded from the context that what we are looking at are relatives, parents and children, or

friends. In fact, we are being convinced from the very first page by a smiling figure that home is the most important place in the world. Obviously, it is an advertising catalogue and its main aim is to present the commercial offer of the company to its potential customers. What drew our attention, however, was the manner of this presentation. Most pictures show furniture and home appliances in their everyday use. What can be seen are people who are bustling about the kitchen, a person who is putting a pullover into the wardrobe and a cat which is lying next to the armchair. Such manner of presentation provides a perfect opportunity to say, “see how nice it is to sit in our armchair” or “make yourself at home in... our store” (sentences taken from the Polish catalogue).

Consequently, rather than analyse the content of the catalogue, we are more interested in scrutinising its ways of representation. The most important issue being the models that appear in the catalogue (including children and pets), who, in line with the catalogue’s agenda, act out specific and pre-arranged roles and social situations. The catalogue is treated as a source of information on how an average apartment should look. In our view, however, the presented patterns concern not only the kinds of furniture and their arrangement, but also some determined models of social life, for example, human relationships based on age, gender or family affiliation. Furthermore, we will also explore the space which, although designed as domesticity, serves a number of purposes connected with, for example, the separation into public and private spheres or into work and recreational areas.

The grammar of visual design

What content do we choose when looking at the centrefold of an interior design catalogue? How does the layout affect the trajectory of our gaze? These were the main questions governing our analysis of the popular home furnishings catalogue by IKEA. The empirical data for the present study was collected by means of eye-tracking tests run on a group of respondents viewing the investigated catalogue. The results were compared to the grammar of visual design theory by G. Kress and T. Van Leeuvena (Kress and Van Leeuven 1996) as it gives a means to determine theoretically the possible visual interactions occurring between the reader and the catalogue's layout. This approach is particularly relevant for the analysis of the spatial distribution of illustrations, photographs, paratexts, signatures, or headers that a potential recipient searches for.

In our framework the catalogue’s centrefold (i.e. two adjacent catalogue pages) is treated as a semiotic space (Kress and Van Leeuven 1996:182). The semiotics of graphic space assumes that the viewer reads the message by comparing the textual and pictorial components. Some of the key elements of the catalogue pages are the paratexts mentioned-above (Kress and Van Leeuven 1996:69). Kress and Van Leeuven define the concept as small textual forms that are secondary to the main text. These include headlines, captions under illustrations, leads, vignettes, symbols, product durability, news, et cetera. Their main function is to attract the gaze of the reader and encourage them to read the main text.

The assumptions of visual semiotics

A specific placement of graphic elements in space communicates a specific meaning. The model of semiotics proposed by Kress and Van Leeuven distinguishes

three main determinants of graphic elements: their spatial structure, their components and the visual connectors between them. The structure of the catalogue's space can be defined according to such parameters as the arrangement of elements on a vertical or horizontal plane and the position of elements relative to the centre of the page. In the vertical arrangement, the most prominent information is placed at the top, while the details are located at the bottom. In the horizontal arrangement, the repetitive information (e.g. the table of contents, menu, numbering) is placed on the left side of the space, whereas the content that is prone to change can usually be found on the right. The typical layout of websites can serve as an example illustrating the above-described principles. The last regularity identified by Kress and Van Leeuwen concerns the validity of the item due to its position relative to the centre of the page.

Theory – Impression management

There are many sociological texts on the meaning of space, manner of its representation and the influence this has on people (Hall 1990; Banks 2009). One of the most well-known sociologists of the mid 20th century, Erving Goffman (2000, 2006), gave a considerable amount of thought to the ways in which the stage (front stage) and the surroundings (backstage) can influence human relations by helping to create or to improve a desired impression in the interlocutors. The force of this influence depends on how skilfully and deliberately we can utilise the interactional space in order to, among other things, create a desired impression. For example, senders can reinforce the message about themselves through the so called *façade*, 'presentation of self' that consists of such aspects as 'a look,' 'a way of behaviour,' 'sets on the scene,' and is a consistent part of one's image and can be redefined according to the particular situation, partners of interaction, or any circumstances (Goffman 2000:136-137; Turner 2004:459; Sztompka 2005:113-118). All these techniques might be described as an 'impression management' strategy, which everyone tries to follow to improve their image (Goffman 2000:235), and ultimately – their social position. Goffman extensively uses a very inspiring distinction between the stage where social interactions take place and the backstage where individuals are preparing to play their performances with a view of making the right impression on others (Goffman 2000; Turner 2004:459-462). The distinction between the stage and backstage is functional and depends on how the actors define the situation at a given moment.

According to Goffman, every social interaction is a kind of a show whereby people try to impress others by using various culture-specific, readable symbols connected with personal appearance, behaviour in specific situations, or such arrangement of spaces that would facilitate the above-mentioned experience management (Sztompka 2005:116). However, for a performance to be successful all participants of the interaction must share the codes for interpreting the symbols, it is also important to draw attention to changes in this area that have been taking place in recent years.

Numerous authors (Hannerz 2000; MacCannell 2002; Macnaghten and Urry 2000; Sztompka 2005; Turner 2004) followed this trail of thought stressing not only the importance of the space of interactions (perceived mostly visually), but also how it can be intentionally exploited by the social actors for emphatic purposes. Cultural differences in this matter have also been brought to light, as well as potential

misunderstandings (Hall 1990) stemming from culture-specific readings of gestures and space (Krzywicki et al. 2005).

Eye-tracking methodology

Eye-tracking (ET) is the method of investigating and recording eye movements. Such measuring allows someone to determine precisely the spots that the viewer has been looking at, as well as the order in which he/she has read the visual information. The above description is, of course, a very rough specification of the eye-tracking measurements. In an attempt to investigate eye movements more should be said on eyeball movement as a physiological symptom of looking.

In the early ET studies, eye movements of the respondents reading visual materials were recorded with a video camera or involved ET equipment in the form of a helmet that was put on the head. Currently, ET equipment looks like a computer monitor with a built-in eye-tracking camera. The advantage of this solution is that it allows for the observations to be conducted in almost natural-like conditions of reading on screen.

Eyes move constantly in various directions. These movements are, in turn, essential to the process of seeing. From among various types of moves the most important for the ET method are rapid ballistic movements or saccades (Młodkowski 1998). Saccades are associated with placing the objects in the zone of the most acute vision. Since this zone is relatively small, in order to see the details, we must constantly scan the object with our eyes through saccades. The saccades place in the centre of the retina the part of the picture that we want to see acutely. The process can be compared to seeing the world through a hole about the size of a thumbnail at arm's length (Ober et al. 2009). Saccades are described with 1000/second units. Large saccades are divided with so called fixations during which the proper reception of the visual information takes place. The role of saccades consist of changing the points of fixation. Their trajectories form broken, often intersecting, lines which consist of many segments between consecutive points of fixation. The fixation can be better understood as visual activity aimed at collecting further pieces of information.

What kind of data does the eye-tracker provide? Three main types of information measured by the eye-tracker can be distinguished: the frequency of fixations, the length of fixations and the order of fixations (Duchowski 2007). The most important for our study are the frequency of fixations and the order of fixations of respondents.

The frequency of fixation is the total number of gazes made by a person on the object he/she is looking at. The order of gaze is the representation of the sequence in which the recipient has read the visual information. Since the zone of acute vision is relatively small, the analysis of the picture is done through point-by-point scanning (Ober et al. 2009). The points of fixation are not distributed randomly, though. Rather, they focus on the selected, most important parts of the picture. By tracking eye movements, we can conclude, with high probability, that certain psychical processes are occurring in the examined person. Normally, the length of fixation is indicative of the time necessary for the processing of visual information, which, on the one hand, can be interpreted as interest in the given object or, on the other hand, the prospective difficulties in the reading process.

The operationalisation of the research question

What we found most interesting in the catalogue were, mostly secondary from the point of view of the catalogue authors, the social situations presented there. The most important criterion for the selection of pages to be used in the experiment was the presence of at least two people in the picture. We were interested not only in the way our respondents would perceive the mentioned situation (and if they would notice the presence of people at all), but also the extent to which this perception would be conscious and how it would be evaluated. To this end, apart from eye-tracking tests, each respondent took part in an interview that consisted of a survey and an in-depth interview. 52 respondents aged 19-25 participated in the study. The majority of them were women (35) and 17 men. The respondents were selected by means of intentional sampling, and the results are not representative. Notably, during the in-depth interviews all participants admitted that they had already seen the catalogue. It can be assumed, therefore, that an average Polish student who lives in a big city is not only familiar with the catalogue and its subsequent editions, but also treats it as a source of information about trends (see: section later in the text).

The respondents were recruited through a public advertisement and received a nominal payment for their participation. The study took place between April and June 2009. The examination of a single respondent lasted from 90 to 120 minutes and consisted of the ET session, the researcher-administered survey and the in-depth interview. As far as the equipment is concerned, TOBII T60 was used in the procedure. During the eye-tracker session the examined person was sitting 60 centimeters away from the front of the monitor. The presentational material consisted of catalogue pictures showing people in certain social situations, for example, a woman and a boy in the kitchen, a woman and a man in the kitchen or children in the kitchen. Each centrefold with photos (a slide) was shown for 10 seconds during which time the respondent could freely watch the material (a slide). Prior to the projection, each participant was given written instructions asking them to pay particular attention to the prospective social interactions presented. Furthermore, each respondent provided answers to the survey questionnaire and participated in about a 30-minute interview. Whereas the ET test provided the information on what the participants were looking at, the aim of the standardised interview was to collect the information on what the participants actually noticed and remembered since we were also interested in capturing the potential differences between these two scopes. Some disparities between the particular stages of the study were revealed; when viewing the slides, participants were found to pay extra attention to objects different than the ones they would choose to comment upon in the follow-up interview.

In the preparation phase of the present study we formulated the following research problems:

1. The respondents will notice people presented in the pictures and the character of the relations (ties) between them.
2. The relations will be described and evaluated from the perspective of ties linking the presented people, for example, father-daughter or parents-children.
3. The presented slides will be treated by respondents as illustrations of everyday family/social life, as 'normal and everyday' situations rather than 'marketing' and 'commercial' ones.

In the research design phase, we made a further assumption that the respondents will be more likely to pay attention to these objects which may seem weird or surprising in some way, for example, a pregnant woman at work or

employees with pets (dogs) in their arms. The above expectation was corroborated in the results.

The analysis of the eye-tracking test results

The dominating graphic element of the investigated catalogue were the pictures of apartment space covered with such marketing symbols as product durability, price tags, technical descriptions, room descriptions, page numbers, or graphically emphasised symbols of novelty. We assumed that the respondents would scan the entire surface first and then focus on the chosen element.

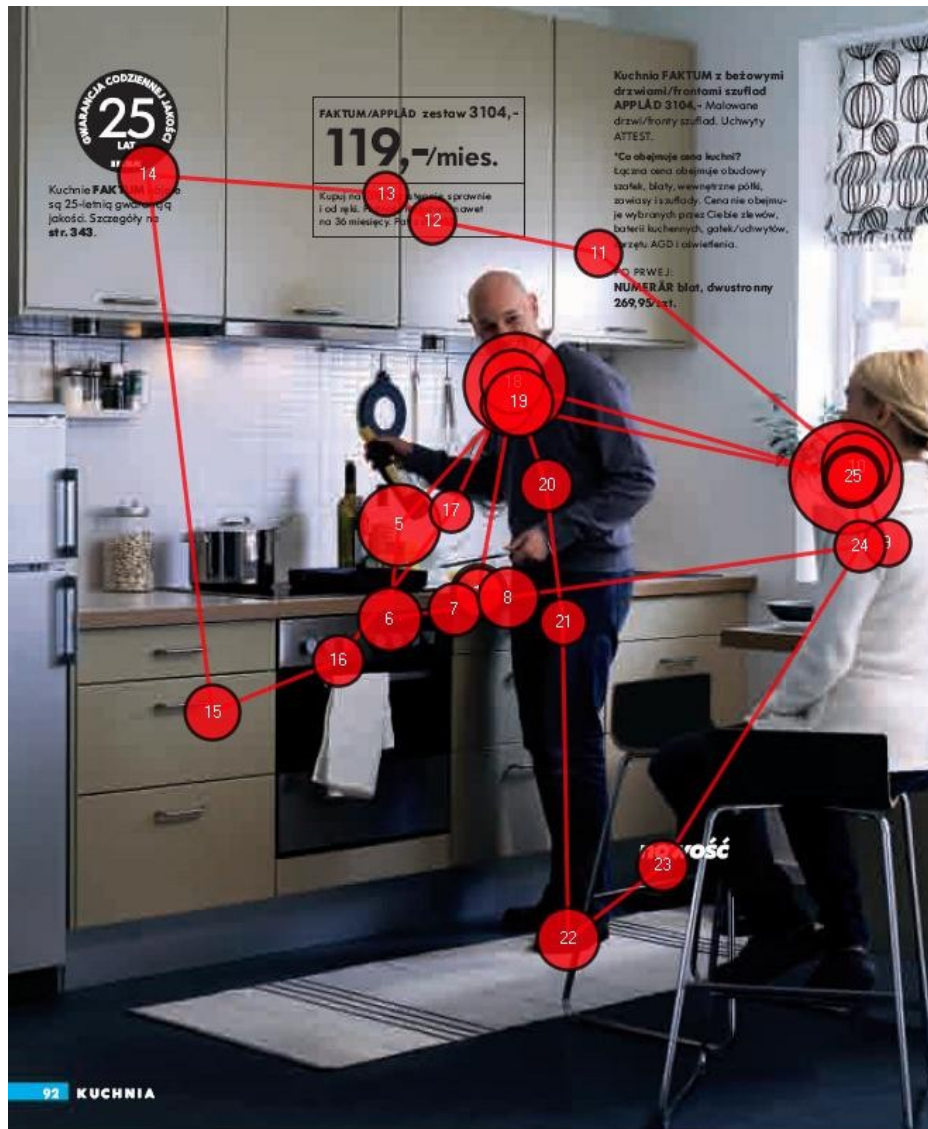


Figure 1. An example of plotting gazes during the 10-second exposure to the catalogue's page.

In addition to the dominant images, most of the catalogue's centrefold included 5 parataxis. The top left side of the semiotic space featured a symbol of a 25-year warranty. Beside the warranty symbol, for example, also at the top but centred, there was the price frame with a brief description of the loan scheme. On the right side of

the spread, in a vertical column, there was a long description of presented products. The bottom part of the spread was filled by a bookmark folder marking the housing space to which the furniture and equipment presented were dedicated. An element that appeared in the floating position was the word “novelty.” Analysing the importance of the space represented on the centrefolds, one cannot ignore the characteristic structure of the catalogue photos. They usually show the wider section of rooms (kitchen, rooms) providing the customer with the opportunity to see many details of the design. In a relatively small area of the photograph, the recipient can see actors recreating different social roles typical of presented interiors. At first glance, it is difficult to conclude which layer of the message is most important from the perspective of the catalogue’s creators. These images seem to communicate to the recipient much more than just a marketing presentation of wardrobes, shelves and chairs. They create idealistic scenes of social life by showing the relationships between partners, children and their guardians, et cetera. Do recipients of the catalogue pay any attention to these scenes and, if so, do they consciously analyse them? These questions can be answered with the results obtained in our ET study.

The ET measurement is giving the presentation the data in the form of so called eye movement trajectories (Młodkowski 1998), which reflect the respondent’s visual activity during a 10-second slide presentation (fig. 1).

The circles in the picture indicate fixations, for example, points where the gaze has stopped in order to collect the visual information. The numbers inside the circles reflect the order of eye movements during the reading (viewing) of the catalogue’s page. The bigger the circle the longer the fixation. The lines connecting the circles represent saccades, for example, rapid eye movements during which the viewer changes their eye position in order to find the next point of fixation. From the cursory analysis of the above fact, it can be concluded that although the pages of the catalogue consist of photos with lettering elements (captions, prices, symbols etc.), the respondents scan them and either search for interesting elements, which are then put under detailed analysis or treat them merely as sensory stimulus. Considering the assumptions of the present study, the most valid would be the qualitative analysis of respondents’ activity, in particular, their perception of social relations depicted in the catalogue’s scenes. Consequently, three research questions have been posited:

Research hypothesis

1. Which of the elements depicted in the catalogue are noticed by the readers and which are omitted?
2. Who (depending on gender) notices the social relations depicted in the catalogue?
3. In what order, or by what hierarchy, are the elements of the centrefold read?

Do the catalogue recipients pay any attention to the scenes related to the social life and analyse them in any way? Drawing on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s theory of semiotics, we formulate seven hypothetical strategies for catalogue viewing: (a) the recipient searches for new and surprising information on the right side of the page (b) the recipient looks for the most important information in the upper part (c) the recipient considers the most important the elements located in the centre (d) the recipient focuses on the information that is graphically highlighted (e) the recipient reads paratexts first (f) the recipient follows the elements that are connected by lines

or arrows (g) the recipient initially scans the whole semiotic space in order to choose the item that interests them most.

Apart from recording the fact that a respondent noticed the presented people and their relations, we were interested in the perceptual differences related to gender. In connection to this question, we assumed that it is possible to distinguish two levels of analysis of the viewed material with regard to the social relations between people presented on the slides: a) casual, b) thorough (fig. 2).

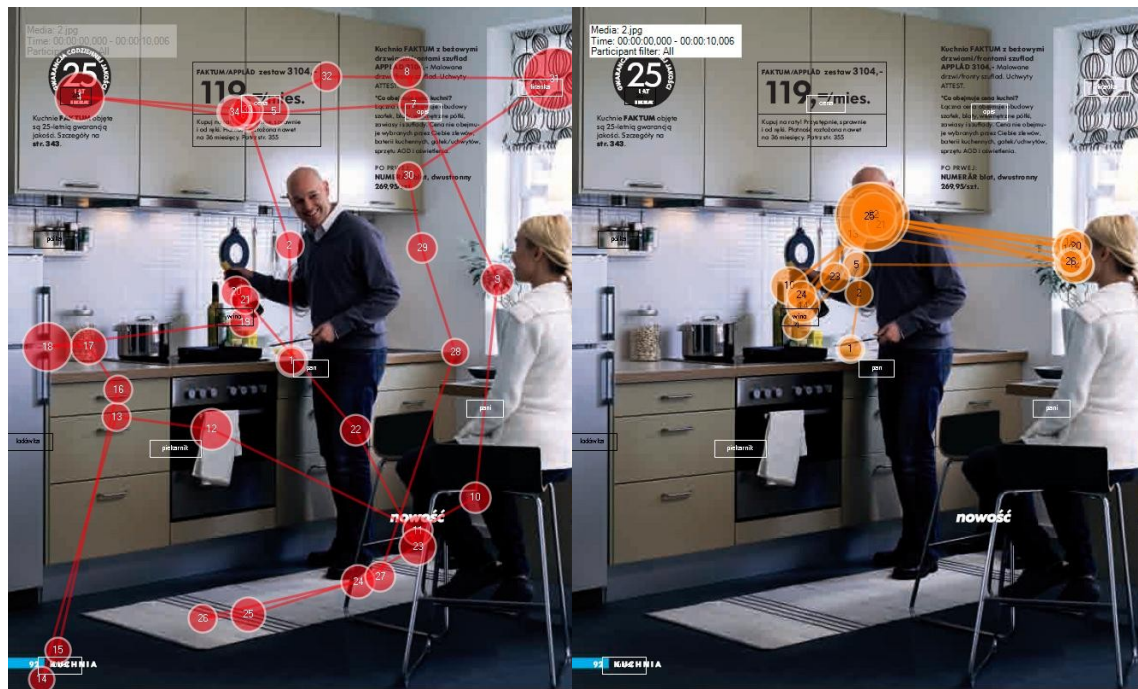


Figure 2. Gaze trajectories of two different respondents. Figure a) illustrates the situation whereby the social relation has not been recognised by the respondent (casual analysis). Figure b) illustrates the thorough analysis of the situation presented.

In what order do the respondents read the elements of the centrefold?

When analysing the visual material during the ET tests, we also paid attention to the gaze trajectories found between people presented in the pictures. For example, we have assumed that multiple trajectorial links between the faces or other body parts of people in the picture could suggest that the respondent has noticed, recognised (fig. 2 b) and analysed in detail the social situation presented. By analogy, the lack of such recognition would correspond to the fixations distributed over other elements of the presented scene (fig. 2 a). For the purposes of the present study, it was assumed that the latter ET result would indicate that either the respondent has not recognised the represented social relation or that they have not analysed in detail the noticed relations.

The results related to the proportions of the above mentioned viewing styles are not conclusive. To illustrate, for centrefold number 1, the vast majority of the respondents (41 people) did not notice the social relations, and of those who did, half would subject it to in-depth analysis. For centrefold number 2, few of the respondents (7 people) did not notice the social relation, and of those who did, 17 people would subject it to in-depth analysis, whereas for centrefold number 3, two of the

respondents did not notice the social relations, while those who did, 8 people would subject it to in-depth analysis.

Comparing general assumptions and actual reading behaviour

One of the main purposes of the present study was to track the visual behaviours of respondents and compare them with the semiotic analysis of the catalogue page. The first and second hypotheses assumed that in the first step the reader finds information graphically highlighted and provided in the form of a paratext. This hypothesis has not been confirmed, as a specific layout, based on the big picture, and central figure of a man caused the insertions that all respondents guided precisely in this place during the first look.

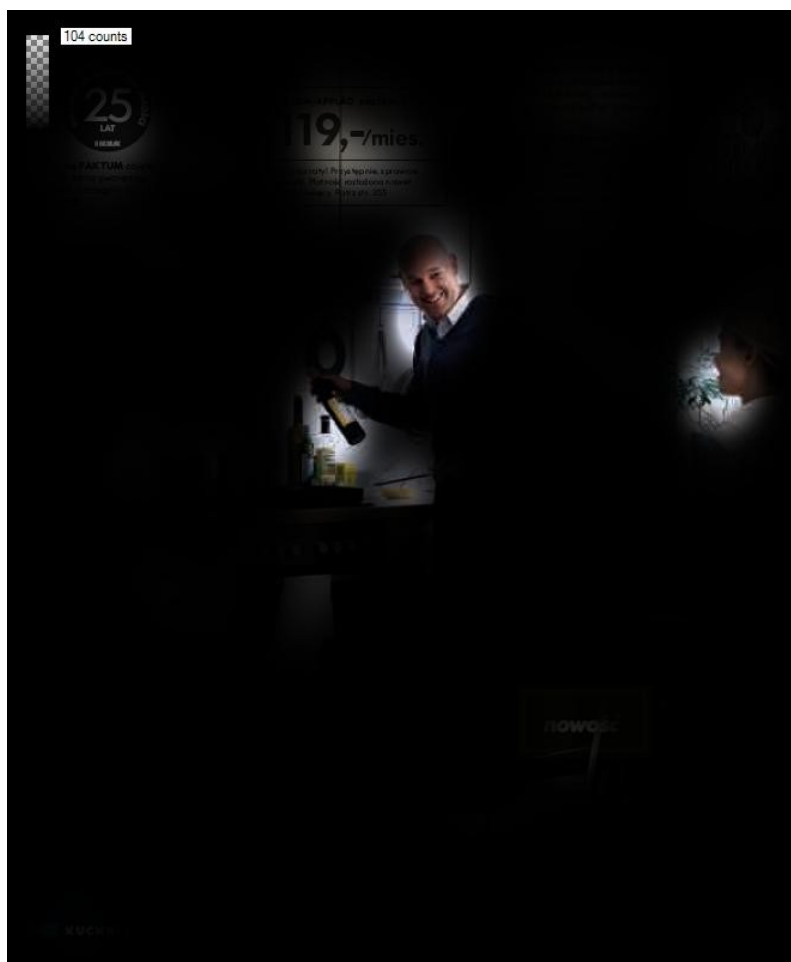


Figure 3. Gaze opacity showing the location which the respondents most often visually highlighted.

Then, the respondents received two possible strategies for viewing. In the first, most respondents relocate their eyes on paratexts and interior fittings. On the other hand, the rest of the time was devoted to the recognition of the context of the social situation.

The third hypothesis assumed that the reader scans the entire surface of the spread, and then begins a thorough look at interesting parts of it. Two-thirds of respondents have adopted a strategy of visually scanning the directory before they

decided to choose the most interesting of those elements. In this case, paratexts at the top of the spreads were places of fixation (fig. 4). The remainder of the study participants immediately focused on the selected item without wasting time on wandering eyes.



Figure 4. The first five seconds of the reader's spread reading presented as gaze plotting throughout the paratexts (gazes 4 to 10).

Our first and second hypotheses are that a reader is firstly searching for graphically highlighted information and those as paratexts. These hypotheses were confirmed.

Another interesting question concerning us was which items on the page are noticed and which are ignored. Figure 5 illustrates fixation counts of respondents who focused their attention on Areas of Interest (AOI).

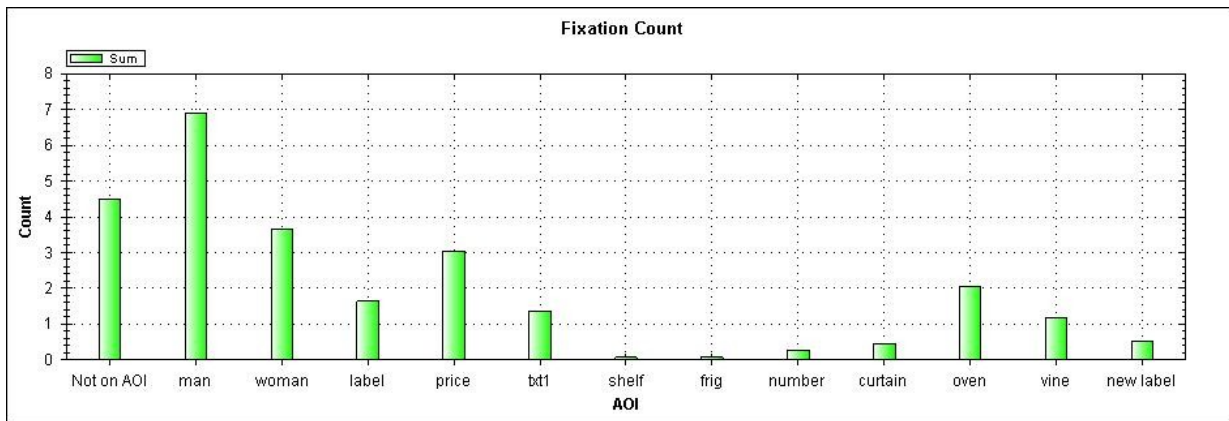


Figure 5. Gaze (fixation) count spent on the various items on the spread.

This chart may be a reference to the data obtained during interviews with respondents.

Data analysis – interviews

Equally interesting results have been obtained from the interviews. First of all, the respondents were asked whether they have noticed “anything surprising.” Secondly, they answered a series of questions concerning the observed social relations (on every slide there was more than one person) and tried to describe them.

Already, at the initial stage of the analysis, it was revealed that although the greater majority of the respondents claimed to not have noticed anything surprising on the slides, the ET data suggested the opposite. Only during the in-depth interviews did the respondents mention “the man in the kitchen” and the fact that he takes care of food preparation as often as the woman. According to the respondents, the kitchen is presented as the place for hanging out, reading a book, kids’ playing and, in general, the place for household members to spend time together. The people in the pictures are associated with positive emotions – lack of problems and worries, a happy and well-organised life with plenty of free time. Home is also often presented as a place of work (mostly intellectual work), which is, however, as pleasant as preparing meals with children in the kitchen.

The respondents would find conspicuous the relatively low number of people in the rooms, two or three children or three to four adults, which is associated with the corresponding model of family and social life, for example, restricted to a group of merely a few people. Although the context of the catalogue does not state whether the people in the pictures are family, friends or neighbours (needless to say these are obviously models acting out the pre-arranged situations), the respondents were quite unanimous in describing them as “family,” regardless of the visible racial or age differences (particularly salient in the case of children). Interestingly, only three respondents mentioned the “racial motive,” for example, different skin colours of the presented people, which one of the respondents considered “surprising.”

For all of the presented slides, most respondents (over 2/3) paid attention to the presented people and devoted most of the time to the systematic analysis of their figures, appearance and the relations between them (e.g., distance, context of presentation, things they were doing, etc.). Interestingly, during the follow-up interviews, regardless of the demographic features of the respondents (age, gender), there was a high correlation in the evaluations of the observed situations. As few as

three of the respondents paid attention to the “anti-stereotypical” role of the catalogue (showing the man cooking in the kitchen or a multicultural group of kids playing at home). Five people would mention that the presented scenes are “much too ideal,” and that they would associate them with Western Europe rather than with Poland.

Just as interesting are the associations the respondents reported in connection with the private space (home) as the “ideal” workplace. A proper arrangement of a part of the house, possible thanks to the furniture available at the store and the assistance of the designers, allows them to create an optimally (in the sense used by Ritzer in the context of McDonaldization; c.f. Ritzer 1999) organised working nook that makes it possible to perform all tasks without bothering other household members.

Conclusion

The respondents, in line with our expectations, turned out to be familiar with the catalogue investigated. All of them provided the correct name of the company. When asked to describe in their own words the situations presented, the respondents would stress the fact that they show “the ideal” world. They frequently mentioned the new, nice and clean, spacious interiors equipped completely with the appliances from the offer of the company represented by the catalogue (which is obviously not surprising because the catalogue advertised the furniture and interior design company). Interestingly though, the quality of “perfectness” was also visible in the people presented and the relations between them. Consequently, according to the respondents, they were all “happy and smiling,” “spending time placidly at home preparing meals,” or “playing,” while the chores seemed “lots of fun” and there was an occasion to “spend time together.”

Analysing the results from a sociological point of view, we noticed that the respondents very rarely mentioned that the presented slides were not an illustration of social life, but an advertising message. Interestingly, although not all the respondents would pay attention to the social context and the relations between particular people (1/3 of the respondents did not pay any attention to the context of the pictures indicating the relations between the people), in the interviews all of them would mention those “ideal” relations representing ordinary family life.

It must be remembered though, that the materials used in the experiment were the photos from the advertising catalogue, the purpose of which was to present a given product rather than people or the social interactions between them. However, the respondents participating in the study were asked to view and evaluate the background of each slide, that is the element of secondary importance. Nevertheless, in our view, the study did reveal a few interesting regularities. Among those, the most important being the fact that the presented people and the situations in which they appeared were treated as “everyday, but ideal/real life.” Beautiful interiors, tasteful clothing and the optimism written all over the models’ faces are treated very often as unattainable perfection. Just as beautiful interiors and furniture are treated as a point of reference and information on how a flat should look, the people appearing in those spaces are described as “very happy” and with a “positive attitude towards life.” Because of that, they inspire quite understandable jealousy and, at the same time, indicate the conditions favouring such outlooks on life. Given that the catalogue has been on the market for several years now (new editions are issued every year) and the fact that it reaches a great number of recipients, it is worth considering whether the pictures from the everyday life it presents can influence the readers. For, it seems

that the recipients tend to treat those photos as information not only on the ideal interiors, but also on the ideal scenes from social life. The scale and scope of our study does not allow us to extrapolate the observed tendencies to the whole population of the potential catalogue readers. Nevertheless, the obtained results confirm the general familiarity of young people with the catalogue, who tend to treat the everyday life scenes just as genuine as the company's offer. Although, the social situations obviously cannot be checked out like the products in the company's store, their authenticity is evaluated by the respondents correspondingly. And thus, when, during the interviews, the respondents mentioned the possibility of arranging their apartment in such a way that it is convenient to work in, they did not reflect on whether they would like to work at home at all. They simply accepted this option as a commercial offer from the catalogue. When they were talking about happy household members spending time together while preparing meals in the kitchen, they would sadly admit that they themselves do not have time for such things, and that the situation is too "ideal." In conclusion, it ought to be mentioned that the catalogue selected for the study has a considerable impact. By employing the pre-arranged scenes from everyday life for promoting its commercial offer, it reaches the recipients with the additional message on how everyday life can look at home and at the workplace (which sometimes happens to be the same place).

In line with our preliminary assumptions, the respondents did notice the social relationships between the people shown on the photographs, for example, the respondents would discuss the observed characters and the degree of kinship between them. They would also comment on some unusual activities that, in their opinion, did not match the gender or age of the people in the photographs or were uncommon for the places where the interaction took place. Interestingly however, in no case was "working from home" labelled as "surprising."

Our next assumption, concerning the assessment of the relationship between people visible in the pictures, has also been confirmed. Due to the fact that the photographs presented a private space/home, the respondents would automatically search for the marks of kinship between people in the pictures.

And finally, in compliance with our third assumption, slide viewers were likely to see photos as the representations of the scenes from everyday life, succumbing to the illusion that the catalogue is not a marketing/advertising tool, but a guide to interiors, daily life and, perhaps, consumer dreams of Poles.

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Elevated Cholesterol as Biographical Work – Expanding the Concept of ‘Biographical Disruption’

Abstract

The concept of ‘biographical disruption’ has been a leading framework for studies of the experience of chronic illness. A symptomless chronic condition – bereft of bodily signs – does not similarly present biographical disruption. People with elevated cholesterol are healthy at the same time as medical regimens signal sickness. The empirical material presented in this article, based on interviews with people with elevated cholesterol, suggests that a more appropriate metaphor could be ‘biographical work’ in such instances. The aim of this article is to discuss how people with the symptomless condition of elevated cholesterol continually construct elevated cholesterol in everyday life doing biographical work along shifting contexts. The vocabulary of biographical work constructs a subject who is continually working on building situationally-appropriate identities embedded in the shifting contexts of being sick or not sick. The article shows how people ongoingly ‘do’ elevated cholesterol, creating a mother-cholesterol-identity, a guest-cholesterol-identity et cetera, navigating the dilemma of absence of bodily signs (signaling healthiness) and medical regimens (indicating sickness) against shifting rhythms of biographical particulars in everyday life. Linkages of medical regimens with the rhythms of mothering, vacationing, being a guest et cetera create contexts – ever-emerging ‘cholesterol-biographical rhythms’ – for accomplishing and stretching the cholesterol identity from situation to situation, being adequately compliant with medical regimens.

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Keywords

Analytic Bracketing; Biographical Work; Biographical Disruption; Compliance; Ethnomethodology; Medical Sociology.

Michael Bury's (1982) concept of 'biographical disruption' has been a leading framework for studies of the experience of chronic illness. The concept implies, first, that a person's stock of knowledge of self and social world is disrupted by the illness experience. Second, it suggests that the explanatory framework normally used for understanding daily living is also disrupted, requiring a rethinking of biographical particulars. A third implication relates to the mobilization of resources in the face of the altered circumstances of chronic illness. Mobilization of cognitive, material and practical resources to repair the biography and maintain everyday life is the adaptive response to the disruption.

The concept has been applied in relation to a variety of chronic illnesses, including rheumatoid arthritis, cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis, and chronic respiratory illness (Anderson and Bury 1988; Bury 1982; Mathieson and Stam 1995; Ciambone 2001; Green et al. 2007; Wilson 2007; Williams 2003). It also has been applied to chronic headaches, seen as a socially invisible disease, not yet fully acknowledged (Lonardi 2007). It has been applied to chronic illnesses with a sudden onset, such as hypoglycaemia among patients with diabetes mellitus (Rajaram 1997) and stroke (Anderson 1992; Becker 1993; Ellis-Hill 1997), and terminal illness, such as motor neurone disease (Locock et al. 2009).

Common place in the wide range of studies that build on the concept is that the illness provides bodily signs of sickness and disability. However, a symptomless chronic condition like elevated cholesterol,² which is bereft of bodily signs, does not similarly present biographical disruption, being absent of the same signalling characteristics. It is a 'seen but unnoticed' condition (Garfinkel 1967). People with elevated cholesterol are healthy at the same time as medical regimens (cholesterol number tests, medication and dietary restrictions) signal sickness. Socially, they are neither sick nor healthy, or they are as much healthy as sick; an ambiguous dilemma. Taken-for-granted, everyday methods for accomplishing and managing this condition – in categories of sickness or healthiness – appear to be breached (Garfinkel 1967). This dilemma works as an assumption in this article. Resting on Harold Garfinkel's idea of 'breaching demonstrations' and the parallel of the intersexed 'Agnes'³ (being neither female nor male, socially), the first assumption leads to the second assumption: that the dilemma of the symptomless condition – breached methods for sick/healthy categorizations – requires and reveals that people with elevated

² Elevated cholesterol (familial hypercholesterolemia and other forms of hypercholesterolemia) is medically seen as a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases. From a particular sociological point of view, the condition in this article seen as a symptomless condition, creating a dilemma of being healthy and being sick, as an assumption and point of departure for further analyses of biographical work.

³ Similar to Garfinkel's example of Agnes associated with methods for gender categorizations, the participants might also reveal routinized methods people use to accomplish sick and health identities.

cholesterol accomplish methods that ongoingly and socially navigate the dilemma of healthiness and sickness, symptomlessness and medical regimens, in step with shifting rhythms of biographical particulars in everyday life. As such, the concept of biographical disruption has limited application in such instances.

This article argues that a metaphor different than disruption has greater experiential cogency. The empirical material presented in this article, based on experiential interviews with people with elevated cholesterol, suggests that a more appropriate metaphor is 'biographical work' (Gubrium and Holstein 1995; Holstein and Gubrium 2000), which I discuss at great length below. In the context of symptomless chronic conditions, the concept of biographical disruption appears to be too substantive, too constant, and indicates a linear, consistent and categorically coherent course of experience. The metaphor of biographical work, instead, constructs a subject who is continually working on building situationally-appropriate identities from episode to episode, reflexively and interpretively embedded in the shifting contexts of being sick or not sick.

The aim of this paper is to discuss how people with elevated cholesterol continually construct the symptomless condition of elevated cholesterol, doing biographical work along shifting contexts. This expands the concept of biographical disruption. This article will show that people 'do' elevated cholesterol and cholesterol identities in step with the rhythms of everyday life. The 'sickness' comes and goes as a context for identity construction; it is not simply a continuous ingredient of everyday life, taken into account as the illness develops. Through biographical work, the participants navigate the dilemma of health and sickness against shifting rhythms of biographical particulars in everyday life. Linkages between the characteristics of elevated cholesterol (the dilemma of absent symptoms against medical regimens) and everyday rhythms of biographical particulars create contexts – ever-emerging 'cholesterol-biographical rhythms' – for biographical work. Linkages create contexts for adequately accomplishing elevated cholesterol and cholesterol identities (Gubrium 1993; Gubrium and Holstein 2009).

The way I use the idea of rhythms of biographical particulars in everyday life echoes the way rhythms are applied in a recent parallel discussion of the rhythms of stepfathering (Marsiglio and Hinojosa 2006). Stepfathers adapt to existing practices in their new households, they adapt to the rhythms of householding. Similarly, in this article rhythms of biographical particulars refer to the already existing, complex and dynamic, episodic, and circumstantial, taken-for-granted practices in everyday life, which feature rhythms of mothering, rhythms of vacationing, rhythms of Christmasing, and so on. At the same time rhythms refer to the ever-emerging 'cholesterol-biographical rhythms' – rhythms of cholesterol-mothering, rhythms of cholesterol-vacationing et cetera – that ongoingly come into being through linkages between characteristics of elevated cholesterol and rhythms of biographical particulars in the participants' biographical work. 'Cholesterol-biographical rhythms' work as moral contexts for accomplishing – 'indexing' or accounting for – elevated cholesterol and cholesterol identities in everyday cholesterol practice (Garfinkel 1967). As we will see, this practice refers to their biographical work. Rhythms operate as moral 'horizons of meaning' (Gubrium 1993) for constructing cholesterol identities through biographical work. Cholesterol identities are given meaning – are horizoned and framed – through linkages with rhythms of biographical particulars.

Rhythms do not indicate a linear biographical flow. Rhythms do not indicate coherence or consistence of the biography nor are the rhythms fixed; the vocabulary of rhythms directs attention to people's *ad hoc* activity to fit existing routines in everyday life. Rhythms indicate people's episodic work of adjustment – the way people adapt identities to shifting contexts in shifting episodes. The rhythms of everyday life carry a taken-for-granted and common 'stock of knowledge' and 'recipes' to 'know how' to manage daily living (Schutz 1970) at the same time as people artfully 'do' the rhythms (Garfinkel 1967), sensitizing us to both the substantive and practical sides of these 'codes of conduct' (Wieder 1974). To be in step with the rhythms of everyday life indicates that people adequately follow and adapt already existing tunes and harmonies in shifting contexts to get right into the swing of elevated cholesterol.

The concept of biographical work and contributions to existing literature

As I apply biographical work, biographical work refers to identity work that creates identities through linkages between the dilemma (absent symptoms against medical regimens) of elevated cholesterol and rhythms of biographical particulars in everyday life. These linkages create the contexts for biographical work, as indicated. Biographical work refers to the navigation work in which identities are constructed through the way medical regimens are navigated against – and simultaneously linked with – rhythms of biographical particulars that challenge, compete with, condition and adjust the identities, a navigation work of adjustment. In technical terms, the cholesterol identity is 'indexed' by rhythms of biographical particulars through biographical work (Garfinkel 1967).

Rather than operating on a linear, consistent, and constant biography, including stages, phases, plateaus, continual flow and disruptions, this article directs attention to the episodic, non-linear and constructive character of biographical work (Gubrium and Holstein 1995; Holstein and Gubrium 2000). Biographical work is continually ebbing and flowing from rhythm to rhythm in everyday life. Biographically active people ongoingly engage in biographical work, not as a stable requirement of identity over the life span nor as a linear fixed life course, but as ever-emerging, fluid, malleable, local, and interpretive, practical accomplishments of (for example, cholesterol) identities from episode to episode, from rhythms to rhythms in everyday life. Biographical work is a distinctive kind of reality-constructing activity in relation to the passage of time (see also Murphy et al. 2010).

Biographical work is a form of 'practical reasoning' (Garfinkel 1967), it is a form of what Jaber Gubrium and James Holstein call 'interpretive practice' which "refers to the constellation of procedures, conditions, and resources through which reality [cholesterol identities] is apprehended, understood, organized, and represented in the course of everyday life" (1997:114). In other words, interpretive practice refers to a reflexive interplay between substantive 'whats' (in this article biographical resources, conditions and biographies/identities) and artful 'hows' (in this article the constructive activity of biographical work through which resources and conditions are used). Biographical work is the kind of interpretive practice that produces a biography pattern in the progression of the participants' cholesterol experience through time,

constructing contexts – cholesterol-biographical rhythms – for understanding themselves as cholesterol subjects.

The biography refers to a mosaic of multiple, situational – temporally episodic – identities and biographical particulars and conditions that come into being in and through the rhythms of everyday life as biographical work proceeds, not as a linear course but as a temporally episodic, situational moment-by-moment work. It is constructed and reconstructed in constructive interactional work, taking diverse forms in shifting contexts, embedded in the circumstances – adapted to the rhythms – at hand for the purpose of temporally being in step with the rhythms of mothering, the rhythms of vacationing et cetera. The biography is continually in motion, in play, always at work, always the biography-at-hand, contingent, reflexively and interpretively shaped. The biography is, moment-by-moment, continually subject to reinterpretation.

The activity of biographical work reflexively constitutes biographies and vice versa. The biography and biographical activity are two sides of the same coin. The biography and biographical work are not set in stone, but interpretively, skillfully practiced, reflexively embedded in shifting contexts ('cholesterol-biographical rhythms'), brought into being from rhythm to rhythm in everyday life.

Jaber Gubrium (1993) describes – similar to the way I apply biographical work in this article – nursing home residents who are biographically active, linking care and nursing home life to various horizons of meaning such as view of life, having a lifelong disability, or being a sister, spouse or traveller. In previous literature biographical work has, on the other hand, been described as an activity that follows a disruption and loss of self in relation to the onset of illness, an activity patients conduct to return to former characteristics of life (Lefton 1984; Williams 1984; Corbin and Strauss 1985; Conrad 1987; Kaufman 1988; Mathieson and Stam 1995; Ville 2005).

With the ethnomethodology-informed, social constructionist perspective in this article, biographical work does not start with a disruption or loss of self in relation to the onset of elevated cholesterol. Neither does it refer to reconstructions of a coherent, stable self or a core identity, nor does it refer to work that repairs a disruption. Biographical work is not limited to the time following the onset of the disease. Instead, I direct attention to the above described indexical, episodic, contextual and practical, flexible and fluid aspects of biographical work as ongoing, situated activities in people's lives.

Biographical disruption, a concept that bears a similar meaning, and also alternative concepts – for example, reinforcement, flow and continuity – discussed in previous literature appear to indicate the assumption that the biography is linear, coherent and consistent; which, in principle, permits an interruption and repair of the linear biography, and implies a stable life course, unity, self and core identity (Charmaz 1983; Cornwell 1984; Williams 1984; Becker 1993; Carricaburu and Pierret 1995; Pound et al. 1998; Becker 1999; Murphy 1999; Sanders et al. 2002; Williams 2003; Faircloth et al. 2004; Leveälähti et al. 2007; Harris 2009; Locock et al. 2009).

With biographical work applied, disruption, flow and continuity are not at issue and cannot be assessed because biographical work excludes a linear constant biography, just as it eliminates a transcendent coherent self and an essential core identity. With biographical work, the focus is instead on people's ongoing

biographical activity from context to context. Kathy Charmaz (1991) and Magdalena Harris (2009) lead us closer to these contextual dynamic aspects of sickness.

Harris (2009) discusses biographical disruption as a contextual concept. Charmaz's (1991) sick people move between shifting 'bad days' and 'good days' in everyday life, discussing the way they put their lives together after disruption, alternating between bad days and good days. As we will see in the following, the metaphor of biographical work opens up to further exploring of the dynamic, contextual day-to-day accomplishment of sickness, but abandons the concepts of disruption, loss and transcendence of 'self,' and does not report patients' 'real,' substantive pictures of their experience of sickness. Providing discussions of 'work' – interpretive practice – this article is also an alternative to substantive patterns of the experience of illness.

The Interviews and the Analytic Lens

The analysis is based on open-ended interviews. The interviews were conducted from 2006 to 2008 in Denmark, in Danish, in the participants' homes, my office or in the GP's surgery. The interviews ranged in duration from around one hour to three hours.

The material contains interviews with participants who all had elevated cholesterol; 15 individuals (some were interviewed twice), two couples (each couple interviewed in a joint interview, once), two sisters and their brother in one joint interview, two friends interviewed together once. To keep focus on how biographical work is embedded in social interaction I interviewed the couples, the friends and the siblings, viewed as close relationships, in joint interviews. I selected the participants from three GP clinics in three parts of Denmark, except the friends and the siblings who I came in touch with through colleagues. The criteria were that the participants had to have elevated cholesterol. To ensure that I crisscrossed the cholesterol terrain in a variety of different ways, I picked both women and men at different ages (between 42 and 80), some with a long hypercholesterolaemia history, some with a short hypercholesterolaemia history, some with familial hypercholesterolaemia, some who had had cardiovascular events like a heart attack. Circumstances of the way the elevated cholesterol had been detected in the first place varied; some in an ordinary routine visit, some had had a cardiovascular event or dizziness, which led to an assessment of the cholesterol number et cetera. The strategic selection of this broad cross section of participants was intended to make up a wide range of biographical positions and linkages creating and revealing a diversity of cholesterol-biographical rhythms from context to context in the interviews.

With the informed consent of the participants, the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. In the excerpts in this article all personal names are fictionalized.

I conducted interviews on the general topic of cholesterol. Each interview was flexibly focused on the ways the participants 'do' the symptomless disease and deal with the dilemma between sickness and health from situation to situation in everyday life. The structure of the interviews were open to the interviewer (me) and the interviewees. Both the interviewer (marked L in the extracts) and the interviewees were conceived as biographically active, interactionally building up shifting biographical positions (as mothers, hostesses, on vacation, etc.), making linkages

between elevated cholesterol and biographical particulars, creating cholesterol-biographical rhythms – contexts – for interactionally constructing cholesterol identities (see Gubrium 1993 for a parallel). The interviewees' biographies were not, *a priori*, predefined primarily in terms of elevated cholesterol scripts, and I did not tend to homogenize the participants' biographies; rather, I intended, with heuristic distance and strangeness, to deconstruct or 'decorp' a taken-for-granted cholesterol biography/identity, separating resources from the topic (the biography/identity), in order to explore how they construct or 'corp' it through biographical work (Zimmerman and Pollner 1971). As a co-creator, I was interjecting myself into the interviews, moving between biographical positions as for example a sociologist, a physician, a daughter of a mother with elevated cholesterol et cetera, suggesting and offering up contrasting and possible ways of 'doing' elevated cholesterol, providing and suggesting 'identity stories'/biographical resources, encouraging the interviewees to make new and ever-emergent linkages between elevated cholesterol and biographical particulars. For example, I replied: "Are there situations in which you manage the cholesterol in a different way?" Or I suggested: "My mother used to manage the cholesterol this way in a situation like you talk about; do you recognize that?"

An interview guide (elevated cholesterol in daily living, treatment, hypercholesterolaemia roles, and the meeting with the doctor) was used to enhance the interviews' interactive and constructive format, not so much as a procedural directive as a conversational basis for prompting the participants' variety of biographical shifts and situational linkages. In some interviews, certain guide items became the crux for diverse linkages, while in other interviews guide items receded into the background as participants made linkages with biographical particulars in other directions, setting their own rhythms and agendas of the interview. The sequence and relevance of interview guide items were determined more by the linkages the biographically active participants made and their interactional, swinging dance with shifting rhythms in the conversation than the appearance of the items in the guide.

This way of conducting the interview – focusing on both biographical resources and shifting biographical (identity) positions (whats) on the one hand and the activity (hows) in which biographical resources are situationally applied on the other – mirrors what I, in below paragraphs, refer to as the analytic program of analytic bracketing and the interview approach of active interviewing, which, in turn, mirrors the applied analytic concept of biographical work.

I transcribed the interviews and built up context- and practice-sensitizing codes of shifting cholesterol identities in the interview, sensitive to biographical positions, various linkages and shifting rhythms of the interview practice and everyday life.

This indicates that I brought constructionist sensibilities to procedural work and analytic strategies which provided the opportunity to view how the participants with elevated cholesterol ongoingly accent biographical work.

Throughout the research process I approach the interviews as 'active interviews' (Holstein and Gubrium 1995); events of constructing talk-in-interaction, language practice and collaboration in which the interviewees – as competent active subjects rather than passive vessels of answers – ongoingly build up and give voice to biographical positions (as a mother, a wife, a guest, etc., referring to the rhythms of mothering, etc. in everyday life) through which they build up accounts for – create

indexing contexts for – constructions and accomplishments of the cholesterol biography and its variety of situational cholesterol identities in everyday practice (see also Baker 2003). The active interview both reveals biographical work (interpretive practice), and refers to and operates as interpretive practice in its own right.

The interview approach of ‘active interviewing’ works in step with the analytic strategy of ‘analytic bracketing’ (Gubrium and Holstein 1997; 2009), analyzing biographical work as a form of interpretive practice. Analytic bracketing means that I alternately shift back and forth between the whats (substantive biographical resources, which means medical regimens held up against absent bodily signs, substantive conditioning rhythms, and substantive cholesterol identities) and the hows (the artful biographical activity through which biographical resources are used and cholesterol identities are constructed) of biographical work in the empirical material. I am momentarily and temporarily bracketing – setting aside – the hows in order to investigate the whats and vice versa, back and forth as the analysis proceeds. The ongoing analytic moves between hows and whats mirror the interplay between hows and whats of biographical work (interpretive practice) (Gubrium and Holstein 1997).

For example, a phenomenologist or an interactionist approach – in step with an emotionalism- or naturalism-oriented analytic strategy and conventional interview approach (Holstein and Gubrium 1995) – would tend to portray a stable, substantive, ‘real,’ authentic, and accurate report of the participants’ cholesterol biography, their meaning, acts, interaction or experience, not so much the interplay of whats and hows of identity-making. Analytic bracketing does not operate as a phenomenology-based ontologic bracketing of ‘natural attitudes;’ rather, it refers to ongoing methodological moves revealing the ongoing interplay of whats and hows of a biographical work never separate from contexts and practice (Gubrium and Holstein 2009).

Biographical work: Linkages with biographical rhythms of everyday life

The participants face the dilemma: absence of bodily signs – maintained bodily skills – does not challenge existing rhythms of everyday life (the rhythms can be maintained) while the social consequences of medical regimens (cholesterol monitoring, medication recommendations and dietary restrictions) may challenge existing rhythms.

On the one hand, “there’s nothing,” “it’s just there” and “you can’t feel it,” as the participants put it, do not challenge the rhythms of everyday life. On the other hand, medical regimens may challenge roles and rules in everyday life, rhythms of enjoying life, rhythms of partying, rhythms of being a guest, rhythms of vacationing, et cetera. On the one hand, “a failure at everyday life ... in the familiar and a taken-for-granted balance between the subjective experience of one’s own body structure and function ... and one’s knowledge, as a competent member of some collectivity, of what is normal experience or conduct under the auspices of that collectivity” (Dingwall 2001:123). On the other hand, the (expected) failure at everyday life is absent. “To be sick, you know, is not to be able to manage what you have always been doing,” Jane accounts, holding absence of bodily signs (which does not challenge everyday rhythms) up against the number and diet that shake the taken-for-granted harmony of

the rhythms of day-to-day life. The number “makes people a little hysterical ... and of course, you should be careful not to eat everything and so on ... but despite that, no... I didn't focus on it. You don't feel that you are sick,” she concludes the dilemma. The absence of bodily signs on the one hand and the number and treatments on the other draw in either direction.

This portrays their ambiguous dilemma – their ongoing point of departure so to speak. The participants – who and what they are – are tensely sandwiched between health and sickness. Linkages – and the unclear identity – may be drawn in several directions. The dilemma prompts – manifests as – continuous navigation work of adaptation. In what empirically follows, their navigation work ongoingly build up temporally episodic cholesterol identities that balance medical regimens against situated rhythms of everyday life. Neither medical regimens nor rhythms of everyday life can be challenged and stretched too much. Their navigation work – biographical work – refers to artful linkages between medical regimens (held up against symptomlessness) and rhythms of biographical particulars that create the contexts (cholesterol-biographical rhythms) for accomplishing cholesterol identities.

The participants ongoingly adapt and adjust medication and dietary restrictions – in a variety of shifting versions – to be in step with shifting rhythms in everyday life. Carl demonstrates a dilemma between cholesterol-lowering pills and dietary restrictions challenging his day-to-day rhythms on the one hand and maintained bodily skills (absence of symptoms), being able to maintain the rhythms of building a kitchen in his cabin and the rhythms of fishing (not challenging the rhythms), on the other. He adapts medical regimens (he does not take medication nor change food) to – making linkages with – the rhythms of working, the rhythms of building a kitchen, and the rhythms of fishing, continually. He “will live as he has always been living” in step with existing day-to-day rhythms of daily life. Through this navigation work – a biographical work of linkages – he ongoingly builds up cholesterol identities in step with the shifting rhythms of everyday life, creating a cholesterol-working-identity, a cholesterol-fishing-identity, et cetera.

The rhythms come in layers and multiple forms as they are used in linkages and take on different meanings in different situations. They are mixed and combined; biographical positions of being a hostess or a guest further specify the rhythms of pleasure that further specifies the rhythms of social gatherings, et cetera. Biographical particulars and rhythms of everyday life presented in the following are not exhaustive of linkage options; rather, I will present three heuristic examples that exemplify biographical work – three examples of the way linkages between elevated cholesterol and rhythms of biographical particulars create contexts for constructions of cholesterol identities.

Example 1: Biographical work in step with the rhythms of vacationing

In step with the rhythms of vacationing, the participants create a cholesterol-vacationing identity. On vacation, Paul links the dilemma of absent bodily signs and medication regimens with the rhythms of vacationing, creating a cholesterol-vacationing rhythm that works as a context for creating a cholesterol-vacationing-identity. This reveals biographical work. In the following excerpt he (P) demonstrates how the dilemma of cholesterol-lowering medication on the one hand and the

absence of bodily signs on the other requires adjustment of medication routines (he takes medication at home) in the light of the rhythms of vacationing. On vacation he had a break from the cholesterol-lowering pills, drawing upon the 'rules' of vacationing and the fact that he could not feel it:

P: We were in New Zealand on vacation in the entire month of November, and I had forgotten to bring the pills with me. So then, I didn't take the medication.

L: Yes.

P: And then I started to take them again when I came home on the first of December.

L: OK. What do you think about that ... you had forgotten to take the pills with you and you didn't take them?

P: Well, how do we put it ... if I had forgotten the arthritis pills, then it would have been painful like hell, right? But, well, you know ... basically I'm as happy if I don't take the cholesterol medication as if I take it. I don't feel any difference. Nothing. I didn't feel it the month I didn't take it, you know ... You know, the cholesterol number, it's just there.

He is switching between the regular day-to-day rhythms at home and the rhythms of vacationing, adjusting medication regimens in step with shifting rhythms in everyday life, ongoingly doing biographical work through which he constructs cholesterol identities for the purposes at hand; a home-cholesterol-identity, a vacation-cholesterol-identity, et cetera. Similarly, many participants, for example, Jane, adjust dietary restrictions on vacation, linking the dilemma of absent bodily signs and dietary restrictions with the rhythms of vacationing, navigating the dilemma against vacation rhythms of eating pleasurable food, modifying dietary restrictions in step with vacationing rhythms, creating a vacation-cholesterol-identity: "On vacation we cheat on the diet."

Similarly, Gladis shows how she navigates the dilemma of absent bodily signs on the one hand and the pills on the other, adapting medication regimens to the rhythms of visiting her daughter and the rhythms of grandmothering and family life. She makes linkages with these rhythms, creating contexts for biographical work through which she creates a visiting-grandmothering-cholesterol-identity: "We have two children and grandchildren in Copenhagen (some hours to drive from home) and if we visit them and all of a sudden change our minds and stay overnight, then I've not taken the medication with me. But, I don't feel that. So, of course I cheat on the medication then." The rhythms of grandmothering and family life further specify the rhythms of visiting. Gladis adjusts and adapts the treatment to be in step with shifting rhythms of being at home (where she takes medication) and the rhythms of visiting and grandmothering, revealing biographical work.

Example 2: Biographical work in step with the rhythms of social gatherings and enjoyable life

In a variety of ways the participants illustrate the way dietary restrictions (for example low-fat cheese, carrots with raisins, and nuts) are navigated against and linked with – adjusted in step with, conditioned by – the rhythms of social gatherings

(partying, entertaining, visiting, being a guest, etc.), further specified by the rhythms of pleasure, fun, joy and beauty, pleasurable, enjoyable eating habits, and social eating rules and conventional food habits. Rhythms of pleasure and enjoyable eating habits might also specify rhythms of enjoyable life in daily living. Navigating medical regimens in step with the rhythms of pleasure and beauty, the friends Anne and Tina, for example, “put some jam on the low-fat cheese,” or the participants eat “a small amount of the real products” – for example, a “real” cheese instead of the “rubbery” cheese – as many put it, or food that makes them feel satisfied and warm “down to their toes,” prompting a bodily pleasure, as the siblings put it. In this way, the participants navigate medical regimens in step with the rhythms of pleasure, creating a pleasure-cholesterol rhythm, shaping a pleasure-cholesterol-identity in daily living.

Moving to the biographical positions of being a guest in step with the rhythms of social gatherings, the participants demonstrate, in a variety of ways, how they navigate – balance – dietary restrictions against rhythms of pleasure, fun, enjoyable food, and social eating rules and roles and food habits, taking “just one spoon of the gravy” and “one serving instead of two.” They make linkages between medical regimens and for example rhythms of partying and being a guest combined with the rhythms of pleasure and social eating rules and roles, creating cholesterol-partying-pleasure rhythms, et cetera for constructing a cholesterol identity for the purpose of being in step with these rhythms. For example, Gladis adjusts dietary restrictions to fit the rhythms of partying and being a guest, drawing upon the absence of bodily signs (she cannot feel it), and social eating rules (she does not want to be blamed), roles and habits. That way she navigates the dilemma of symptomlessness and dietary restrictions against the rhythms of social gatherings, adjusting dietary restrictions (which she follows at home) in the light of rhythms of partying, creating a rhythm of cholesterol-partying that works as a context for biographical work through which a cholesterol-party-identity is constructed:

L: What if you attend a party or other kind of gatherings or...?

G: Then we eat regular food just like everybody else. We don't care then (laughing).

L: What do you think about that?

G: Nothing. I ... just eat like everybody else. I don't want to be the only one invited for dinner, sitting there at the table and saying, “I don't want this and I can't eat that and I don't tolerate that.” Then I just eat like everybody else, perhaps a little less than ... MAYBE. But, I can't feel that I cheat with the diet sometimes.

Gladis adjusts the diet, adapted to the rhythms of being a guest: She takes for example a little less, but she takes what she is served and acts within the limits of what is socially acceptable. This navigation work refers to the biographical work through which she creates one cholesterol-identity in step with the rhythms of regular food habits at home and alternative cholesterol-identities in step with the rhythms of social gatherings.

Moving to the biographical position of eating out, the friends Anne and Tina link elevated cholesterol with the rhythms of eating out, social eating rules and pleasure for the purpose of not being blamed, appropriately being in step with social demands of eating out, and enjoying the fun and beauty of life. Through their negotiated

navigation work, navigating between medical regimens and the rhythms of eating out, they create, through collaboration and negotiations, an eating out-cholesterol-identity:

T: Look, when I'm at home, I can leave out the cream, I can have it like that, but well, when we're eating out, I just don't realize that I can leave out the cream. I just don't do that. I don't allow myself to do that.

A: No, then...

T: And someone would notice and make a big deal about it... When you're eating out, it shouldn't be like you can't eat the food if you can't take the extra fat off.

A: No, no, sure. If I'm eating out and we have sandwiches with butter, then I eat them, definitely. And, I don't do like this [demonstrating] and take the butter off.

T: That's exactly what I'm saying; when I'm eating out, then I eat what I get served.

A: Well, sometimes when we have been to the gym together, you know, and after finishing the exercises we have a sandwich with shrimp and such stuff, and usually they don't skimp there. They use real butter because of their reputation, you know (briefly laughing), but then I've sometimes asked the chef there to prepare a sandwich without butter for me, and that's no problem, it's acceptable to do that, I think.

T: Yes. But as I told you, when I'm eating out and have a sandwich with shrimp with flavor, prepared with love and it looks beautiful, then...

A: Yes, sure.

T: ... I say, if I just occasionally have one like that, that's okay.

In the above excerpt, Anne and Tina negotiate the temporal rhythms of eating out and the social rules that count, "occasionally" or "sometimes" happening; it depends on occasional rhythms. They negotiate the way they can navigate elevated cholesterol in step with the rhythms of eating out. Through these negotiations they make linkages between elevated cholesterol and the rhythms of eating out, balancing medical regimens against the rhythms of eating out, further specified by the rhythms of social eating rules and pleasure. That way they co-construct eating out-cholesterol-identities brought into being during social interaction. Their biographical work does not end; they continue to negotiate ever-emerging eating out-cholesterol-identities. There are many linkage options and many options for this identity. They demonstrate the way biographical work is interactional and ever-emerging, always in motion, never self-evident, always at work.

In the following extracts Ivy (I) is continually moving between different biographical positions, starting in step with the rhythms of being home, moving to the rhythms of "being out and about," moving to a party, being a wife at the party, a guest at the party, moving to the rhythms of entertaining and being a hostess, ongoingly switching and combining these biographical positions, ongoingly creating a range of cholesterol-biographical rhythms for the creations of a variety of cholesterol identities, sometimes combined cholesterol identities like a wife-guest-cholesterol-identity, maybe several cholesterol identities at the same time, always in step with the rhythms of social gatherings further specified by the rhythms of social eating rules for the purpose of, for example, not being blamed or impolite. This demonstrates the ways she ongoingly does biographical work, demonstrating ever-emerging alternative

cholesterol identities. There are many linkage options – a variety of different rhythms – that ongoingly draw the cholesterol identity in many directions as her biographical work proceeds. At home Ivy follows a dietary schedule but...

I: ... then we're out and about, you know, and it's hard to keep it up one hundred percent, even though I want to.

L: Yes. You're out and about?

I: Yes.

L: And then?

I: And then, you get a little something extra, you know. And then we sometimes have guests etc., etc.

(Biographical work in step with the rhythms of eating out and being a guest:)

L: How does it work if you are eating out, for example, in a restaurant or...?

I: If my husband's there, I can take for example vegetables from his plate and we can change a bit.

L: OK.

I: And, if we are eating out and we have something that is reeeeeeally fat, then I leave it. It's not impolite to leave it, right? It isn't, I think. But, you know ... because you're polite, well, you know what, you taste a little bit of everything, you know.

L: But, I have talked to someone who ... if they have guests or are eating out or this or that, then they eat what everybody else eats, ... but you don't do that?

I: No, well, if we are eating out and there is only sauce and potatoes and meat, only, you know, well, then I take two pieces of meat and only one potato. And, ... I can perfectly well take vegetables without people making a big deal about it because they think I'm on a diet. It's not impolite to take vegetables, right? Right. And, I take ONE spoon of the gravy, only, and if we're eating out I can just sit and take a nibble of the food. And, I don't have two helpings.

(And then we move on to the rhythms of entertaining:)

L: I remember you talked about this last time we talked together and you told me that when you had guests you tried to adapt the food ... you told me that you had vegetables and you served meat and gravy for the guests.

I: When we have guests, I would prepare meat and gravy, potatoes and vegetables. I wouldn't treat the guests poorly. When I serve food for guests it's always salad or boiled vegetables included. And then, I can have vegetables. ... For example, yesterday, our grown-up children and their families were here for dinner, you know, and, well, I had prepared salad, and they had gravy and potatoes, and I had meat and salad, you know, I don't have potatoes and gravy.

Ivy demonstrates the way the participants construct a variety of shifting cholesterol identities, modifying and balancing dietary restrictions against the rhythms of biographical particulars in relation to social gatherings. She makes linkages between dietary restrictions and the rhythms of social gatherings, creating a range of cholesterol identities – an 'out and about'-cholesterol-identity, a wife-party-cholesterol-identity, a guest-party-cholesterol-identity, a hostess-cholesterol-identity, a hostess-mother-cholesterol-identity, et cetera – in step with the rhythms of social gatherings. Nancy, one of the siblings, is echoing the construction of the hostess-cholesterol-identity: "If I have a party I use real cream in sauces and dressings, I

don't skimp. I wouldn't treat the guests poorly." Similarly, Gladis (G) is echoing the hostess-mother-cholesterol-identity: "You do cheat on your diet when you have guests and our children are visiting us. Then you prepare food like everybody else, right? But in daily life, then we don't get much fat." Gladis is ongoingly biographically active, shaping a regular daily life-cholesterol-identity ("then we don't get much fat"), switching to a mother-hostess-cholesterol-identity and so on.

Example 3: Biographical work in step with the rhythms of familial relationships

The participants link the dilemma of elevated cholesterol with the rhythms of familial interaction; the rhythms of being a sister and a brother, a friend, daughters and sons, the rhythms of mothering and grandmothering, the rhythms of having grown-up children visiting, the rhythms of being a "good wife." Through biographical work – literally in the interactional interview setting with the sisters and brother and the friends – they create cholesterol identities in step with the rhythms of biographical particulars and positions as sisters and brothers and friends, using these conditions as resources for constructing the cholesterol identity. As Ivy and Gladis have demonstrated, they create a cholesterol-mother-hostess-identity in step with the rhythms of mothering further specified by entertaining.

The two sisters and their brother navigate medical regimens in step with co-constructed (negotiated and existing) rhythms of familial food traditions further specified by the rhythms of being a sister and a brother and the rhythms of being daughter/son of their mother's food traditions, making linkages with these rhythms, literally co-constructing familial-cholesterol-identities. They negotiate the way they "need to" step out of their dietary schedules of lettuce, raisins, carrots and cucumber, preparing gravy and meatballs "like their mother made them;" on the one hand, they are required to follow dietary restrictions, while on the other hand, they are required to enjoy their shared familial food traditions, not living too frugally. The rhythms of familial relationships and familial food traditions might be further specified by the rhythms of (bodily) pleasure and aesthesis, enjoyable and beautiful food. They ongoingly navigate and construct a shared story of their familial-pleasure-cholesterol-identity through biographical work in which medical regimens are linked with – modified by – negotiated and co-constructed rhythms of familial food habits.

In the following extract Anne (A) and Tina (T) move on to the rhythms of family life; they 'do' elevated cholesterol in step with the rhythms of being a wife and the rhythms of homemaking:

T: Well, I'm married to Peter Peterson...

A: Yes (briefly laughing).

T: ... and he wants meatballs cooked his way. ... When he's cooking, the only part I can control is that I try to leave the butter off my helping before he puts a big lump of butter in the pan.

A: Yes.

T: So my meatballs don't soak up extra fat.

A: Well, I have an advantage because [her husband] doesn't cook. He eats whatever I make (laughing).

T: Well, look, when I was working, he cooked every day and he fries in all that stuff, pork chops fried in butter and all that stuff. Trimming. I'm married to Peter Peterson and he wants butter on the pan.

A: Yeah. Sure.

T: But, you can easily do your frying, well, ... you just need to have non-stick pans so you don't need to put so much butter on it.

A: Yes, you can do that. Is it a non-stick pan?

T: Eh, no, but it doesn't soak up much fat. When I take my pork chop I can add a lump of butter on his, and it'll work all right.

What we see is that Tina and Anne negotiate possible ways they can navigate medical regimens against the rhythms of cooking, homemaking and being a wife. Through these negotiations they demonstrate how they continually do biographical work, shaping a cholesterol-cooking-identity, a cholesterol-wife-identity, a cholesterol-wife-homemaking-identity, et cetera.

Moving to the biographical position of being a friend, Anne and Tina adapt medical regimens to rhythms of friendship further specified by existing rhythms of the fun and joy of social gatherings, rhythms of being out biking together and drinking Irish Coffee together. Anne (A) makes linkages to these rhythms, creating friendship-cholesterol-identities:

A: Sometimes I like to enjoy life, having fun.

L: OK. And enjoying life, fun, what's that?

A: Well, that's, for example, an ice cream when we're out biking together and your friends enjoy an ice cream.

L: Yes.

A: You know, and when we drink our Irish Coffees together with friends I would like to have some cream on it, you know, and such things.

Anne and Tina demonstrate the way they create the friendship-enjoying-Irish Coffee-cholesterol-identity and the friendship-ice cream-cholesterol-identity to be in step with temporal rhythms ("sometimes") of Irish Coffee and ice cream together with friends, indicating also the way these cholesterol identities are two among a variety of situated cholesterol identities brought into being through biographical work.

The vocabulary of biographical work has demonstrated the way cholesterol identities are continually in flux, elastic, and flexible as people with elevated cholesterol figure into shifting roles (mothers, hostesses, vacationing and so on) for the purposes at hand: being in step with shifting rhythms of mothering, entertaining, vacationing, et cetera at the same time as they comply with medical regimens.

Stretching the cholesterol identity – the elasticity of compliance

What do we learn from this analysis and its discussions of the applicability of the analytic concept of biographical work, which has been applied as a minimalistic, non-totalizing empirical framework and enterprise? Applying the analytics of biographical work to a symptomless disease has demonstrated the way the cholesterol identity comes in multiple alternative forms rather than one single and fixed identity. Biographical work is not arbitrary though. Biographical work has no free play. What this article provides is a discussion of the ways the participants stretch the

medically available cholesterol identity, constructing a cholesterol-mother-identity, a cholesterol-guest-identity, a cholesterol-vacationing-identity, et cetera. The dilemma and the rhythms of everyday life challenge the participants to do what is needed, creating locally nuanced, diverse and biographically informed forms of medical regimens. This opens to discussion the way institutional, discursive images – medical regimens – work as templates and formula identity stories for constructing identities in and through everyday moral contexts in a discursive give-and-take. Based on this, I will discuss four lessons.

The first lesson relates to the moral tone of their biographical work (Gubrium and Holstein 2001). The participants' biographical work directs attention to the way an institutionally-available-discursive-cholesterol-identity story, provided through medical regimens, set the conditions of possibility for reflexively formulating and reformulating, assembling and accomplishing cholesterol identities in and through competing and conditioning contexts (rhythms) that index the institutional identity story from situation to situation through the discursive practice of medical regimens (Garfinkel 1967; Foucault 1977; Gubrium and Holstein 2000). To what extent is the cholesterol subject a strictly dictated moral puppet and to what extent an agent who acts at liberty with free moral will? Medical regimens and the (institutional) cholesterol identity might be seen as 'going concerns' (Hughes 1984 [1942]); there is as much 'going' in the cholesterol identity as there are 'concerns.' That way the cholesterol identity is neither a product of free will nor is it uncontrollable or tyrannically dictated by institutional formula stories.

The second point relates to the way the participants' biographical work leads us to discuss the way a constitutive or productive power might work – seen but unnoticed – as the other side of medical knowledge in and through discursive medical regimens in biographical work (Foucault 1977; Gubrium and Holstein 2000). Biographical work might operate in a form of panopticon, not as a totalized deployment of subjectivity, not a totalized version of panopticism that dictates usage of medical regimens and in which the medical-institutional story of the cholesterol identity – power – appears to be the only possibility; rather, a less totalized, ethnomethodology-inspired version of panopticon in which power is produced and reproduced through competent and self-disciplined navigation of medical regimens against biographical particulars, literally producing and reproducing a 'healthy, normal body' – 'life' – from the dilemmic cholesterol body.

Third, biographical work can be seen as an analytic and conceptual defence against the assumption that people with elevated cholesterol have one morally uniform, hegemonic and homogeneous cholesterol identity or cholesterol role (Gubrium 1993). The idea of biographically active patients goes beyond a stereotype of a cholesterol-patient-identity separate from social contexts and practice.

Fourth, biographical work can be seen also as a conceptual defence against – it resists, and precludes – judgement of 'correctness' of management of elevated cholesterol (Gubrium and Holstein 1997). With the concept of biographical work, the participants are not 'judgemental dopes' (Garfinkel 1967), neither dictated by medical regimens as external social directives and forces or internal motives, nor judged against absolute, *a priori* moral standard of health promotion policies. Rather, the participants seem to operate within a moral environment between institutional medical regimens forming a bio-medical cholesterol sick role based on biological norms, on the one hand and lay cholesterol roles of being healthy as much as sick

embedded in social norms, on the other for keeping and ongoingly reestablishing a social place with stable social bonds from the unclear symptomless position (Freidson 1970; Goffman 1971). This gap or contradiction possibly mirrors and expresses what Bloor and Horobin (1975) refer to as a 'double bind.' The active interview approach applied might accommodate and reveal these contradicting expectations, with me and other participants in the interviews figuring moral entrepreneurs/enforcers (Becker 1963).

Drawing upon the ethnomethodology-oriented approach including Garfinkel's, et cetera clause (see also Wieder 1974), the vocabulary of biographical work reveals the participants' elasticity of compliance with medical regimens. Producing and reproducing medical regimens in multiple versions through linkages with biographical particulars, they adequately comply with medical regimens in shifting rhythms in everyday life. The cholesterol identity comes into being in the forms of a compliance-cholesterol-mother-identity, a compliance-cholesterol-guest-identity, et cetera. The medical concept of compliance (Conrad 1985; Trostle 1988) exists through the varying everyday biographical-cholesterol rhythms that work as contextualizing indexes – 'morally adequate accounts' (Monaghan 1999) – that create ('index') compliance. With this perspective, noncompliance is not at issue. The participants are not recalcitrant. The participants need to comply with rhythms of everyday life as much as medical regimens and vice versa. This resists judgements of compliance/noncompliance as moral standards. This implies, in turn, a reflexive critique of the medical concept of compliance as a moral standard. "The theories used by both 'laymen' and 'experts' are accorded an equal status" (Dingwall 2001:124). The analytic vocabulary of biographical work is intended to help discuss this and provide a moral vision of it. Through biographical work, elevated cholesterol might be seen as a work of everyday normalcy/compliance as much as deviance and noncompliance (Voysey 1975).

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Book Review:

Dialogical Self Theory. Positioning and Counter-Positioning in a Globalizing Society by Hubert Hermans and Agnieszka Hermans-Konopka. Cambridge University Press, 404 pages, 2010

In *Dialogical Self Theory*, Hubert Hermans and Agnieszka Hermans-Konopka introduce self as a dialogical entity, which emerges from social, historical and societal processes and which overcomes the classical dichotomy between individual and society. Dialogical self theory is a new way to approach questions typical to psychological and sociological research, although, the idea of the book is to provide a general analysis of dialogical self based on pragmatism, and Bakhtin's ideas about the role of dialogue in human sciences. But, as the writers say in the beginning of the book, they want to go even further than the pragmatist or the dialogical tradition has gone by analyzing the questions related to the nature of self and the dialogical processes. It is the basic idea of the study to analyze the formation of self and identity in the context of globalization, and also to present some practical ideas concerning organizations, conflict-resolution and questions connected to motivation. According to the writers, they attempt "to generate new ideas" (p. 19), not to formulate testable hypotheses. By doing so, their intention is to integrate various views presented in sociology, psychology and human sciences and sketch out a broader framework, which they call a dialogical self theory, as the title of the book reveals.

The study consists of six long chapters, which are like parts in a long journey into the basic questions of dialogical approach. The analysis starts from globalization and continues then to the historical formation of identity and to the different forms of self and identity. A rather large part of the book considers positioning theory and its fundamental concepts. This is understandable because the whole idea of the book is to broaden our view of self both spatially and temporally. According to Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, "the self and identity can only be properly understood when their spatial and temporal nature is fully acknowledged" (p. 120). Because of this, they present a detailed analysis of the theory of dialogical self theory. It differs essentially from postmodern self theory, for there is no wall between the internal life of the self

and the social world outside of self. In the final chapters of the book, the writers consider emotions from a dialogical point of view and some practical implications of their theory. This inspiration to practical considerations comes from pragmatist tradition, which also underlines the connection between theory and practice. On the whole, the study provides an exciting journey into various social scientific, psychological and philosophical studies that are seen as important building blocks of dialogical theory of self.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book is the analysis of the historical development of identity and self. It contains a wide variety of different views about cultural development, globalization, psychological questions typical to the modern world system, uncertainty and the differentiation of positions in relation to action. This analysis belongs mainly to the field of sociology, but the psychological and social psychological dimensions are also important to notice. The fundamental idea of the analysis is to connect wide societal and global processes to the individual level of action. Because individuals belong to the states and global world, it is important to pay attention to this point of development. Hermans and Hermans-Konopka's analysis shows the meaning of global development for the study of dialogical self theory. Although, they do not, for example, refer to Mead's ideas about the role of international relations, internationalism and politics, which are similar to their views. Actually, Mead's internationalism or cosmopolitan ideas can be seen as an attempt to analyze the globalization development and his concept 'the generalized other,' which refers to individual's relation to society. Perhaps it could be said that the global community around us is, for us, the modern version of 'the generalized other,' which would also be in harmony with Hermans and Hermans-Konopka's views.

There is no room here to analyze all the details of argumentation in Dialogical Self Theory. What is essential for the analysis is that the writers show the meaning of positioning and counter-positioning as a fruitful starting point for further analysis considering the questions typical to globalizing society. An interesting dimension in dialogicality is that we also have a dialogical relationship to ourselves, not only to other people around us. Especially this side of dialogicality makes it possible to construct a dialogical self theory. According to Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, such phenomena (e.g., self-conflict, self-criticism and self-agreement) means that there is a "basic similarity between the relationships among people and the relationship between different parts of the self" (p. 127). They also refer to William James' psychological self theory as a starting point for further analysis on the questions connected to the dialogical processes inside the human mind. Positioning and counter-positioning mean that we are able to change our views, take distance to some questions, form coalitions with other persons and create new solutions in a dilemmatic situation, where two positions are in conflict. The analysis ends with a list of main features of 'good dialogue,' which underline some fundamental principles of good communication as the recognition of social power and the role of misunderstandings.

The main goal of the study is to show the conceptual potential of the dialogical self theory for the understanding of psychological, organizational and societal processes connected to globalization. The developmental dimension of dialogical self theory is an important part of the analysis in order to see the developmental role of dialogicality, while the last two chapters of the book deal with emotions and the practical implication of dialogical self theory. The developmental perspective makes

sense of the developmental roots of dialogicality in an individual's life. The analysis starts from the early years of an infant's development and continues to the different phases of the socialization process. As a result, a multi-level model for the development of the self is constructed. According to this model, important life events and subjective responses determine the development of the self. Emotions have a special role in the development because they have a double position in our action. Emotions can namely change self and self also has the potential to change the emotions we may have. The writers present a detailed analysis of the meaning of emotions in social life: a distinction between primary and secondary emotions, an analysis on emotional authenticity and a phase model for changing emotions, which is based on dialogical movements. Perhaps the most interesting part of the study is the analysis of love as an extension of self. According to dialogical self theory, love differs from other emotions because it extends our self to other persons.

Why do we need an integrated view of dialogical self? The point comes clear when considering the recent development in psychology and sociology. Because of globalization, there is a need to understand the dynamics of social, political and historical processes. In relation to previous books on the same subject, such as Kenneth Gergen's (1991, 1999) *The Saturated Self* or *An Invitation to Social Construction*, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka's study contains some essential view points, which deepen our understanding of globalization and its psychological effects. However, there are some weaknesses in Hermans and Hermans-Konopka's study concerning the approach. Firstly, their approach to positioning is very optimistic. Although, the concept of habitus, as developed by Bourdieu, refers, for example, to the point that our action is based on dispositions, which we have internalized in our community and which are based on power structures. It also means that we have a very limited capacity to understand our actions or change our routines, and as the pragmatic social scientists have stated, our habits do not alter quickly. Secondly, while analyzing globalization, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka refer to the cognitive organization of the human mind only. Perhaps we are mentally more flexible today than some decades ago, but the globalization development can be seen as a multi-sided process based on national and economic interests. Critically speaking, positioning, as a feature of the human mind, does not provide a good analytical tool to understand these processes.

This book does not directly belong to any particular field of research. As I said before, the role of analysis is to connect different large-scale societal processes typical to globalization to psychological and social psychological studies on dialogical relationships. The book provides a highly original contribution to the understanding of these societal and psychological processes. Although, it is quite difficult to say how we should continue the analysis sociologically about different questions typical to the global world. Hermans and Hermans-Konopka's study is written with excellent style and the analysis proceeds logically from one question into the next. This conceptual clarity helps the reader to follow the main ideas of the book. The writers define clearly the basic concepts of dialogical self theory, even though the book contains a lot of information about various themes connected to dialogicality. However, the book is not just an eclectic compilation of views or examples, but an attempt to analyze the current societal situation from a new meta-theoretical perspective. In this sense, there is need to make more empirical analyses based on dialogical self theory and show the usefulness of this new approach in a more concrete way. However, first we

must know the fundamentals of dialogical self theory. Thanks to this new book we now have an understanding of these principles at hand.

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Book Review:

Material Markets. How Economic Agents Are Constructed by Donald MacKenzie. Oxford University Press, 2009

During recent decades many economists started to be interested in perspectives from outside the science of economics and scholars from other disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology or anthropology) turned their attention to problems traditionally associated with economics. Behavioral economists/economic psychologists¹ try to explain human behavior on markets (including financial markets) using concepts and theories from the field of psychology (Kahneman, Knetsch and Thaler 1986; Akerlof and Schiller 2009). Many economic sociologists have investigated the problem of social embeddedness of markets and economic actors (Granovetter 2002 [1985]). *Material Markets* by Donald MacKenzie also offers a social sciences perspective on financial markets (and on markets in general), but the perspective presented in this book is substantially different from the perspective of today's fashionable behavioral economics with its methodological individualism. Furthermore, this perspective is broader and has different aims from the perspective of many other economic sociologists. These differences will be explained in the next parts of the review.

For understanding a book, it is very helpful to know the background of the author. Donald MacKenzie is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Edinburgh. Before he focused his interests on financial markets, he made some important contributions to the field of Science and Technology Studies. Interestingly, he gained his first degree (BSc) not in any social science or humanities, but in mathematics, which certainly helps him in investigating contemporary financial markets. Donald MacKenzie has been awarded an ESRC-funded Professorial Fellowship on social studies of finance (2004-2007), which enabled him to undertake in-depth research in

¹ Terms economic psychology and behavioral economics are very often perceived as synonymous (Wärneryd 2004).

financial markets and write this book. According to the title of MacKenzie's Professorial Fellowship, this book presents a field which is labeled with the term 'social studies of finance.' One may distinguish two meanings of the term; its broad meaning refers to the application of social science methods and theories to financial markets analyses, whereas a more specific meaning of this term denotes studies of financial markets inspired by science and technology studies. Social studies of finance are presented in this book in the latter meaning of this term. However, the author emphasizes that *secretarianism is never a virtue* (p. 2). So he does not limit himself to an application of science and technology studies to the field of finance, yet he borrows concepts and research results from other social sciences (what is reflected in broad literature is used).

The aim of this book is to answer the question: *what can an approach rooted in social studies of science and technology contribute to understanding of markets* (p. 6). In my opinion, despite the fact that this book consists partly of earlier works published elsewhere, its structure helps to fulfill this goal. *Material Markets* consists of eight chapters. The first two chapters (*Introduction* and *Ten Precepts for the Social Studies of Finance*) can be treated as an introduction to the social studies of finance approach. The next five chapters (3-7) comprise case studies exemplifying and detailing concepts presented in the second chapter. The eighth chapter includes a concise conclusion where the place of social studies of finance among other social sciences and generally in society are discussed. This book also contains a short glossary of financial terms. It will certainly help a lay person understand presented ideas. Yet, I would strongly recommend to a reader without knowledge of financial markets to use not only this glossary, but also some introductory textbook on finance in order to really understand the content of this book.

As it has been stated above, the social studies of finance is an application of social studies of science and technology framework to financial markets and this approach not only differs significantly from behavioral economics but also transcends classical concerns in economic sociology. What distinguishes social studies of finance and what is most characteristic about its field? According to the author, the most distinctive feature of social studies of finance is taking into account, as stated in the title of the book, the materiality of markets. MacKenzie understands materiality of markets as their physicality, corporeality and technicality. It means that physical forms of the elements of financial markets, embodiment of economic actors, technological systems and conceptual tools are incorporated into analysis as important (or even crucial) factors.

These and other distinctive features of this approach are described in the second chapter in which the author enumerates ten precepts of social studies of finance. It must be noticed that, according to MacKenzie, this presented list of precepts is incomplete and not everyone linked with social studies of finance has to agree with all of these precepts. The first assumption is that *facts matter*. This means that facts are produced, socially constructed and they are not external entities like platonic ideas. It concerns both scientific and financial facts. The best example of such a fact in wide use in finance is London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR), which enables liquidity of the interest-rate derivatives markets. The second precept, *actors are embodied*, may seem trivial but is almost never taken into consideration in market analysis. Human beings, including traders, brokers, analysts et cetera, are limited by their body's and brain's capacities. The conjecture that *equipment* (both physical and

conceptual) *matters* is the third precept. Technological devices like computers or communication networks help to go beyond the human body's limitations and are reshaping the market, while algorithms, procedures, models and other elements of conceptual equipment are used by actors to categorize financial reality and to interact with highly complicated markets. The next precept posits that *cognition and calculations are distributed and material*. Cognition processes of combinations of human actors and objects as a whole have different properties than the sum of the cognition processes of single human actors and the former cannot be reduced to the latter. Materiality of calculation processes is easily visible in the example of advanced numerical computation in financial institutions (e.g., in risk-management), impossible without using a large set of computers. The problem of calculation is closely connected to the problem of measurement, hence the science and technology of metrology, answering the questions what and how to measure, very often plays a key role in markets. The fifth precept, *actors are agencements*, is derived from one of the pioneers of social studies of finance, Michel Callon² (and Caliskan 2005:24-25 cited in MacKenzie 2009:21), who defined *agencement* as *socio-technical arrangements when they are considered from the point of view of their capacity to act and to give meaning to action*. These *agencements* are constituted not only by human beings and social networks, but also by non-human objects like equipment, technical devices, algorithms or other conceptual tools. That approach has a few important virtues. It implicitly poses the question of attribution of agency, which is very often connected with gender. It also suggests that an actor should not be perceived as having fixed natures and characteristics. Finally, by tracing the make up of an economic actor, it can prevent social scientists from focusing only on high-status human beings (*action's glamorous agential peaks*) and turn the attention to less high-status persons. The statement that *classification and rule following are finitist processes* is the sixth precept. Finitists assume that every rule is flexible and rules are not just applied, but rather interpreted and reinterpreted. There are no two identical cases, so every time we categorize an individual case we have to make a decision interpreting a rule (e.g., it has very important implications for accounting). In these interpretations we are limited by other people and by technical devices. The seventh precept, *economics does things*, has been the main topic of another MacKenzie book (2006). Economic models included in technical and conceptual tools influence actions of people regardless of their knowledge about these models – these models become parts of *agencements*. The eighth precept, *innovation isn't linear*, is the refutation of the thesis that innovations are simply deduced from implications of scientific discoveries. One of the sources of financial innovation is economics, yet financial innovation is also affected and shaped by other factors like legal structures, politics or culture. This non-linearity of financial innovation implies the next precept – *market design is political matter*. Due to the assertion that financial innovation is not a linear result of economic discoveries, but depends on many others factors, politics shaping the financial innovation process and its outcomes becomes possible. According to the tenth precept, *scale isn't stable*, social studies of finance remains sceptical to the presumption that 'macro' phenomena stays big and 'micro' phenomena stays small. As studies of science and technology have shown, details and technicalities are very often ones that matter. In my opinion, this chapter is the

² And Callon borrowed this concept from Deleuze.

most important chapter in *Material Markets* because it presents, in a very concise and accessible way, the main ideas of social studies of finance.

The next five chapters are case studies and show the application of the aforementioned precepts to studying markets. These chapters will be summarized only very briefly here. The third chapter comprises the results of MacKenzie's and Ian Hardie's research on hedge funds (short-term observation in one of the hedge funds and interviews with people working in or with hedge funds) nowadays, which are very important actors of financial markets. The notion of *agencement* is applied in this research and the hedge funds are treated as socio-technical combinations. The author describes the legal and political context in which hedge funds function, the social organization of work in hedge funds, its infrastructure and its distributed, multi-site cognition processes. This chapter shows, that the application of the concept of *agencement* to financial markets, if selective, can really broaden and enhance our understanding of economic action.

The fourth chapter is an introduction to the field, which can be labeled as sociology of derivatives. Derivatives are relatively new financial instruments of rapidly growing importance. Because of their construction, they are 'abstract' and 'virtual.' However, as it was stated above, even virtuality has a material effect, thus material production of virtuality is explored in this chapter. The author limits his analysis to only three aspects of this process; innovations, impact of culture and 'facticity.' Similarly to technological innovations, financial innovations are not linear and are influenced by the science of economics and other factors, but they are more sensitive to the tax system than technological innovations and the legal protection of innovative financial products is very limited. Despite the globalization of financial markets, local cultures of trading and legal boundaries still have an impact on production of this virtuality. Facts crucial for derivatives, like LIBOR, have to be perceived as adequate representations and as resistant to manipulation. However, the last financial crisis resulted in LIBOR losing its status of fact in the perception of some economic actors.

The next chapter, co-authored by Ian Hardie and Daniel Beunza, concerns arbitrage – the practice of benefiting from price discrepancies between two or more markets. This chapter is based on three main data sources: participant observation in the trading rooms of global investment banks supplemented by in-depth interview, 26 interviews with arbitrageurs and the data from the abovementioned study of hedge funds. It should be noted that the definition of arbitrage in social sciences is broadened and more realistic than in financial economics because the latter excludes demand of capital and involvement of risk. The central idea of this chapter is that the price is a 'social thing,' which indicates materiality and sociality of prices. Prices always have to take physical forms and the speed of their mobility is essential for arbitrage. Arbitrageurs' capacities and equipment also matter. Sociality of the process of arbitrage means that social relations among people practicing arbitrage and between arbitrageurs and others (e.g., their managers or clients) need to be included into analysis.

In chapter six, the author focuses on the processes of measuring profits. This study shows the importance of lower counterparts of accountants, book-keepers, who have never been a subject of social science research. If the notion of finitism is applied to the field of accounting, it turns out that it is book-keepers who play a key role in preparing corporate accounts. According to finitism classifying does not mean

automatically following the rule, but it means making decisions in every case. As Bloor (1997:19-20 cited in MacKenzie 2009:29) states, *We could take our concepts or rules anywhere, in any direction*. But, there are some constraints which determine the process of classification. Both social and technological factors should be recognized as these constraints (e.g., training and habit, organizational context, technological systems). Hence, this chapter uncovers a very interesting and significant field, which requires deeper exploration.

The last case study, presented in the seventh chapter, concerns not financial markets in a narrow sense, but markets in general. The author examines the emergence (or maybe creation is a better word here) of markets in pollution permits. Imposing tax or fixed limits on contaminators are another means to cutting down pollution, but, thanks to combining 'left-wing' care about the environment with satisfying 'right-wing' pro-market sentiment, constructing emission markets is politically more attractive than taxation or fixed limits. Designers of emission markets, economists and politicians, have to reach many decisions concerning both fundamental problems and small technicalities. But, the latter cannot be omitted, because, as it has been mentioned earlier, technicalities also matter and can determine success or failure. The designers of such markets, for example, have to decide how to allocate allowances and they have to choose a system of measurement. The author underlines the need for adequate politics of market design, which pays attention not only to overall virtues and flaws of market solutions, but also to technopolitical specifics.

In his conclusion, MacKenzie emphasizes two main interconnected points of social studies of finance. Firstly, the market cannot be treated as a singular entity, what divides politics in 'pro-market' and 'anti-market' (with the 'third way' between them). Market itself, as policy tool, is neither bad nor good. There is no one single market, but many different markets exist. The shape of these markets depends on technologies, politics, ways of constructing economic agents, their design and so on. And here, we come to another main point of social studies of finance. Technicalities do matter (it is well described in the example of emissions markets). What is often omitted as a small technicality, left for specialists and as unimportant in comparison with more general political disputes, is often crucial for the final outcome.

The author also discusses the place of the social studies of finance among other social sciences. He does not claim that this approach *supplants previous approaches* (p. 180). MacKenzie insists that he does not want to compete with financial economists, just as philosophers of physics do not try to compete with physicists. Moreover, social studies of finance does not aspire to replace existing economic sociology. Rather, it is compatible with a large part of its works and theories. Investigating networks of interpersonal connections goes well together with investigating technicalities, matching 'social' with 'technical.'

Except for its academic ambitions, social studies of finance has the ambition to become a 'public social science.' The author's point of view is that this book's contribution to academic and social life is opening the black box of finance like hedge funds (as organizations), accounting or derivative markets. In the last sentence the author expresses hope that his book will be not only interesting intellectually, but also will have some consequences in real-world action. In my opinion, this book certainly is intellectually stimulating, yet time will tell if it has any impact on real-world actions. Moreover, because of its coherent structure, clear style and avoidance of jargon, this

book can be read by academics as well as by lay people. People without some background in social sciences may not be able to understand fully some specific ideas, but they would definitely benefit from reading this book.

Despite my general positive opinion about this book, I have some doubts. Firstly, it is mainly based on a large set of qualitative interviews and short-term participant observations. These techniques may be insufficient to find what is ultimately going on in reality. The author is completely aware of this lack of long-term ethnographical observation and explains that it would be extremely difficult to obtain permission to do ethnographical research in financial institutions. This does not undermine the merit of this book, but shows the possible direction of further research in the field of social studies of finance to gain a deeper knowledge.

Another doubt concerns the overall concept of social studies of finance. Reading *Material Markets* for the first time, I, at times, had a feeling that some presented concepts are simply trivial and I wondered if social studies of finance is not just a *jargon into which to translate banal description and narrative* (p. 57). One economist even labeled work connected to this approach as *nerdish case studies* (Beunza 2010). It puzzled me what would be the opinion of some traders, brokers or other 'insiders' about this book. Could such a person find something really interesting or new in it? However, before accusing social studies of finance and this book of triviality, the case of Akerlof's *Market for Lemons* (1970) should be taken into account. This significant and widely-cited article was initially rejected by economic journals because of its triviality (Swedberg 1990). This demonstrates how the incorporation of things, which may seem trivial, into analysis can contribute to the development of the theory. Of course, some people, after having read MacKenzie's book, superficially and selectively can think that this approach is all about how important a broker's ear is, yet I think that this book presents a coherent and interesting, although controversial, view of finance.

This is not a place to weigh arguments for and against social studies of finance. This approach can arouse some controversy, it can be liked or not, yet it is worth learning its perspective. Therefore, I recommend reading this book, which is an excellent introduction to social studies of finance, especially to persons academically or professionally linked with the financial markets. They should read this book not necessarily to become followers of social studies of finance, but to learn this interesting perspective and maybe to change their view of markets a little, as did the author of this review.

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Book Review:

Erotic mentoring: Women's transformations in the university by
Janice Hocker Rushing. Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press, 2005

Erotic mentoring, by late Janice Hocker Rushing, explores gender dimensions of academic institutions with the use of qualitative research of personal stories of life in academia. It focuses on some patterns of female university careers, especially the role of male mentors, and the results of those relations on women themselves. The book might be read as a multibiography of numerous female academics representing a few generations of women finding their space in academia, thanks to the narrative style used by the writer and the universal character of the subject.

One of the objectives of this book was to reveal hidden aspects of women's experience in the academia, to point out how everything being 'feminine' intrudes university career pathways, how women have to bury it deeply – and how necessary it is to uncover that. The starting point for reflection on the subject was the author's own mid-life crisis, experienced after reaching the top of her career. Overcoming that crisis was possible only thanks to the analysis of its deep roots, internal conflicts faced by female academics, being buried deeply in the private sphere of the 'feminine.' As the conflict is experienced by the majority of academics, the book should also help them in understanding their own dilemmas, defining and solving problems and avoiding some of them in the future. Before she started her research, Rushing had discussed with other women their everyday health problems, but did not associate them with those dilemmas, now she offers to discuss those internal conflicts before psychosomatic diseases signal the problem.

The book is about women, deliberately, as the 'feminine' aspect is still absent from the collective vision of academe. This book aims to encourage the inclusion of the feminine aspect into its vision of academe not only for women to live fully as individuals in and of themselves, but also for men, who similarly are expected to suppress their feminine sides. It is also a form of compensation for Rushing's previous cooperation in the process of exclusion and undervaluation of 'feminine' in favor of 'masculine.'

The text ostentatiously sets scientific writing standards aside. Its author declares her knowledge of the rules, and finally conforms to them, but indicates her

reservation. Being a professor in communication, specializing in gender studies and myths, she doesn't aspire to the specialization in research methods, but lets her husband lecture on that subject. The research is considered by the author as only filling requirements of quasi-social scientific study. However, her choice of new ethnography as a methodological paradigm is deliberate.

Rushing situates her method as new ethnography, autoethnography or personal narrative. She tries to fulfill Harold Lloyd Goodall's definition of new ethnography, as "creative narratives shaped out of a writer's personal experiences within a culture and addressed to academic and public audience" (2000:9). Such an attempt needs the use of standards of creative writing, as well as standards of accurately representing the reality. Rushing purposely avoids dryness of academic prose replacing it with a literary style that makes reading passionate adventure; where the general is contrasted to the personal and research results are juxtaposed with particles of everyday experience of the author: her conversations with her husband and recollections from the past.

Rushing calls her research 'archaeological,' an attempt "to dig up shards of what lies beneath the surface, piece them together into whole figurines, and make inferences about a culture that still remains mostly in the dark" (p. 8). The research includes her own experiences, observations made during years spent at university, or even earlier, and other women's stories; gathered through intensive interviews conducted during several years with women from a wide variety of fields, ages, geographical regions, countries and ethnicities ranging from students to professors and from deans to a university president. The research results include not only 'real' tales, but also some stories adopted from movies, literature, autobiographies, biographies, music, and dreams. Rushing shaped some separate interviews with different interlocutors into the voices of 'composite characters,' condensing several stories into one.

What made the research results universal is the interpretation of women's individual and collective dilemmas in academia by their interpretation through ancient myths. These are the myths that help to illuminate how women live and work within the academy and, in particular, how they relate to men and to academia as a masculine institution.

The book is divided into three parts, the first and second concerning those relations, while the third part shows how women attempt to build a self that is not dependent upon men. The three parts represent three different sets of stories that may be articulated in the language of myths.

The first part tells the tale of the 'Man-Made Maiden,' being an account of women's stories of relationships to actual men. Most of these relations are sexual, either in fact or in tone. The man-made maidens are essentially roles that women play in a man's search for his role. They have both payoffs and pitfalls for the academic woman, but they do not result from her own search for self. Unless she progresses beyond them, she tends to remain dependent upon the man – or upon the patriarchal structure of the university. The heroine follows the pattern of abandoning the role of daughter, becoming muse, mistress and beloved brainchild, as Athena born from Zeus' brain, following the fate of Galatea and Persephone. The muse, or mistress, is in opposition to the wife, her role means avoiding the mother in herself and sacrificing her femininity and ambitions for the male mentor, playing the role of almighty father and Pygmalion. The sexual aspect of that relation does not, however, mean a woman's sexual satisfaction, as sex in such relation is treated as purgative, and female hunger has to be controlled.

The second part of the book focuses on 'fatal attractions.' This term, quoting the title of a once popular movie, describes a close relationship between resisting and perfecting the male ideal within the academy. Such a pattern includes trying to gain independence and success by asserting women's own sexual dominance by hiding their femininity from view or by becoming toughened warriors who fight for their rights. The figures of *fatal attractions* are personified into a Siren, Veiled Woman and Amazonian. Each of these figures asserts her own power, but still may capitulate unknowingly to men's expectations; or may even become an enticing target for their domination. The *Siren* openly uses her sexual powers to seduce, the *Veiled Woman* covertly employs her hidden femininity to charm, and the *Amazonian* separates from men and becomes a warrior. She breaks away from the plots that men write for her, but often ends up acting just as strictly according to their script. These figures are named *fatal attractions* because they offer the woman a path to power that may, in the end, prove to be a mirage. Each of them has their own downsides. The *Siren's* power is limited only to her sexuality and can evoke domination from men, the *Veiled Woman* ends up either as 'respectable' or 'whore-like', and the *Amazonian* often becomes a target for men who boost their heroism by conquering or bedding her.

Where does one look for a model which wouldn't lead to failure? The process of gaining stabilization is described in the third part of the book, titled *One-in-Herself*, after the term coined by Esther M. Harding. Rushing states that women should search for themselves in the myth of the ancient goddess *Virgin*, remembering that the ancient meaning of this adjective was completely different and meant a woman who was autonomous, whole and free. Only following her example leads to real fulfillment of contemporary female academics. For Rushing, the traces of old goddesses may be found in another Greek myth, the myth of Eros and Psyche. This myth may be used to symbolize the model of how a woman can become one-in-herself without final separation from men, making self-fulfillment possible without resignation from one's ambitions or love. This complex process is illustrated by three stages of Psyche's marriage, her labors and, finally, a divine child. This mythological metaphor shows women how to develop their own self by lighting a lamp in the rooms that have been closed to them; so that they may see their own dark marriages to men and to the numerous possibilities of a woman building self-in-relationship that does not deny 'feminine' ways of being and that makes possible the birth of their most creative gifts. Only following the pattern symbolized by Psyche's myth, may an academic woman find a 'voice of her own,' which is necessary after obtaining a 'room of her own,' demanded by Virginia Wolf a century ago.

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Author – Supplied Abstracts and Keywords

Robert Prus, University of Waterloo, Canada

Morality, Deviance, and Regulation: Pragmatist Motifs in Plato's Republic and Laws

Abstract

Envisioning morality, deviance, and regulation as enduring features of human group life, and using symbolic interaction (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969; Prus 1996; Prus and Grills 2003) as a conceptual device for traversing the corridors of time, this paper asks what we may learn about deviance and morality as humanly engaged realms of community life by examining Plato's (420-348 BCE) *Republic* and *Laws*.

Focusing on the articulation of two model communities, with *Republic* primarily under the guidance of a set of philosopher-kings and *Laws* more comprehensively under the rule of a constitution, Plato considers a wide array of matters pertinent to the study of morality, deviance, and regulation.

Thus, whereas many social scientists have dismissed Plato's texts as the works of a "utopian idealist" and/or an "ancient philosopher," *Republic* and *Laws* have much to offer to those who approach the study of human knowing and acting in more distinctively pragmatist sociological terms.

Indeed, because these two volumes address so many basic features of community life (including morality, religion, politics, poetics, and education) in extended detail, they represent particularly valuable transhistorical and transcultural comparison points for contemporary analysis.

Although the products of a somewhat unique period in Western civilization (i.e., the classical Greek era, circa 700-300 BCE), Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* are very much studies of social order. Plato's speakers, in each case, clearly have notions of the moral order that they wish to promote, but, to their sociological credit, they also embark on more distinctively analytic considerations of the broader processes and problematics of humanly engaged life worlds.

Still, given the practical restraints of a single paper and the extended relevance of Plato's texts for the topics at hand, readers are cautioned that the present statement focuses primarily on those materials from *Republic* that most directly address deviance and regulation and mainly the first six books of *Laws*.

Employing Prus and Grills (2003) depictions of deviance as a series of generic social processes as a contemporary reference point, the paper concludes with a consideration of the relevance and contributions of Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* for the study of morality, deviance, and regulation as fundamental features of human group life.

Keywords: Morality; Deviance; Crime; Regulation; Plato; Aristotle; *Republic*; *Laws*; Pragmatism; Symbolic Interaction; Agency; Community; Justice.

James Sutton, California State University, USA

An Ethnographic Account of Doing Survey Research in Prison: Descriptions, Reflections, and Suggestions from the Field

Abstract

This article presents an ethnographic account of my day-to-day experiences as a survey researcher in men's prisons in the United States. I outline challenges I encountered in the field and share personal reflections on interviewing people who are incarcerated. I then put forth a series of implications and suggestions for those who plan to conduct similar studies.

Researchers' firsthand accounts of the data collection process and research settings are crucial because they provide instruction for other scholars. Yet, these aspects of doing research are conventionally ignored in survey researchers' scholarly publications. Accordingly, this article presents an examination of my work as a survey researcher through an interpretive frame, calls for reflective approaches to conducting quantitative research, and provides a primer on doing research in prison settings.

Keywords: Field Research; Survey Research; Total Institution; Incarceration; Prison; Ethnography; Reflective Research.

Chris Hardnack, University of Oregon, USA

More than an Activist: Identity Competition and Participation in a Revolutionary Socialist Organization

Abstract

How do activists manage life commitments and membership in a radical social movement organization? Starting with the assumption that activists are 'more than activists' who have personal lives that can affect their movement lives, I use identity theory to analyze how competition among identities influences participation in the organization to which they belong. I also assess how the collective identity of a revolutionary socialist organization affects the personal identities of activists. This movement identity is labeled 'socialist identity' which must then compete with other identities that the activist may possess. The methods used were modified life history interviews of former and current members, participant observations, and content analysis of the organization's documents.

Keywords: Social Movements; Identity Theory; Identities; Case Studies; Activists; Socialists.

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"Keeping up with the Joneses." A sociological content analysis of advertising catalogues with the eye-tracking method

Abstract

Is it possible to look at something without actually noticing it? Is it possible to see something in the picture that is not really there? The answers to these philosophical questions can be obtained by comparing the results of eye-tracking tests combined with interviews based on sociological theories. The answers, however, have more than the philosophical dimension in that they can provide insight into everyday processes of social perception and its application, also for commercial purposes. In the design phase of the present study, we chose a popular advertising folder available for free for the average consumer. While showing the selected photographs to the respondents (all the pictures included people portrayed during everyday activities), we asked them to pay particular attention to the situations presented. Afterwards, each participant took part in a standardised interview. In our view, the conclusions formulated on the basis of the obtained results are relevant not only to the investigated catalogue, but can also be treated as an indicator of how people usually browse through advertisements and what kind of inferences they make about the world on that basis. While most attention should be given to watching the advertisements, we constitute our dreams of a perfect life, environment and the items that furnish it.

Keywords: Erving Goffman; Eye-tracking Research; Visual Analysis; Qualitative Research.

Lina Hoel Felde, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Elevated Cholesterol as Biographical Work – Expanding the Concept of ‘Biographical Disruption’

Abstract

The concept of ‘biographical disruption’ has been a leading framework for studies of the experience of chronic illness. A symptomless chronic condition – bereft of bodily signs – does not similarly present biographical disruption. People with elevated cholesterol are healthy at the same time as medical regimens signal sickness. The empirical material presented in this article, based on interviews with people with elevated cholesterol, suggests that a more appropriate metaphor could be ‘biographical work’ in such instances. The aim of this article is to discuss how people with the symptomless condition of elevated cholesterol continually construct elevated cholesterol in everyday life doing biographical work along shifting contexts. The vocabulary of biographical work constructs a subject who is continually working on building situationally-appropriate identities embedded in the shifting contexts of being sick or not sick. The article shows how people ongoingly ‘do’ elevated cholesterol, creating a mother-cholesterol-identity, a guest-cholesterol-identity et cetera, navigating the dilemma of absence of bodily signs (signaling healthiness) and medical regimens (indicating sickness) against shifting rhythms of biographical particulars in everyday life. Linkages of medical regimens with the rhythms of mothering, vacationing, being a guest et cetera create contexts – ever-emerging ‘cholesterol-biographical rhythms’ – for accomplishing and stretching the cholesterol identity from situation to situation, being adequately compliant with medical regimens.

Keywords: Analytic Bracketing; Biographical Work; Biographical Disruption; Compliance; Ethnomethodology; Medical Sociology.

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