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Editorial: Qualitative Understanding and Variety of Qualitative Approaches

The second issue of the first volume of *Qualitative Sociology Review* is a continuation of our initial idea to present diversity of theories, methods and techniques which are applied in social sciences aspiring to understand studied phenomena.

As Krzysztof Konecki presents in his introduction to the first issue, qualitative sociology is something more than a kind of method. It is a way of thinking about social world, the way of considering human being as an active part of the never-ceasing process of society becoming. Therefore a variety of approaches among current qualitative sociology schools cannot be reduced to a composition of different techniques of data gathering and analyzing. The variety is in fact a response to the multiplicity of processes, events and other elements of the phenomenon called society. To apply one of these diverse approaches in qualitative sociology means to choose one of diverse aspects of studied phenomenon, to decide about the way of conceptualization of its elements, to find inquiry used for description and explanation and, at the end, to select style of presentation for audience composed of other researchers. To apply one of these approaches means then – to choose the way of understanding.

In this issue, as well as in the whole journal, we intend to answer three questions: what specific aspects of social world are studied by qualitative researchers, what kind of approach they apply and finally, as a consequence of these first two questions, how they try to understand others and themselves?

In the first article Barry Gibson, Jane Gregory and Peter G. Robinson present theoretical intersection between two, dissimilar approaches and propose combination of systems theory and grounded theory. Authors begin by contrasting and outlining differences, then they explore potential connection and point out four types of intersection: the effectual intersection, the operational intersection, the intersection of primary redundancy and the global/transcendental intersection. They conclude with a proposal and discussion about possible emergence of a grounded systems methodology.

Pirkkoliisa Ahponen aims to explain how individuals make sense of their identities and define presence in their own social world and she focus especially on the phenomenon called everyday heroism as a reflexive construction connected with

biographical episodes during individual life courses. The author approaches the problem from a phenomenological perspective by interpreting autobiographical data and her considerations are developed in the general context of reflexive modernisation.

The third article, written by Tim Berard, is a qualitative socio-legal study with a special reference to hate crimes. The application of the Membership Categorization Analysis to examine hate crimes legislation, makes this paper very important and valuable not only for law & society inquiries but also for ethnomethodological/ conversational analytic studies and all qualitative social researchers interested in social problems discourse and constructionist social problems analysis.

Finally, Constantinos Phellas explores the problem of sexual identity and relationship between self-identification based on sexual orientation and ethnic minority membership. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, author studied situation of Greek and Turkish gay men living in London and now presents result of his research which may be useful for those who recognize sexual identity as a contextual, negotiated and self-constructed phenomenon.



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The intersection between systems theory and grounded theory: the emergence of the grounded systems observer

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to outline how a theoretical intersection between systems theory and grounded theory could be articulated. The paper proceeds by marking that the important difference between systems theory and grounded theory is primarily reflected in the distinction between a revision of social theory on the one hand and the generation of theory for the social world on the other. It then explores figures of thought in philosophy that relate closely to aspects of Luhmann's theory of social systems. An effectual intersection, an operational intersection, an intersection based on the concept of primary redundancy and a global/transcendental intersection between systems theory and grounded theory are proposed. The paper then goes on to briefly outline several methodological consequences of the intersection for a grounded systems methodology. It concludes by discussing the sort of knowledge for the social world that is likely to emerge from this mode of observation.

Keywords

Systems theory, Luhmann, grounded systems theory, grounded theory

Introduction

The title of this article, to those familiar with Luhmann's theory of social systems, is paradoxical. Luhmann (1990a) has stated that one of the underpinning ideas of his theory, that of observation and distinction is not intended to "provide a grounding for knowledge, but only to keep open the possibility of observation of operations' being carried out by very different empirical systems – living systems, systems of

consciousness, systems of communication.” (Luhmann, 1990a: 78). So why would someone observing Luhmann talk of “grounded systems theory”? What could that mean? The following paper aims to explain this paradox.

The paper itself has emerged out of an empirical study into the meaning of oral health related quality of life (Gregory, Gibson, and Robinson, 2005). In this study an affinity between Luhmann’s social systems theory and grounded theory was discovered. The emerging combination of theory and method accounted for the variation and change in “everyday” communications about oral health. The combination of grounded theory and systems theory however demands further observation. The results of this analysis are presented in this paper.

For the researcher new to Luhmann the biggest problem to confront is how to deal with the emerging complex of analytical strategies being deployed in a multitude of communications. These communications are often on directly applied substantive problems such as love (Luhmann, 1986), ecological communication (Luhmann, 1989), risk (Luhmann, 1993) or Political Theory in the Welfare State (Luhmann, 1991). Alternatively, there are other sets of communications aimed at a general analysis of for example *The Differentiation of Society* (Luhmann, 1982), the Problem of self-reference (Luhmann, 1990b) or the influence of the laws of form on Luhmann’s thinking (Baecker, 1999; Luhmann, 1999). Alternatively one can of course begin with Luhmann’s own outline of his theory of Social Systems (Luhmann, 1995).

It is not unreasonable to suggest that the variation in paths for discovering Luhmann can lead to variable applications of his work (Andersen, 2003). Approaching his theory from the general perspective of say social differentiation (Luhmann, 1982) may well lead the observer of Luhmann to focus more on system environment differences and on the relationship between structure and time (Luhmann, 1995: 288-89). Other routes into his theory might involve the idea of self-reference and autopoiesis (Luhmann, 1995) or through consideration of the various implications of Spencer’s Brown’s *Laws of Form* (Luhmann, 1999; Spencer-Brown, 1969) for his approach to the analysis of social communication (Baecker, 1999). Andersen (Andersen, 2003) outlines five different discursive analytical strategies applicable to Luhmann:

- form analysis, where the unity of communicative distinctions are analysed along with their paradoxes
- systems analysis, looking at the emergence of social systems and their boundary maintenance
- differentiation analysis, here what conditions the emergence of systems and how they differentiate is the subject of analysis
- semantic analysis, where the analysis is based on the condensation of meaning to form pools of distinctions that are then available for systems of communication
- media analysis, where the shaping of various media are analysed and discussed in their potential for organisational formation (adopted from Andersen (Andersen, 2003).

The method being proposed relates closely to both form and semantic analysis. It is therefore not suited to the analysis of media, systems or their differentiation. The

five paths from Luhmann obviously suggest that his analytical strategies have significant potential for the production of a wide variety of sociological analyses. A grounded systems approach is therefore likely to be only one among many.

The variability in readings of Luhmann is further evidenced through some of fruitful applications of his approach for example, Qvortrup's (2003) "Hypercomplex Society". This work aims to substantiate and defends Luhmann's idea of a shift in social order from a theocentric to a polycontextrual society. In the latter form of social semantics the hypothesis is that society can no longer observe itself from a single observational point but rather it must operate with a large number of positions of observation each drawing on various codes for observation (Qvortrup, 2003). There is no centre for society but rather a hypercomplexity of positions of observation. This work contrasts with Fuchs (2001) who sets Luhmann alongside network approaches to communication in an extensive analysis of essentialism. It is likely for a theory so broad and complex that there will be many ways to open it to empirical application. As a result this paper will make no claim to any exclusive rights on Luhmann.

The constructivism of Luhmann marks a shift from structural functionalism (e.g. Parsons) to a functional structuralism (King and Thornhill, 2003). In his scheme the contingent use of function contrasts directly with traditional functionalism wherein social norms and institutions were explained by their beneficial effects on the reproduction and survival of society. Luhmann's systems are primarily communication systems that do not evolve in any purposeful or rational way and indeed may or may not become functional (King and Thornhill, *ibidem*). The functional structural turn in his theory leads to the centrality of contingency and "emergence".

His approach, embracing contingency as it does, is unusual amongst the particular group of theories associated with attempts to understand the changing nature of society as a process of social differentiation (Alexander and Colomy, 1990). It is well known that this group of theories has continually struggled with the problem of producing very general and abstract theory. This is particularly the problem with aspects of Luhmann's theory of social systems which itself often appears "remote from the traditional settings" of sociological theorising thus furthering the "scepticism of those who feel that its 'entry rights' to social theory are prohibitively high" (Clam, 2000).

These problems in systems theory contrast sharply with debates concerning the grounded theory method (Charmaz, 1995; Clarke, 2003; Dey, 1999; Dey, 2004; Glaser, 1978; Glaser, 1992). There have been a series of papers that have criticised grounded theory for not specifying its theoretical "underpinnings". Some of these have made their own suggestions from the soft constructivist approach of Charmaz (2000), critical realism (Downward, Finch, and Ramsay, 2002; Yeung, 1997) and even feminist standpoint epistemologies (Kushner and Morrow, 2003). Others have been more vocal, arguing that grounded theory fails to address more fundamental problems such as the theory laden nature of observation, the nature of categorisation in science (Dey, 1999; 2004) and the problem of reflexivity (Denzin, 1997; Hall and Callery, 2001). The debate has evolved so much that it is now even suggested that there is no such thing as grounded theory but many forms and ways of doing grounded theory (Dey, 2004).

Contrary to this trend, Glaser's communications over the last twelve years have continued to argue for just "doing" grounded theory (Glaser, 1998). This focus has often given his writing a specific tone centered on the operational aspects of the

method and a rejection of the “forms” of grounded theory which have subsequently emerged (Glaser, 1992; 2002; 2004). In his perspective the method should be kept “unpolluted” and free from “preconception” (Glaser, 1992; 1998). The centrality of the distinction between “preconception” and “emergence” indicates that there is something that remains to be said about the method. Often his responses have been met with a kind of exasperation and even bewilderment (Bryant, 2003). Yet it seems quite clear that Glaser (1992) sees grounded theory as a method that in its purest form it should be kept free from all forms of “ontological” pollution. This was his first objection to Strauss (Glaser, *ibidem*) and continues to be the basis of his objection to others (Glaser, 2002; 2004).

This paper will explore the implications of the argument that grounded theory is “operationally” grounded. If we accept this then we feel that Glaser’s notion of grounded theory has some very close affinities with Luhmann’s constructivism. We suggest that like systems theory, the grounded theory of Glaser (Glaser 1978; 1992) might be easier understood within a post-ontological tradition. If the roots of Glaser’s (Glaser, *ibidem*) grounded theory requires clarification, and we certainly think it does, it is along these lines.

The intersection involves understanding the important differences between systems theory and grounded theory whilst also articulating some of the key aspects where a link between them could be developed. Systems theory, as a general theory, generates certain expectations about what is observable whilst grounded theory as a method for observing gives directions on how to look at the world. If there is to be a theoretical and practical intersection between systems theory and grounded theory the latter, in essence ought to have operations that fit and work within the expectations generated at the general theoretical level.

The paper draws on Clam’s (2000) reflections on the operation in Luhmann. These discussions are useful because they help expose the centrality and simultaneously underdeveloped nature of the operation in his theory. These reflections are central to this paper which is as much in conversation with Clam as it is with Luhmann. Apart from this obvious influence we will also draw on Esposito’s analysis of the two sided form of language (Esposito, 1999) and Luhmann’s work on constructivism (Luhmann, 1990a). Whilst the argument is restricted to these points of observation it is important to realise that there is no doubt that other points of contact could be developed.

The contrast between social systems theory and grounded theory

Luhmann’s social systems theory involves a categorical “radicalization” of systems that are “...‘non-real’, purely ‘actual’... containing nothing and made of nothing but operations” (Clam, 2000: 63). His approach was based on a profound and explicit concern with theory building after the “rupture of the ontological tradition” and “from the beginning his project is very clearly one of a post-metaphysical theory of society” (Clam, 2000: 64; King and Thornhill, 2003; Luhmann, 1990a). In contrast Glaser (1978; 1992; Glaser and Strauss, 1967) has been concerned with providing a method for generating theoretical communications that are firmly rooted *in* and *for* the world. Luhmann’s focus involves a categorical revision of social theory whereas Glaser’s involves a focus on the generation of theory *for* the social world with minimal reflection on the theoretical status of what it discovers. Within Luhmann’s approach the sociological concept of action was faced with sustained criticism for the

assumptions it made about issues related to the identity, internal consistency and “ontological firmness of the acting subject” (Clam, 2000; Luhmann, 1990a). The predominant dependence on the notion of a privileged and dignified actor was rejected in an attempt to break with ontological ways of theorising. This is certainly clear when one looks at his constructivism closely (Luhmann, 1990a). Luhmann had “an acute consciousness of the need for non-metaphysical frameworks for the description and comprehension of ‘what is’” (Clam, 2000: 43).

The principal difference between systems theory and grounded theory is related to the difference between an explicit and implicit notion of immanent rationality. Luhmann’s perspective took him away from the world aiming to provide a revision of such rationality. Grounded theory on the other hand became disengaged from such concerns becoming very much “engaged” within “the world” of everyday rationality. Both perspectives have a sense that the world is organised. The systems theory of Luhmann, however, is a theory about how that organisation emerges. In this theory the problem is there to be explained; in grounded theory such organisation is there to be discovered. In a very simplistic way therefore the conjunction between systems theory and grounded theory involves understanding their principal difference, based as this is, on the distinction between revision and discovery. Luhmann’s social systems theory has been preoccupied with revision. Grounded theory, on the other hand, discovers itself, in the form of grounded theories, at the end of its own operations. “Glaserian” grounded theory has been constantly engaged in order but has singularly failed to provide an explanation for the emergence of that order.

The intersection between systems theory and grounded theory

Whilst the principal difference between systems theory and grounded theory on one level could be articulated as the distinction between revision and discovery, they both share an appreciation of the de-ontologization of the world. For Luhmann this developed into a profound awareness, whereas for Glaser (1978; 1992; 1998; 2002; 2004; and Glaser and Strauss, 1967) it has remained more a kind of intuition. Luhmann’s social systems theory and Glaser’s grounded theory were written in very different époques of sociological endeavour. Part of the task of comparison therefore involves recognising that both carry some of the intellectual differences associated with the époque within which they were developed.

We would like to suggest that Luhmann’s general theory of social systems could have four intersections with the method of grounded theory; an effectual intersection, an operational intersection, an intersection based on the concept of primary redundancy and a global/transcendental intersection. These intersections are significant because on the one hand we have a general theory of social systems which can help guide our expectations of what might emerge when the world is observed and on the other we have the method of grounded theory which explains how to look at this world. If the intersection is found to be potentially fruitful we would like to suggest that it subsequently becomes possible to suggest a revision of grounded theory within the framework of a general theory of social systems.

Distinction and emergence: the effectual intersection

Traditional ontological positions tend to observe through the use of closed unities the use of the term “individual” being a point in case. Categories in such theory operate in an attempt to capture aspects of human experience or social interaction which are then believed to be encapsulated in the form of the definition. Luhmann’s approach to theory attempts to supersede such approaches since it is focussed on the centrality of distinctions operating behind communications. The approach developed from the work of Spencer Brown (1969) and also related to the work of Derrida (1982) who uses asymmetrical distinctions with a positive and a negative term. In each distinction the positive side of the distinction is the side which the system recognises and in which the operations of the system occur and becomes known as the “indication”. Observation in communication systems always carries the shadow side of the distinction at the heart of the observation and so both moments of observation are “effectuated” in the operation of observing. For example, science as a social system concerns itself with establishing the truth in so doing it cannot avoid also designating that which is false. A distinction is “self-contained” because it “needs nothing more to exist than its moments united in one sole act: effectuation” (Clam 2000: 68). We would like to suggest a link between this notion of effectuation and the intuition of Glaser to “just do”.

Whilst “just doing” grounded theory the most basic distinction is the distinction between what is currently marked as theoretical and what is not. Traditionally a grounded theory emerges from “coding” or “marking” of incidents and the constant comparison of “incidents” to further “incidents”. Observation occurs by noting down similarities and differences in observations of observations. In other words a statement or observation is marked/indicated and then summarised by a second observation. As observation continues similar incidents might be observed and these are either noted as similar or different. Incidents which are similar do not indicate further variation whereas incidents that are different need to be noted for either indicating variation in existing codes or suggesting the development of new codes. Anything which is not yet coded remains to be integrated into the theory through constant changes in its structure. Therefore the theory is solely justified by the performance of its operations it is through the “effectuation” of its operations that the grounded theory “emerges”.

In grounded theory the theoretical structure “emerges” then fades only to re-organise itself during the operations that constitute it. This has already been noted as problematic from the perspective of classical logic (Dey, 1999). Dey (ibidem) takes some time to explore the “elastic” nature of grounded theory categories explaining that perhaps it would be better to see them as fuzzy sets? We would like to suggest that an alternative route to understanding grounded theory can be forged that builds on Luhmann’s notion of the operation, based as this is on the marking of asymmetrical differences.

The comparison needs to be qualified. In systems theory systems emerge from the effectuation of an asymmetrical distinction that lies at the heart of indicating in all communication. Whereas we have found that grounded theory is itself “effectuated” and discovered in its own operations. Therefore the focus of systems theory on explaining how systems are effectuated might tell us what to *expect* concerning the relationship between grounded theory communications and their immediate environments. Systems theory could then act as the general theoretical programme within which a modified grounded theoretical approach could be developed. In short, the recommendation is that grounded theory should be observed through Luhmann. The first theoretical intersection at the point of effectuation is closely related to the

next one which involves an understanding of the notion of the form in its adequate manner.

Redundancy and variation: the operational intersection

Amongst the other figures of thought that relate to Luhmann's social systems theory is Aristotle's act theory of the soul. Clam (2000) relates the work of Aristotle to Luhmann's theory of social systems through a discussion of "the realisation of a form in its adequate manner", the:

metaphor that bears the whole interpretation is that of a whirlpool maintaining the stability of the form through the flow of matter. (p. 72)

The operational intersection involves understanding the difference between the protological and the operational level. The difference is between descriptions of "untemporal, time-inaugural emergence" of things versus concrete events. The empirical world is "a world of cooled out derivatives", contrasting with originatory structures (Clam, 2000: 72). In the "cooled out world", reality cannot comprehend the protological. This might explain the central tension in this paper between an aspect of systems theory, which is formed on the protological level, and the production of grounded theory which itself emerges within the world of cooled out derivatives. The metaphor of a whirlpool is best suited to capturing the circular nature of operations as well as the derivative nature of the resulting "cooled formations". Once again Aristotelian act theory is understood in a de-ontological way because this:

establishes the problematic on an empirical operative ground and draws on the contingency and (evolutionary) variability of the form as opposed to its supposed incorruptible ideal sameness. (Clam, 2000: 72)

Luhmann's conception of the operation which in turn has "no guarantee of ontological identity and stability" is very similar to this figure of thought (Clam, *ibidem*). The key question concerns how order is possible at all. The "protological differentialist formulation" of Luhmann in this context would indicate that:

each difference that scratches the surface of the world tends, from its prime event on to iterate in a way that builds a nucleus for redundancy as well as for variation. Redundancy is the basic variation enabling process, while variation is the marginal one... Each operation, from moment to moment, either confirms further the form, or inflects its wrapping movement and prepares the possible (not necessary) emergence of new forms. (Clam, 2000: 72)

Systems theory, if understood in this way, can equip us with the "expectations" that the outcome of observing would emerge into a world of "cooled out derivatives". Conversely the *process* of *doing* grounded theory would be formed on the basis of the prime event (observation) towards the emergence of a nucleus of redundancy - a communication. On the protological level grounded theory emerges from the "hot" process of observation, resulting in "fixed" forms or categories. In these terms the marking of categories enables the process to see further variation, which can in turn be fixed in further categories and so on. Variation is therefore determined by, and marginal to, the process of categorisation. As observations are performed they either

tend towards further redundancy or result in fundamental shifts in the theoretical structure. The result is a theory that “captures” greater and greater variation in terms of its own redundancy. The “elastic” nature of categorisation in grounded theory has already been recognised as deeply dissatisfying within the ontological tradition (Dey, 1999). The theoretical intersection with systems theory would suggest that this should be “expected”. We would expect categories in the grounded theory process to reproduce order, generate redundancy and allow for variation.

In our study everyday forms of communication about oral health were observed to have settled around the distinction concerning whether oral health was relevant or not (Gregory, Gibson, and Robinson, 2005). In the “whirlpool” of communications we discovered other forms for example there were communications that were associated with distinguishing between natural and unnatural oral health. This distinction emerged when pictures of different smiles from the “Hollywood” smile to those which were close to the grotesque were introduced into the conversation. These stimulations can be said to have resulted in observations about the authenticity of the smile based as this is on the form of natural/unnatural. Nonetheless no matter what secondary form emerged (there were seven in all) each of the communications in the conversation would eventually return to the relevance of authenticity for the observer.

Our analysis was based on marking the indications in the conversation and then looking for the other side of the distinction either within one conversation or in other conversations. The distinctions were interchangeable a designation that is very close to that indicated by Glaser (1978; 1992; 1998). The distinctions that emerged generated considerable redundancy i.e. they could be seen readily in all communications that followed. What was also interesting was that there was also tremendous variability in how they could be deployed in conversations.

The operational intersection can also be explained by returning to the differences in systems theory and grounded theory. Fundamental to Luhmann’s systems theoretical explanation is an understanding of operations as the basis for “flowing process with no real anchoring in things. A structure reflects just the temporary redundancy tendencies of operations, with “enslaving” effects upon certain operative sequences” (Clam, 2000: 73). As we have seen, an appreciation of the operations in grounded theory indicates just how redundancy generates variation and at the same time how communicative structure emerges out of observation. This intersection links closely to the next one. In Luhmann structures emerge as a result of operations building greater and greater redundancy so that a kind of primary redundancy is expected to emerge. In Luhmann this is characterised through the expectation of the “primary distinction”, a theoretical term that can be correlated with the notion of the core category in grounded theory.

Primary distinction and core category: the intersection of primary redundancy

Before beginning reflections on the status of the primary distinction and the core category it is necessary to reflect that the grounded theoretical notion of core category still contains much of the language and rationality of its époque. The core category is generated on the claim that the writer understands the main concerns of those being observed. This would no longer be appropriate within a truly post ontological tradition. The category in the classical way acts as a kind of container or hold-all concept and this is more appropriate to a time when the structure of things was believed to contain its object. It might be necessary to drop the theoretical notion of the category which might lead back to the sorts of problems that Dey (1999)

has explained in some detail. Our suggestion therefore would be to replace the notion of the core category with the idea of the primary distinction.

In the previous section the centrality of the operation suggests that communication forms will condensate towards a primary distinction (Clam, 2000). The closer communications are to the primary distinction the more redundant they will be. This contrasts with the drawing of distinctions in the primary stages of observing when the iteration process is said to be more "hasty". We have suggested the iterations of grounded theory produce redundancy and variation in the emergent communication. Condensation is achieved through the emergence or development of a core category and a fixed theoretical structure. This occurs through "theoretical saturation" on the one hand and a formalisation of the structure of the core category through the use of "theoretical coding families" on the other (Glaser, 1978). Theoretical saturation is nothing more than the marking of the redundancy of observations where the emerging communication anticipates what will be observed if further observations occur in the area under question. Theoretical coding families include for example, the mainline family which involved categories such as social control, recruitment, socialization, stratification and social mobility etc. (Glaser 1978). These categories were developed from a summary of common theoretical codes available within the immediate environment of grounded theory at the time. In a sense this was the way that grounded theory had incorporated the "cooled out derivatives" of sociological theory into its own operations and so was directly connected to its communicative context. If any methodological schema is to emerge from the intersection of systems theory with grounded theory, it is suggested that categories would have to be copied into the revised method by uncovering the distinctions and operations they involve. Once again the general theory can help to explain aspects of a new methodology aimed at fitting and working within its structure.

To illustrate this point if one looks at Glaser's presentation of the theoretical coding families you can see that there are sub forms of codes each placed under a thematic categorical heading (Glaser, 1978). In theoretical sensitivity the themes are a heuristic rather than a rigorous and exhaustive ordering of all the codes that can be used. Take the "identity-self" category which is said to "contain" the following: self-image, self-concept, self-worth, self-evaluation, identity, social worth, self-realisation, transformation of self, conversions of identity. If you look at these from the perspective of systems theory clearly the category can be reformulated around the distinction between what is or isn't self. A grounded systematic theory about self identity would therefore concern itself with articulating how everyday communications around the form of what is or isn't self. The reformulation of the method into a grounded systematic framework would equip the researcher with the expectation that communications about self identity may well turn around the distinction between self image or no self image, worth or no self worth. Self worth could be further subdivided into the distinction between social and personal self worth. Self realisation would become the form of re-entry of the self into itself and the transformation of the self could perhaps be analyzed as possibly the symbolic medium of self identity. If the core form of communication in an area revolves around the distinction between self and identity then the interplay of each of these forms of communication would be expected to emerge in conversations about the self.

In addition to this one of the puzzling aspects of grounded theory from a traditional research perspective has been its insistence that a theory emerges most efficiently when preconceptions are either held in check or avoided altogether (Glaser, 1978; 1998; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Glaser has often argued that the

novice researcher is the one best suited to doing grounded theory because their observation processes are not already “formed”. In some respects Luhmann’s theory of observation can help explain why such guidance might be worthwhile. In systems theory (system) identity emerges better under the conditions of an undifferentiated environment. Therefore the “difference system-environment within the system is stronger, and enhances the building of self-identity, when the environment is not already so differentiated as to impose internal complexification of the system through the differentiation of diverse roles and functions within the latter” (Clam, 2000: 73). Therefore when the environment within which the communication is being developed is highly differentiated the communication risks becoming structured by distinctions from sources not directly relevant for the building of the communication. This is known as “forcing” in Glaser’s perspective (Glaser, 1992).

The problem is that the defence of Glaser’s approach has always been on the basis of experience and the urge to “just do!” (Glaser, 1998). By bringing Luhmann to Glaser this approach can be justified through the use of the theory of observation where an indication iteratively implies a distinction which in turn can be recognised and re-entered (Luhmann, 1990a; 1990b). Forcing this iterative process of observation along pre-conceived distinctions only serves to replicate those distinctions within the form of what is being observed.

Take the example of a student who is looking at the impact of a chronic condition on quality of life if they have read some persuasive articles that discuss “coping” with chronic illness they might be “forced” to take account of the term “coping” by “reading it into” what they are observing. In the end all that has happened is that the form of observation coping/not coping has been replicated the indications and by designation the distinctions that are being deployed in the communication are ignored in favour of those already accepted in the “scientific” literature. This is not to say that the “scientific” literature is not relevant. To the contrary it is essential to observe the distinction and indication that are being made here too but as Luhmann states the most important thing is to specify the system of observation (Luhmann, 1995). This does not imply that observers do not have preconceptions Glaser or Luhmann would not say this. What it means is that care should be taken when observing to specify just what is being observed and from which direction.

A theoretical intersection on the basis of the notion of the primary redundancy is fundamental to the relationship between systems theory and grounded theory. The first central correlate is that between the core distinction and the core category. The second is the importance of the system-environment difference where the former emerges more strongly, the less the latter is differentiated.

Systems theory and grounded theory: a global/transcendental intersection

Luhmann’s dependence on Brownian methods of observation made more acute questions about the status of his theory. Questions about the level at which his theory was pitched were deemed most pressing, the problem being that it often reached a kind of “transcendental *a priori*” (Clam, 2000: 68). This, Clam volunteers, was because Brown’s logical calculus is a kind of protologic. Meaning:

an inquiry into the pre-discursive laws emerging with the most elementary position of ‘something’. These laws must be situated at a level preceding the level of expression grasped by classical logic. Protologic denotes, thus, in our context, the logic implied in the most general act of appearance or

position of a something (a form). It reveals 'our internal knowledge of the structure of the world' [Laws of Form 1969: xiii]. (Clam, 2000: 69)

As reference to Brown's protologic became more dominant, the late theory in particular became an "observation" theory. By drawing on Fichte Clam (2000) has indicated that the main problem with theorising on this level is to try and think from a position before experience, in a "transcendental" without objective firmness. Clam returns to this figure of thought through a qualified exploration of the relevance of Heidegger's doctrine of pure event (*Ereignis*).

The achieving piece of Nur-Vollzug thought is the reflection of an aspect of reality which hints towards a horizon that out-ranges, and in a way engulfs the horizon of all- and self-engulfing communication.

The world problem of world event is, however, like everything having sense, a potential object of social communication. (Clam, 2000: 75)

The grounded theory method hints that such figures of thought might well be instructive when it uses the, albeit époqually flavoured, stipulation, that "all is data" (Glaser, 1998). According to Glaser (1978; 1992; 1998) grounded theory categories emerge from the analysis of data. This has resulted in claims that grounded theory is positivist or post positivist (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) even if others see this as a kind of false problem (Dey, 2004). A more appropriate or at least potentially more useful term might be that "all is observable". Therefore everything is potentially the subject of a grounded theory communication. The method might then be seen to reach out to the sort of global understanding of systems theory. What we know, however, is that this view of communication is also self limiting. Not everything is communicable or indeed observable and "a whole stream of non communication is thus co-current to that of communication" (Clam, 2000: 75) and that such communications cannot attain to be the largest "horizon of being" (Clam, *ibidem*). Grounded theory and systems theory therefore have to "fracture" the world in order to make it communicable.

In conclusion, Clam's (*ibidem*) reflections on a qualified relevance of Fichte to Luhmann can also be used to illuminate the philosophical territory where Glaser's (1978; 1992) central intuition of the emergence of grounded theory might lie. Glaser has never explained why theory emerges other than to assert (in a characteristically circular way) to "just do". His assertions lack objective firmness and we would like to suggest that his insistence on emergence without preconception places his version of grounded theory within a kind of transcendental tradition¹. His method for generating theoretical communications is very similar to the position adopted by Luhmann to account for the emergence of social communications. These reflections prepare the way for an outline of just some of the main methodological consequences of such an intersection.

Consequences – the emergence of a grounded systems methodology?

Systems theory and grounded theory are both products of their time. A consequence of the engaged nature of grounded theory has been that it has not considered the social (communicative) status of its observations, which often give the appearance of being more "social" than "sociological". By this we mean that grounded theory has become so immersed within various professional fields of

enquiry that it has become more and more disengaged from the sociological enterprise. With the advent of Luhmann's form of systems theory we feel that there is now available a general sociological theory that would be sensitive to the operations at the heart of Glaser's form of grounded theory. Grounded theory could be refined within the sociological framework of systems theory and simultaneously a path back into the sociological endeavour might be developed. Grounded theory should remain socially engaged, that is its strength. In conjunction with this our aim has been to assess the degree to which a combination between systems theory and grounded theory can generate knowledge *for* the social world.

We are deeply sensitive to the fact that the theoretical conjunction suggested here might be asking a lot of those doing grounded theory. It is because of this that an alternative methodology is proposed. This approach would involve outlining the notion of "grounded systems observing" and the products generated might then be termed "grounded systems theory" (Gregory, Gibson, and Robinson, 2005). We would like to also suggest that the term "grounded systems theory" further doubles the original paradox since there will be considerable resistance from grounded theory to be "grounded" in anything else other than data and its own operations.

The theoretical context suggests that any proposed methodology must reflect the relation between the method, theory and its complex social communicative environment. It is erroneous to see a system as a unity containing itself. Rather, order is itself an actual difference which is often confused as a boundary. The central point is that order reflects a complex actual relation (Clam, 2000). Grounded systems observations might contribute to the systems they are supposed to be studying through the production of "condensated" communications. The implication is that at one level the production of knowledge *for* the social world involves the generation of "a difference that makes a difference" (Bateson, 2000: 272). To some extent this involves the generation of communications that become copied into various social systems as part of their internal environments. These communications can be meaningful and informative because they communicate something rather than nothing and because they reduce the complexity of communications in the environment of systems to core forms. The grounded systems methodology proposed here might improve the possibility of achieving this since it would be based on and guided by the general theory of social systems. At the same time it would also be aimed at providing practical guidelines on how to explore "complex rationality" in its "variety of forms" (Clam, 2000: 66).

The production of communications centred on core forms can fit and work within a programme of research suggested as a consequence of the theory of social systems. What is more problematic, is predicting the impact of such communications. As such the method is only going to be able to provide communications of the first, second and perhaps third order. The approach suggested would only cover a small part of the implementation of a theory that has complex and wide ranging implications. Therefore other approaches will have to be developed for an in depth exploration of systems theory.

For example, the suggested methodology might be coupled with a further methodological programme aimed at the observation of such forms at different communicative levels (Leydesdorff, 2003). Before this can be adequately addressed the notion of coupling needs to be discussed in more detail.

For Luhmann the problem of coupling is generally seen as the contribution of one autopoietic system to another. This occurs when differences in one system enters another without breaking the unity of the effectuation. So conscious material

does not enter communication materially but both consciousness and cerebral life are actuated in communication (Clam, 2000). Luhmann sees the absorption of one actualisation in the other through contribution and stimulation. An actualisation such as consciousness for example, does not imply the realisation of communication, since consciousness is not communication. Not all conscious syntheses enter communicative ones and the transformation of internal experience into communication is not automatic. In other words systemic coupling is unequal and selective, the best examples of this are given in *Ecological Communication* (Luhmann, 1989). When this occurs the conscious material has ceased to operate as consciousness and has moved to the operative synthesis of communication (Clam, 2000). The configuration of the conscious experience of communication during its own operation is described as a case of simultaneous effectuation (Vollzug). Communication is therefore continuously “underwritten” by consciousness. The implication of this for grounded systems theory are that communications formed through this methodology cannot be said to be located within an all thinking, all seeing and powerful rational actor. Rather, the observation processes would be subject to a range of communicative contingencies. The expectation should therefore be that grounded systems theory should be expected to vary in relation to the consciousness/environment relationships “underwriting” the performance of its operations.

There has been very little reflexive consideration of the processes affecting the generation of grounded theory communications. Such work would certainly help inform methodological expectations for an emerging grounded systems theory. One problem might relate to linguistic contexts. Grounded theory nominalisations are often use active aspects of gerunds (Wik, 1973), this form of nominalisation is not available in some languages. As yet there is very little in the way of a comparative appreciation of how language contexts can impact on the operations that form the method (Barnes 1996). From the general framework of systems theory such work would be justified on the basis of the expectation of contingency. Coupled with this is the expectation that there may be third order constraints on the emergence of grounded systems communications (The work of Strydom, 1999 with respect to Habermas is of interest here). The result would be an appreciation of the stimulus of social systems in the immediate environment of the consciousness underwriting the operations of the method.

Luhmann has overseen the shift from the idea of a system as a unity to a differential view of the system. In this perspective the unit of order “is that of an asymmetrically reflected difference order/non-order” (Clam, 2000). The resulting configuration is not unprecedented but as Clam (*ibidem*) has stated is part of a special theoretical tradition from Aristotle to Heidegger. The appearance of these figures is always associated with attempts to think against habits of intuitive thought. For its part, the use of a grounded systems theoretical approach would enable the emergence of communications that are condensed into core forms and generated out of observations of everyday conversations. One of the key things we are implying then is that since people are part of the immediate environment of communication systems it would be appropriate to consider methods for generating systems theoretical communications that are more directly coupled with this environment. We feel that a fully developed grounded systems methodology might be appropriate for this.

This paper has outlined two principal aspects of a grounded systems approach through reflection on Clam’s (*ibidem*) insightful discussion of Luhmann and through a working knowledge of Luhmann’s constructivism (Luhmann, 1990a). Other work on

the theory of observation is also important. For example, Esposito (1999) discusses two-sided forms in language and their relationship to the processes of observation. These reflections can illustrate the complexity of the proposed method. Esposito (1999) begins with an explanation of the autopoiesis of observation:

Each operation distinguishes something to which it refers, yet at the same time it generates the distinction between the operating system and that to which the system refers. These two systems are not congruent: The distinction between the object indicated in each case and that from which it is distinguished does not match the one between the operation of the system and that which is external to the operation. We shall address the latter as the self-reference / external reference distinction(s/e), in contrast to the distinction indication / distinction (i/d) that guides the operation. (p. 80)

The operation is circular but exists on two simultaneous levels; “a distinction is a case of self reference (distinctions can only occur in a system); an indication is a form of external reference (the indicated operations do not coincide with the ongoing operation)” (Esposito, 1999: 80). These reflections have important consequences for grounded systems theory and can help add to the understanding of the complexity of the relationship between “open” and “theoretical” coding in grounded theory. In traditional grounded theory open coding is the process whereby the person doing grounded theory generates “substantive codes”, that is words that can be used to refer to groups of similar incidents. Bringing the observations of Esposito on the autopoiesis of observation to this process involves interpreting open coding as the marking of “incidents” by making “indications”.

Marking “indications” would then be seen as a form of external reference and involves evoking the i/d distinction (Esposito, 1999). Since observing also simultaneously effectuates the orthogonally related s/e distinction the observer is also marking what is theory and what is environment. In this respect the process of observation forces the emerging communication to take command of the indications that people make and demands that these be copied into the emerging communication.

In classical grounded theory “theoretical coding” focuses the researcher on the internal structure of the emerging communication and this in turn means focussing on the s/e distinction. As a consequence the i/d distinction becomes implicit. Yet if we follow the autopoiesis of observation this would mean that such operations coding would unavoidably adjust the external referencing of the emerging theory. The idea that the categories generated during the process of doing grounded theory were peculiar and in some ways “elastic” has already been problematised (Dey, 1999: 89) and the suggestion is that an understanding of the autopoietic nature of observation can help to explain why this is the case. Categories are fuzzy simply because observation operates simultaneously on two different levels and it is not possible to observe each at the same time. Moving from the i / d to the s / e level involves time and a shift in communicative focus, and it is perhaps for this reason that in classic grounded theory both operations were named as separate stages in a process of theory building (Glaser, 1978; Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

We feel that a working knowledge of Esposito’s (1999) thoughts can help to explain the complexity of a purely observational method. What is more the complexity of this form of rationality can be clearly understood when one has a working knowledge of these reflections. In grounded theory both substantive and theoretical “coding” are autopoietically related and simultaneously effectuated.

Whilst in the past they might have been seen as two discrete components of a method, separated by time. They are nonetheless intricately connected to each other and their relationship is unavoidable. For grounded systems observing an appreciation of how the autopoiesis of observation involves a reflexive awareness of how observation “wounds the world”, takes possession of it (the i / d distinction) and on the other hand how this form of observation would also involve instances of self-reference and other reference (the s / e distinction). It is within the instantiation of self reference that the grounded systems observer emerges.

Conclusions

“Grounded systems theory” is inherently paradoxical. Clearly Luhmann (1990a) was holding out his theory of observation so that it could be broadly applied. It is nonetheless necessary to open this innovative theoretical design to the sorts of territory that sociology has traditionally studied. We do not aim to transform Luhmann rather we aim to transform traditional approaches in sociology by bringing Luhmann to bear on what is the traditional stall of much of sociology. We suggest that by taking possession of grounded theory procedures and techniques systems theory can be deployed to study the world of everyday communication. If we return to Andersen’s (2003) outline of Luhmann’s different discursive analytical strategies we would suggest that the method should be able to uncover the various forms of meaning in everyday communications alongside an analysis of everyday social semantics.

We must be clear that such studies could in no way claim any special validity within a Luhmannian approach to the study of social systems. But rather such studies should serve as points of departure to a more extensive analysis of how various social systems communicate about these everyday themes. For example, to conclude previous work looking at the everyday form of communications about oral health related quality of life (Gregory, Gibson, and Robinson, 2005) it is suggested that we now move to analyse how communication about quality of life has been thematised as a programme in medical and dental science. One of the interesting questions to be asked is if the same theme of relevance will emerge?

We began with a very loose coupling between grounded theory and systems theory. Our reflections take us toward a more meaningful appreciation of the potential connection between these two traditions. Before we could explore a closer theoretical intersection between systems theory and grounded theory we had to outline that some important differences do exist.

Whilst the general and abstract nature of Luhmann’s theoretical structure is now well known, what is less frequently identified is that Glaser’s form of grounded theory is becoming increasingly disengaged from the sociological enterprise. We hope to have indicated that a link between sociology and grounded theory can indeed be maintained. We are acutely aware that the methodology would certainly not be the only one suggested by Luhmann’s social systems theory. Nevertheless it does seem worthwhile to us that the proposed methodology to help guide the production of communications centred on core forms and this endeavour would fit and work within social systems theory. A problem nevertheless remains concerning the status of such communications.

The dissolution of the distinction between systems theory and grounded theory can produce theoretically guided modes of observing of imminent and transient

information about patterns of everyday communication. It is imperative that systems theory engages with the immediate environment of "hot" communication; the traditional stall of sociological communication. This will invariably involve the development of methodologies that can help in the observation of interaction systems and a deeper appreciation of traditional methods from a Luhmann perspective. The challenge for systems theory is to discover just how patterned such communications are. The one thing that grounded theory can teach us is that core redundancies can and do emerge relatively quickly. Indeed the products of this mode of observation often do produce "differences that make a difference" (Bateson, 2000: 272). We therefore speculate that the unmarked side of the distinction between grounded theory and systems theory might involve the emergence of the grounded systems observer. As we have seen, such an observer might be able to describe the nature of the complex rationality in many forms and in doing so might be seen to produce knowledge *for* the social world.

Endnotes

- i Note in this respect we agree with Dey that there is a kind of idealism here.

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Precariousness of everyday heroism A biographical approach to life politics

Abstract

It is a special challenge for an individual to be the hero of his/her own life in the social conditions of reflexive modernisation. Autobiographies are not only descriptions of what happened during the life course, but they also reflect individual capacity to construct cultural identities in reflexive and reflective ways. To reflect on one's own success, personal gains and losses have to be compared with the competitive capacities of other community members of the hierarchically structured society. Reflexive capacity is the demand to become a conscious self and culturally identified member of a social group. Self-identity is reconstructed and coped with in light of meaningful others during certain transition periods in the life course. Life-political meaningfulness is checked by overcoming personal difficulties in order to manage life-challenges further. Self-respect gives the resources needed for overcoming alienating experiences, for controlling the risk of social exclusion and for mastering one's own life successfully. Narrative identification of self tends to produce life-heroes. But the problem considered relevant here starts from reflecting altruism with reflexive monitoring of the self. The question is whether heroic episodes of life can be narrated so that heroic everyday deeds are emphasised in autobiographies. Or is everyday heroism present only in precarious moments which escape ego-centrism because this kind of heroism can be placed only at the social margin, where surviving a difficult situation obliges one to turn unselfishly toward another?

Keywords

Everyday hero, autobiography, reflexive self-identification, life politics, altruism

Introduction: narrating everyday heroism in reflexive modernity

Everybody is the hero of his or her own life story. Everyday heroism is, however, a special challenge for an individual; and it becomes more and more challenging in the conditions of reflexive modernisation. This is the starting point for dealing with how the reflexive capacity of an individual is used to construct a precarious but heroic identity for socially discriminated members of society. Certain autobiographical narratives and biographical episodes are taken into consideration here, not only to

describe what happened during some individual life courses, but going further, to contemplate how the phenomenon called everyday heroism is processed and constructed by identity-political means at the margin of society.

This article approaches the problem of everyday heroism from a phenomenological perspective by interpreting autobiographical data and episodes of spontaneous altruism in everyday deeds where the other is met. The aim is to clarify how individuals make sense of their cultural identity and define their presence in their own social world (see Roberts, 2002: 20). To weigh personal gains and losses and to compare one's own social success with the situation of other members of a certain community, both reflexive and reflective individual capacities are needed. Reflectivity helps individuals to become conscious members of social groups. Reflexive monitoring of the self (Giddens (1991) is needed for transitions in the life course, when the personal identity is reconstructed and the cultural membership categories defined anew. To manage life challenges, life-political strategies are developed, especially for dealing with difficult situations. Overcoming alienating experiences nourishes self-respect, and in this way the resources for controlling the risk of social exclusion and mastering one's own life can be increased. This motivates individuals to use narrative strategies for constructing heroic self-identities from successfully experienced happenings in life.

The focus of this article is not on finding and analysing evidence of everyday heroism as such. Rather, the problem-oriented constructive approach implies that empirical episodes of life happenings as well as extracts of autobiographies are used as illustrative testimonies to the fragility of everyday heroism. This phenomenon is taken into consideration to point out that to interpret everyday heroism as a reflexive construction which enables the self to recognise the other in unselfish deeds, conceptual displacement between egoism and altruism is needed.

To understand another side of everyday heroism, *altruism* has to be reflected upon by reflexive monitoring of the self. The problem considered here is: can heroic episodes of everyday life be narrated so that altruistic deeds are emphasised in autobiographies? Or is everyday heroism present only in precarious situations that pass by momentarily? If this kind of heroism escapes ego-centrism, it can be found only as placed in the social margin where *the other* is met. Then we can assume that surviving a very challenging situation obliges one to turn unselfishly toward another so that everyday heroism becomes understandable as a fragile phenomenon.

This article deals with the above questions by interpreting autobiographical data. Both miniature autobiographies and episodic stories picked up from newspaper articles were chosen with the intention of discussing how delicate is the process of becoming an everyday hero. Narrated heroic experiences are related to personal and social challenges met during certain socio-historical changes. The precariousness of everyday heroism is associated with the liquid formation of identity as a social process which less and less is, according to Bauman (2000: 2), either fixed in space or bound in time, although the definition of the situation of the self has become a lifelong effort.

Are there everyday heroes in the society of individuals?

The present cultural-historical epoch is diagnosed according to the reflexive tendencies of individualisation in the welfare societies. The cultural dynamics of life politics are connected with the reflexive capacities of individuals to increase pleasure creatively by competitive means. Bennett's (2005: 58-65) term *active audience* refers to the consumer's competence to produce an identity by adopting a creative life style.

It is important in a progressive society to prefer the innovative capacities of individuals. Competitiveness of the society is improved by finding the distinctive qualifications of the best people. Most successful individuals are mentioned as inspiring examples and life models for others. Competitiveness also refers, evidently even when evaluated in social terms, to increasing inequality between individuals. Not all competitors can be winners, some are runners-up, the least successful being losers.

The society of individuals, as characterised by Elias (1991) and with comparative terms also by Simmel (e.g. 1999), is a construction, the interpretation of which starts with thoughts on how the quotidian sociality of everyman becomes constructed in deeds of everyday life. Familiar settings of quotidian *aesthetics* (Lefebvre, 1971: 24) are understood in humble and solid ways as far as the insignificance of routines is taken as granted. The everyday life of ordinary people is not, in general, seen as interesting in the sense that it could offer exciting heroic examples. Rather, it seems to be filled with common-sense routines, taken-for-granted practices and seen-but-unnoticed aspects of the habitual life order as, for instance, Featherstone (1992: 159-160) has remarked. The relatively stable fabric of daily life is necessary for the personal upkeep of the individual. The normalcy of the life course includes compiling, maintaining and reproducing the figuration of typical social activities. Keeping up with the continuation of life may be hard enough in managing difficult situations, but usually it is not exciting enough to bring forth a heroic ethos.

The mundane fabrication of everyday practices is necessary for survival but alienating in the sense that the continuation of routines tends to make life safe, although monotonous. Routines are carried out without thoughtful orientation, in other words without fixing one's consciousness on these doings. This is why, referring to the Marxist way of analysing the use-value relation to wage work, estrangement from the self as a conscious being can be interpreted as a marker of instrumental orientation.

Heroic life, in contrast to everyday life, is marked by excitement and extraordinary deeds (Featherstone, 1992: 160, 164). Grandiose, superior capacities are demanded from real heroes. Virtuosity and courage are heroic qualifications, as is endurance. A hero is ready to respond to challenges, to take risks during his adventures and to struggle in an effort to succeed in performing demanding tasks. He concentrates all his capacity on achieving the extraordinary goals set for winners. Referring to Campbell's (1990) well-known slogan, the hero returns from his/her adventure "filled with force which will bring blessing to his/her nearest". A hero liberates those shackled by subordination. Stories of heroism feed the imagination of those living in the slavery of routine work and dreaming of having some superiority.

Mysterious, transcendental and metaphysical aspects of heroic episodes are traditionally seen worth being narrated, whereas the familiar course of everyday life is perceived and described only in the context of some meaningful events or through trivialities in fleeting moments which come and disappear almost without our awareness. But as Lefebvre (1971) points out in his classical interpretation, modernity made everyday life increasingly visible; and as several authors have discussed (see e.g. Chaney, 1994: 194-203), everyday situations have become imaginary stages for aesthetic performances and spectacles inside postmodernity. This age is receptive to popular stars as *icons of identity*. Representatives of everyday heroes are celebrated at the stages of publicity because of their likeness with anybody, even though they are expected to be capable of extreme courage.

Let us glance at a story of everyday heroism in a challenging situation when this challenge was not faced consciously, nor met with uncertainty. The heroine was

thrown into these circumstances by accident, without her prior consent.

'It was a reflex', says Emma Paju, a 27-year-old actress who was walking on a seaside street near Helsinki City Theatre in October 2004, when she noticed that two men dragged a third man - unconscious, maybe drunk - and suddenly threw him into the cold water. Emma ran to the place, jumped into the water and brought the poor man up to the shore. Another woman helped her while the two men sat on a bench, indifferently watching what happened. Some days later this episode was described in a newspaper article (Helsingin Sanomat (HS) 15.10.2004) when Emma was rewarded with a special prize, 'The Flame of Life'. In this context Emma wondered how things like this can happen. She also remarked how valuable the daily work of nurses, policemen and rescue workers is. 'I cannot think of the life of any person as worthless', Emma concluded.

This story inspires to discuss further the problems of caring sociality as related to selfish individualisation in the age of reflexive modernisation. The precariousness of life conditions is argued to be increasing in many life arenas where continuation of social commitments has so far been expected to be the normal situation. Uncertain tendencies are now put forward in working life, family relations and career expectations. There is ambivalence concerning the political choices and postmodern ethical values of members of contemporary communities (Bauman, 1993). It is a popular argument that, to guarantee the rationality of competitive ethics - as far as interest partners can put their trust in fair play, social cohesion has to be conditioned based on a commitment to keeping equilibrium in social affairs. The idea of accumulating social capital is based on this argument. Our sociality tends to be increasingly instrumentally rational in the sense that utility equilibrium is preconditioned before sociality (equal partnership) begins. In these conditions we have to ask whether unselfish deeds are possible or plausible in the sense of *being for*, which Bauman in his *Postmodern Ethics* (ibidem) has seen as being the basic moral value of human life. The answer can be sought in exceptional situations that compel people to use human reflexes without having time to rationalise their behaviour. Exceptional situations like natural catastrophes bring out the human spirit of sacrifice in a heroic way because it is a question of saving life in extreme conditions.

A methodological note: why interpret everyday heroism in autobiographies

Interpretation of oneself as another (Ricoeur, 1992) is much discussed within the narrative genre. In an interpretative process, when narrating what happened to oneself, the present author sends the narrator to the past to find the person who experienced something meaningful in order to remember what was internalised. We can see the act of telling one's own story as emancipating, and even more as empowering, when it enables someone to become a conscious subject who knows how to live a better life.

It seems that the tendency toward life-political individualisation fits well with late-modern self-actualisation. No wonder that soft methodologies called *autoethnography* (e.g. Ellis and Bochner, 2003: 209-214), narrative studies of lives or even performance studies (e.g. Alexander, 2005: 411-441) are increasingly in demand. The self is not only reflected in a public place but increasingly, as Alexander points out, public scenes and performances are used culturally to see the self as

reflecting him- or herself. This means, as Alexander (ibidem: 423) sums up this tendency, an act of seeing the self both through and as the other.

Personal narratives can be used for many interactive, interpretative, reflexive and self-creative purposes. In any case, in contemporary society, with its tendencies toward fragmentation and toward competing with the increasing demand for rational consciousness, narrative strategies are means of constructing individual identity in flexible ways (c.f. Roberts, 2002: 21-22). This situation makes involvement of the therapeutic aspect in the autobiographical genre very understandable. Although the orientation here is close to critical participatory view or creative analytical practice (see Denzin, 2005: 933-958) my aim is not to introduce specific devices for biographical analysis. The focus is neither on soft means of managing emotions (Hochschild, 1991) nor on adoption of confessional applications of embodied autobiography (Coffey, 1999). Identity politics is not taken into service of representational pedagogy (Giroux, 1994) or critical performance ethnography (Alexander, 2005: 427). Instead of advocating emancipatory discourses as such I try to make understandable why everyday heroism is necessarily precarious as a phenomenon which is almost invisible and found only in almost unnoticed processes. Altruistic episodes are taken into consideration in contemplating the construction of caring identities in deeds that are included only fragmentarily in the narration of everyday heroism.

Heroic life and heroic narratives in publicity

In contemporary competitive society, heroes are admired. Heroism is publicly celebrated in performances, programs and media-narratives. The luckiest fellow competitors are celebrated - although sometimes envied - not only because of their competencies in managing the occasional incidents they face, but also because special capabilities make them superior to everyman.

Competitiveness also means an ability to make the proper choices which are demanded socially from an emancipated, empowering and enabling individual. The conception of social equality has now turned more and more towards social participation and contribution; in other words, everyone is expected to have and give a share in the costs and benefits of society. Political democracy has progressed by means of group solidarity into a determinative factor of the welfare society and a significant denominator of civil rights. As they adjust to the requirements of the competitive society, individual choosers try to occupy the best possible social positions for themselves in the course of their life span and in comparison with their social groupings. Life situations in present society tend to become risky and precarious. It is demanded that everyman learn how to succeed, because opportunities to win and threats of loss are met by everybody as daily challenges.

It is commonly believed that *fortune* is involved when decisions are made about whether one is a prototypical winner or remains in the background. Thematically, the boundaries between the extraordinary world of heroes and the quotidian spheres of ordinary men are well defined; but in practice the limits are blurred and shifting from moment to moment. Everyday heroism is an interesting topic because a "dialectical tension between alienation and self-liberation" (Gottdiener, 1996: 144) lies within this problem sphere or hides in the process of constructing this phenomenon. According to Lefebvre, an intellectual mentor of the present critical research on everyday culture, this means that chances both for self-conscious, meaningful creativity and for the institutional pressure of passive adoption to the power of commercialism exist, in

principle, in the everyday practices where routines take place but also the work of art is realised (see Lefebvre, 1991: 182-183, 190-191, 203-206). Lefebvre (ibidem, 130-137) points out that only by perceiving everyday life in its familiar, trivial and inauthentic guises do we become receptive and reflective for mystical or metaphysical criticism of everyday culture. This may make us more aware of the popularity of different forms of cultivating narratives for superhuman characters of heroes.

The principles of heroic life and everyday life are discussed here in order to frame the problem sphere. The term *precariousness* demonstrates fragility and uncertainty as to whether heroic deeds can be *narrated* by ordinary people in the context of everyday life. The basic questions concern: a) how life-narrators appreciate happenings as being worth taking into consideration, b) which episodes are processed as containing de-alienating qualities, c) how the hero of one's own life is enabled creatively and d) how caring for another is taken into consideration in the problem of everyday heroism.

To deal with this subject, episodes on reflexive heroism are taken from media publicity to exemplify situations in which people meet the challenge to act *for the other*, even when risking their own lives. Other data used here consist of autobiographies collected with the intention of ascertaining how people describe their life as a symbolic journey from social discrimination to a heroic effort to master one's own life. One idea is to see how social *identities* and their demarcations are related to the concept of *the other* and how, in this way, boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of social membership are constructed and shifted when reflected in power and domination (see also Ragnerstam, 2004: 212). Seeing social (cultural) identity as processed reflexively in the narration of life contains political implications. This kind of politics of identity demands sociality as does discursive construction of the *self*. It makes understandable how the flexibility and liquidity of the society of individuals substitute for the class society based on socially fixed identity positions (Bauman, 2000). It does not, however, explain as such how and why the demand for everyday heroism is increasing.

Interpreting autobiographies on everyday heroism

A collection of autobiographical data was planned under the rubric "Once discriminated, incipient heroes - or prosperous heroines" (Ahponen, 1997: 107-118) with the intention of taking individual experiences of social discrimination, marginality and exclusion into consideration in the interpretation of biographical narratives. A core idea was that every narrator of an autobiography is a hero of her or his own life. The focus was on social and symbolic barriers that must be overcome to get from difficult life-conditions where some kind of discrimination was experienced. The aim was to follow the strategy of resolving difficult life-situations in reflexive ways and to see how a successful life-career results from the foundation of experienced social discrimination. When the study started, the aim was, to adopt the terms of Greimas (e.g. 1987) which are used so often to interpret heroic narratives (see also Ahponen, 1997: 114), to pay attention to individual gains and losses, narrated in autobiographies, as well as the roles of mentors, enemies, accompanying persons, mediators and by-passers of the wanderers on the terrain of life. The intentional interpretation of autobiographies concerns how the subjects are presented in these texts or, comparatively, how *the self* performs as an actor on the stage of life. The researcher is also interested in what kinds of narrative conventions are made to

construct a context for the process of *writing up* the experiences (e.g. Denzin, 1989: 21-22, 31-32; Roberts, 2002: 7-8). Problematic experiences can be, to use a Denzin's (ibidem, 33) expression, meaningful as epiphanies or moments of revelation for the subject. This aspect refers to de-alienating strategies in the processing of the reflexive self.

After being interviewed in a nationally distributed newspaper (HS 16.3.1997) and later in a regional newspaper (Karjalainen 7.10.1997) with the intention of introducing the idea of studying "discriminated heroes of everyday life", I received 12 autobiographies. Eight of them were written by women, four by men. The longest autobiography consists of 130 single-spaced pages, the shortest miniature stories were 2-3 pages. In addition, 8 self-publications (one written by a woman, the others written by men) were supplied in this context. In one special case a woman's life-story was narrated by her husband. The response to the invitation was not very active although some stories were eloquent and appealing. The contacts and accompanying notes gave the impression that the idea was received as inspiring. Only the contents of non-published autobiographies are further interpreted here, but self-publications are also worth discussing briefly. After the motivation behind their publication was checked, the research problem was processed again and the focus shifted from discriminated heroes of one's own life towards the possibility to narrate the phenomenon of everyday heroism in a specific social context.

Self-publication of an autobiography means a strong effort to obtain publicity as a life-hero. Telling of one's own story is motivated by a conviction that lived experiences are meaningful and worth telling in public. The authors of self-publications trust their talent to narrate the story in an interesting way even though they have not passed the critical selection processes of publishers. Although printing practices have developed so that it is easy to formulate and modify book-like copies electronically, success in marketing of publications is not made easy. Without going through the critical screening process, it is difficult to convince the audience that a story is worth telling publicly as containing a distinctive message.

Self-publishers present themselves as heroes of their own lives by describing their experiences. Those stories were not, however, motivated exactly according to the intention of this study so their contents were not analysed further. The non-published autobiographies were written after the writers read the invitation to participate in the study, and their focus was on the theme "from discrimination to heroism in everyday life". In this sense *an autobiographical contract* (see Lejeune, 1989) - a reflexive commitment between the author and the reader was taken into consideration to evaluate how the invitation was understood by the participants. The personal orientation, including questions of who is speaking to whom (I speak to you) and how the self is presented through its others (c.f. Marcus, 1995: 47-49) to the reader, is an important aspect in the interpretation of the writing convention in a biographical research (Roberts, 2002: 8).

Most of the authors of the autobiographies were in late middle age. The development of Finland from a poor rural country toward a rapidly changing modern welfare society was reflected in these individual life stories (cf. Ahponen and Järvelä, 1987: 68-86; Roos, 1987: 151-161). After reading the stories carefully the core themes were structured and one writer chosen for the role of key informant. The pseudonym *Urho* was given to this male author, born in 1931, whose story is related as a case to experiences of the other authors as well as to the general social consideration of how society has changed during his lifetime. Through their autobiographical experiences, individuals are constructed as social beings, as Roberts (2002: 88) says. Quite much is discussed about how changes in society are reflected in individual stories when story-tellers are seen to represent different

generations, as classified according to age, gender, level of education, occupation and family career (e.g. Heinz and Kruger, 2001: 29-53). A conscious attitude towards the cultural spirit of the time (*zeitgeist*) is also emphasised when specific generational cohorts are constructed (e.g. Edmunds and Turner, 2002). In the context applied here it is meaningful to construct figuration of sociality through individual experiences instead of categorising socially institutionalised age markers (cf. Heinz and Kruger, 2001: 32, 42). The intention is to understand processes of individualisation as increasingly contingent upon modernisation. This implies a tendency for the boundaries of previously fixed social markers to become flexible and for identity positions to multiply.

Roos is a pioneer in the use of life stories with the intention of describing qualitatively how Finnish society has changed since independence in 1917. Roos (1987: 153-157) connects the "dramatic changes" of the society to his typology of Finnish generations, which was formulated in the middle of the 1980s. Independent Finland has now reached human longevity in comparison with the individual life career. The great social transformation of this society can be reflected in the individually experienced life course. Finland as a society represents a heroic success story in its innovativeness, especially when the stage of democracy, values indicating self-expression, and creativity in inventing high-modern technology are taken into consideration (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Florida, 2005). Here, however, the changing society is a context of the individually experienced life-histories.

When going through the autobiographical data, I put special emphasis on signs of everyday heroism. Aspects of social discrimination and possibilities for emancipation during different life phases were taken into consideration. Unlike Roos (1987: 153), who interprets autobiographies as "telling the truth", I do not emphasise the realistic character of these life stories. I see it as more important to interpret how people subjectively narrate themselves as heroes of their own lives than to discuss the truthfulness or authenticity of the narratives. The basic aspect is how individuals give coherence to their lives in the autobiographical writing process (Denzin, 1989: 62) when they interpret their personal and social challenges. This means that *biographical illusion* (ibidem: 61) is not taken for granted. According to Denzin, this illusion means that the general social structure is illustrated directly through an individual life and the narration of life gives a realistic picture of what happened. The realistic genre also includes the fact that transition periods of life are interpreted within the framework of the dimensions of social changes that occurred simultaneously. In this way Roos (1987: 158-159) has classified typological changes in social security, work conditions, education, personal relations and the increasing importance of individual happiness.

For categorising institutionalised age markers, these dimensions or life spheres are usually seen as socially fixed. When social conditions are connected to the structural context in a determinative way, no space remains for the voluntary capacity of individual agents as community members to act using their life-chances to change the institutionally conditioned structure of society. When they spoke about a trend toward destandardisation and individualisation of the life-course, Heinz and Kruger (2001: 41-42) remarked that the institutional life-markers have become more flexible than before. It is sensible to consider how the social context of life is reflexively filtered into individual experiences. Autobiographical data, however, offer a possibility to see the other side of sociality in an effort to ascertain how the reflective capacity of conscious individuals affects the way in which socially given opportunities and structural restrictions are subjectively interpreted. This kind of constructive aspect was pointed out by Weber when he defined power as the ability to act otherwise than expected, even against the will of others. Just in this sense, concepts like generation

consciousness or an *active generation* (Edmunds and Turner, 2002) are challenging; they refer both to the need for social cohesion and to the demand for conscious activities on the part of individuals and nuclear group agents who influence structural changes by producing *key-experiences*.

In accordance with individualisation, the tendency toward increasingly institutionalised lifestyles is discussed, not in purely structural terms but by paying attention to processes in which the rationality of people is conducted from outside of the subject by commercial and managerial means (see e.g. Beck, 1992: 131-137). The life space of choice-making consumers, enjoyed by means of increasing commercial use of leisure, is like a playground (e.g. Cahill, 1994) where successes and failures are calculated by instrumental means according to ordered preferences in cost- and benefit-like operations. Performed qualifications are tested through the use of information channels. "I know that I live because I am visible as being connected to the network of communication". This is a watchword for an "individualised" person living through the social demands of the media society.

There is polyphony of voices and cacophony of *talking heads* in the media-formatted publicity. So many sensations and extreme cases make it difficult for narrators of life stories to be distinguished from others who are competing for space to create a heroic image among their equals. If you have no listeners, is your story worth telling? You may succeed in having a large audience for a short moment, which allows you to taste public admiration; but the risk of being forgotten tomorrow is included in the publicity of the popular media. According to de Certeau (1988: 8), overproduction of authority leads to devaluation of authority. Overproduction of authors and performers means that an ordinary storyteller is left in silence among the public like the everyman named nobody (de Certeau (ibidem: 2). Comparative overproduction of popular heroes in public may lead to the decline of heroic ethics (cf. Featherstone 1992: 175-176) because stories of popular heroes are increasingly consumed. If heroic deeds are valued according to how much publicity is given them, then the most popular heroes celebrate, as Gottdiener (1996: 140) notes. He refers also to Featherstone (1991: 270) to continue how the *aesthetics of everyday experiences* tend to manipulate images by commercial means. Popular culture is useful for advertising which "reworks desires through images".

The autobiographical genre implies an illusion that bringing of personal secrets and intimate affairs into the public eye is valuable as such. The tension between intimacy and publicity nourishes our seeking of sensation. The autobiographical genre is a pathetic form of narration. Life stories attempt to undress the inner self in descriptions of how self-identities are reflexively organised and life-political processes are oriented toward self-actualisation. Life-stylistic choices are justified by the promise of full personal satisfaction. Like traditional confession, public confession of intimate secrets can be understood as being purifying. It is often thought to be rewarding to complain about how personal failures and experienced injustices were caused by unfair competitors when they tried to attain to the same life chances. Whether based either on successful happenings or failures, biographical narratives are increasingly used to construct life-political programs and procedures. In principles according to which everyday heroism are internalised by the subjects of serious life stories, priorities are not, however, given to public rewards and sanctions. The authors will identify themselves by evaluating the meaningfulness of their self-realisation.

Life-political supply and demand for autobiographies

When Giddens (1991: 224, 231) speaks about how reflexive mobilisation of the self produces self-identity as a subjective achievement, he points out that the emergence of life politics and the reflexive project of the self in lifestyle choices are in accordance with the recovery of moral and existential problems. These problems are increasingly present both in everyday life and in public debates in a way which becomes understandable by pointing out the principal difference between life politics and emancipatory politics. According to Giddens (ibidem: 211-214), the difference concerns whether the subject is oriented to the self or towards the others. *Emancipatory politics of the others* was aimed at releasing underprivileged social groups from their unhappy living conditions and from subjugation to unfair domination. Eliminating social differences between citizens, or rather reducing the processes of exploitation (cf. justice), inequality (cf. equality) and oppression (cf. participation), was the political ideal for liberating the subjugated from constraints. The demand to construct *ways of life* by classifying socially and culturally privileged or subjugated identity groups was based on this logic, which follows the principle of negative freedom, whereas lifestyles are positively propagated as individual choices (e.g. Chaney, 1996; Barker 2004: 219-220; Bennett 2005: 63). *Life politics* is oriented to individual self-actualisation and deals with emerging life changes. In accordance with this orientation, narrative construction of the self is consciously reflected in autobiographies. In this way emancipation is internalised in the sphere of life politics, the main concern being the success of the enabling self rather than the caring politics for marginalised others.

Individuals are expected to be capable of making proper choices in their lives. Social reflexivity means that individual life choices are made, as stated by Beck (1994: 14-15), inside networks where skilfully negotiated commitments are the result of options that are embedded in opportunities available for those who can utilise them best. Success of the self is bound to option-like rewards in life games. Life-political experts are specialised in helping people make choices in optional situations. But there are problems concerning moral questions, which are necessarily met in the intimate life sphere. Professionals cannot commit themselves to substantial values because then they make normative decisions. But without personal involvement, these experts act in an instrumental way by arranging the multitude of more and more situational ethical codes according to the principles of technical rationality. Who can take responsibility in moral questions? Ambivalent relativism, egoistic attitudes or social conformism – these are the alternatives given to the late-modern builders of communities who prefer discursive subjectivity for comparing how successful biographies are “produced, staged and cobbled together” (ibidem: 12-13) by using narrative strategies. By these means the individual subject returns to the domain of institutions. Everyday compilation of the self, especially when identity is constructed in the sphere of intimacy, is reflexively related to an institutionalised concern for the life adjustments (Giddens 1994: 59-60).

Social reformation of the self is introduced in the discussion on how the everyday life of ordinary people is ordered, negotiated and decided in reflexive ways in matters of choices concerning the precariousness of life-structures, personal life being increasingly embedded in risks, uncertainties and ambivalent alternatives. By emphasising the need for personal life strategies, it is asserted that both demand for and supply of professional expert counselling, advice, norms and rules which legalise, reform and regulate the life-sphere are necessary, even compulsory for enhancing reflexive sustainability.

This situation also makes the demand for everyday heroism understandable. Individuals fulfilling the life-political requirements of late-modern society are heroes of competitive liberal democracy. To manage the risks of reflexivity and uncertainties

met during the course of life, they need capacities for self-respect. Their discursive competence makes them good if not superior agents for the deliberative democracy of the politics of presence (cf. Phillips, 1995). Those who are clever and skilful enough succeed well in complementing their competencies by using the services of the best supervisors to become *primus inter pares*. Performing and representing magnificent properties in illustrative, narrative and discursive ways will guarantee the attractive popularity of the hero of one's own life, although it demands continuous efforts to keep this position of cultural capitalist as safe as possible.

But the problem dealt with also concerns another side. Heroes of one's own life, as interpreted in reflexive terms of life politics, are not everyday heroes *if* this term refers to a process that results in self-respect because of altruistic deeds. Altruism means that a person is respected because she/he does something exceptionally unselfish. In this sense everyday heroism does not mean the same as winning in a competition or otherwise gaining public recognition. Overcoming of personal difficulties can be a necessary precondition of everyday heroism, but the most important aspect is that the needs of the other are taken into consideration during happenings of everyday life, which results in heroic deeds without conscious striving for fame or honour. Martyrs, however, are not everyday heroes because their self-sacrifice lacks any other hope of salvation than that in heaven. Their exceptional behaviour cannot be placed in the normal order of quotidian life. Everyday heroes are not produced by providing nourishment for sensations.

When analysing the autobiographical data, the focus was placed on both how the identity of an everyday hero is produced by overcoming difficulties during the life-process and also on how awareness of social responsibility among individuals is increased by this. The strategy for analysis was quite simple. The life course contains turns, openings and closures as well as specific ways of reasoning about the choices for continuing the path by crossing difficult situations. These aspects were underlined when the data was read thoroughly, paying attention to how the orientation towards the self and meaningful others was justified.

Once discriminated everyday heroes

The autobiographical narratives are structured, in general, by starting from how the author was born and what were the life conditions of the parents. *Urho* is the key narrator in the interpretation of the data applied here because he illustrates well the unselfish character of an everyday hero, but also because his life-career reflects well the structural turns of the society during his lifetime. His early childhood was during the pre-war years but he pays no attention to the living conditions of that period. As is known, most inhabitants of Finland were then living in the countryside. In this sense *Urho* was not typical because he was born in Helsinki. During the wartime his father was a soldier like most men in the same age group. The winter-war (1939-40), in particular, is seen as a heroic episodes in the history of Finland as a nation.

Urho says nothing about siblings. Possibly he was the only child in his family, contrary to most families which at that time were quite large. Only after the post-war "baby-boom" did the population transition take place in Finland and nuclear families become planned more consciously. We may define the family life in this case as safe because *Urho* comments: "The wartime (1939-1944) did not cause me big traumas". A couple of sentences later he continues, however, saying that his home was destroyed in the bombings. This may have happened in the summer of 1944 because Helsinki was heavily bombed before the fighting at the Karelian front

stopped. The family had to move to a very modest summer cottage without electricity or water and sewage pipes. *Urho* felt that the war was like an adventure for boys - quite awful as an adventure, however, because he lost some of his friends in the bombings. A female author who was born just before the winter war also describes the effects of this period. The safety of children depended on how well the parents could give their children immediate care and only afterwards did the children realise the larger context of this difficult period.

The life of my parents was certainly filled with anxiety and fear because of the fate of the homeland and the family, but I was so small that these things did not touch me in any way. Home was safe, we had enough food and I did not know anything about the material welfare before the war. (Rauha, an author)

In post-war conditions people “lacked everything”. Those who started to build a house of their own had a serious shortage of money and building materials. *Urho* tells: “... our clothes were ‘modified’ from uniforms left over from the surplus stocks of the army, we had big fat leather boots and our faces were thin because of the lack of food”. *Urho* was lucky enough to continue his schooling in the senior high school by learning, for instance, the German language although when he came to know what had happened in Germany, he was disappointed and felt reluctant to learn German well.

In the post-war conditions scarcity prevailed, but characteristic of the general atmosphere was that everybody had to struggle by participating in rebuilding the country. The social structure in Finland was renewed quickly in the reconstruction period. According to the autobiographies, the principal reason for experiences of deviance and social discrimination in childhood or youth was sickness or some physical disability. One of the authors describes how she got polio during her second year of life. This serious illness was not unexceptional before the war or during wartime. *Urho*, on his part, had rheumatic fever and was bedridden during his student examination.

Not all homes were safe and warm places. From their early years children had heavy responsibilities. They had to be humble and obedient. Many children suffered because they were left without the necessary care in hard conditions. During this time an authoritarian way of raising children without expressing warm emotions, especially on the part of the father, was the normal practice in Finnish families, organised according to a patriarchal model of everyday life (e.g. Ahponen and Järvelä, 1987: 68-86). “Invisibility” was a strategy for overcoming a difficult family situation. A female author from an academic Swedish-speaking family tells how she suggested that she was ill and to get attention from her parents she pretended that she could not move her knee. In this special family, when the daughters were “old enough”, the father expected patronising services from them. He even had incestuous interest in the author, who finally attempted suicide with medicines but recovered and started to contemplate her inner life intensively. Like so many authors of these autobiographies, she felt that she was intelligent. She succeeded well in her studies until she fell in love and then did not continue her studies because of a difficult marriage.

Love, intimate relationships and marriage are turning points in the life course. This aspect is exceptionally interesting in *Urho*'s miniature story.

I married a very intelligent young woman and we had two children. During the following years her psyche began to change, in the course of time so

much that she had to be admitted to a mental hospital. In addition to my work, I took care of the children and the household. After my wife got out of the hospital, she did not want to continue the marriage with me. Our children were officially left in her charge in the divorce. It was the normal practice for the court to give this responsibility to the mother. Because of the unstable health of my former wife, I lived with her and the children, and took care of the household whenever she tolerated it. The situation continued this way for about five years. My wife did not express any gratitude but blamed me for things like using the vacuum cleaner too often or for being otherwise too conscientiously occupied with 'mundane' affairs.

Urho does not say a word about how well he succeeded in his student examination and in his occupational studies. He mentions that he taught school pupils as encouragingly as possible and started to take on the home responsibilities after his working day. We can draw the conclusion that he worked as a teacher, in other words, as an expert in education. Socially he was better off than most of the representatives of his generation. The service society based on the middle class was not realised in Finland until the great social transformation in the 1970s.

Nevertheless, as *Urho* says, "it was normal practice" in the case of divorce to give the responsibility for children to the mother. In this story something seems to be turned upside down. Was it "normal practice" to assign care-giving to the mother even when she was mentally ill? What the father tells in his laconic style indicates that he was able both to practice his occupation and to take practical care of the children as well as of the household duties. The story continues:

My wife began to turn her negative attitudes towards our fourteen-year-old son, who became solitary and withdrew from his mother. Little by little the lives of my children as well as mine began to be continuously painful. We left home because of the wishes of the children (daughter 12, son 15); we sold our summer cottage and moved to our new home. Naturally, my former wife tried to make our life difficult but did not, in the end, succeed. My manly pride did not, from my side, allow me to start legal proceedings to ask for maintenance payments.

Social allowances were possible, even then, and could be applied on the basis of the Social Assistance Act. Social welfare was systemically organised in Finland during those years when the welfare-state model was implemented and developed. But as Kröger, Anttonen and Sipilä (2003: 43, 45) mention, modernisation in childcare was late in coming to Finland, gendered assumptions about male and female parental responsibilities were strong and informal childcare was not expected to be a generally accepted part of the male role. In addition, until the change towards the new Social Service Act took place in 1984, social care had an old-fashioned label of relief for the poor. We can only guess the main reason for *Urho's* "manly pride". But year by year he managed better and better economically, maintaining all the time a close relationship with his children. He ends his life story by remarking that he now enjoys his days "as a happy pensioner."

My mental state was hard-pressed but step by step my strength returned. We supported each others, my children and I. In the wintertime we went in for slalom. After passing the student examination, both children went to the Technical University, and got their degrees rapidly, without any loans because they lived at home and worked in the summertime. Now they are

working as managers in the field of economics, and I enjoy happy pensioner's days. I take fitness exercise, jog, and go skiing. Music, literature and 'Sunday painting' are also part of my life.

Urho concludes the heroic aspects of his life coherently way. Remarkably, he sees himself as a hero of his own life, but aspects of everyday heroism can also be found in his story.

I see that there are three phases of 'everyday heroism' in my life course: childhood during the wartime, becoming a student (while having a serious physical illness) and coping with a single-parent situation as well as with the crisis preceding this time.

Urho definitely managed his everyday crises well without becoming bitter and without blaming fate for landing him with an unbearable burden. He succeeded well in the arenas of work, home-building and bringing up children. He does not tell whether he had meaningful contacts with women after his divorce. He points out certain aspects in the family life, but other social relations play no part in his story.

Urho's laconic writing style concentrates only on key episodes while in many other stories a multiple spectrum of intimate relationships is brought to light to show coping with or getting out from under problems caused by difficult partners. Thus, the partner was often left because otherwise the author would not have been able to continue the process of constructing him- or herself as a life hero. A clear clue in *Urho's* story is that empowerment is framed by increasing social well-being and an ideology of the struggle for success. From the individual point of view of everyday heroism, the most significant aspect in this story is the unselfishness of the author and his self-respect as a result of his successful career as a father in difficult life conditions. Structurally, the development of the welfare state was a guarantee of the basic conditions for living without scarcity, but *Urho* apparently wanted independently to clear up with the situation – like a lonely hero. His intention of giving his children a good education was included in his life project. A structural precondition is that the children managed to have a good start to their careers before the time of hardened competition and the precarious elements of liquidity in present-day working life.

The authors of the autobiographies describe their significant experiences, personal turning points and moments of resignation as *epiphanies* when they see that overcoming difficulties and managing challenges in education, working life and family relations are important aspects of their self-respect. Serious illnesses and disappointments in intimate relations feed feelings of resignation. These experiences are reflected in expectations which are charged by hope and dreams. One of the authors describes how she became convinced that she could not manage life independently and continues: "My only way to cope with myself was marriage". Later she went through a difficult divorce. The autobiographies of *once discriminated incipient heroes* are mainly descriptions of sometimes almost unbelievable difficulties met during different phases of life. Sacrifice is rarely met without martyr-like sentiments. Everyday heroism is present in the narratives only in fragments like this sentence full of empathy: "when an old man is aware of the pain of his wife, he feels this pain in himself".

Most autobiographies of the once discriminated are descriptions of how the heroes of their own lives have gotten through personal difficulties and almost overwhelming troublesome relationships with their parents and their partners. "At last I am independent", cries a middle-aged woman, who already is a grandmother. On the other hand, it is deeply reflected, by both male and female authors, how

important it is to have close emotional relationships, and how difficult to reach and keep them up. At best, life is seen as “surrounded by life angels who have supported my way“. Most urgent, however, seems to be mastering one’s very own life reflexively. “I felt that I have never existed“, complains one of the authors. Another middle-aged woman writes: “In the nearest future I will cure my weak self-confidence, which is related to my dependence on family and friends“. Proceeding through this process means that the life-political reflexivity is deepened in accordance with the will to become conscious, independent self. The process of divorce is analysed in this way: “My husband needed my support to be able to break away from me. This break-away hurt me so deeply that I became able to meet the challenge to create my own life“. The precariousness of everyday heroism is culminated in these fragile sentences.

Everyday heroism in altruistic deeds

To characterise further the essence of altruism included in everyday heroism, some illustrative examples are chosen from the media publicity. When interpreting the contents of the following episodes, I emphasise that altruistic deeds result in self-respect because of exceptional unselfishness, both towards the family and friends but also towards people who are not known. The first fragment was already in focus in the beginning of this article. A comparative event was told in public some years ago, before a car accident took the life of the heroine of this story. This fragment portrays how an ordinary Finn, with the help of the royal *Princess Diana* saved a bum who had fallen into the River Thames in London. Later a medal was awarded to this decent young man for his bravery. The hero of this story discovered, by accident, a poor drunken man drifting along in the river. The heroine, Princess Diana, was taking her daily jog on the riverside and went to help in this rescue operation. Everyday heroism is included in this happening because both of the brave figures spontaneously helped a “down-and-out“ person without asking whether he was valuable or useful for them, or familiar due to earlier face-to-face contact. The young Finn and the princess acted as everyday heroes just because they put themselves in danger for another person in this suddenly encountered risky situation, which they managed bravely, decisively and successfully.

This episode was exceptional. It may be thought that the publicity given to what happened on the bank of the Thames was due to the presence of Princess Diana as a *public person*. After her fatal accident in August 1997, the story was immediately repeated in the media. Princess Diana lived and died in the public eye, used by sensation hunters, but also herself utilising the media as an image-product. Signs of charity played an essential part, if not in her life, at least in her public role, which was based on specific role-expectations. Everyday heroism reinforces moral responsibility as an aspect included in the myth of Diana, thus counterbalancing the luxury of her royal life.

Charity serves image work well. To earn a good reputation among the public, care is given to poor people. Charity means that well-to-do people orientate down towards the poor from their heights. That is why charity does not really, in the moral sense, fit in well with everyday heroism better than martyr-like self-sacrifice does. Bauman (1993: 24) thoughtfully points out how, in the process of civilisation, the representatives of the “self-liberating elite“ become emancipated from their own animal side. Therefore, as Bauman (*ibidem*: 23) notes by referring to another analyst, “they rejected everything that appeared to them ‘savage, dirty, lecherous’ - in order to better conquer similar temptations in themselves“.

Levinas has defined morality as unconditional responsibility towards the Other, giving to Bauman (1998a: 15) a significant point for continuing that the Other commands us through her weakness. In morality, according to Bauman (ibidem: 19), “the weakness of the Other makes me powerful“, because “everything depends then on my taking up the responsibility and giving voice to the unspoken demand“. Bauman (ibidem: 21) argues that we are thrown into the moral situation without justice, ethical codes or negotiated agreements. Products of the work of reason are free from the virtues of moral attitudes, not demanding one-sided responsibility.

The spontaneous reaction towards an unknown and weak caretaker brings the jogging princess near to ordinary people and therefore, into the spheres of charity and morality. This way the episode described above is linked to altruism in everyday heroism. The third fragment does not include figures known from publicity:

A young woman, 17 years old, was walking with her father on the Central Market Square in Helsinki when she saw a drunken bum who had fallen into the dirty sea water in a pool in front of the square. The man had been playing a card game with his friends, who because of their drunkenness did not even notice the poor fellow tumbling down. The rescue experts said later that the man would certainly have drowned, because of his unconsciousness and the dirtiness of the water, without the help given by this brave young woman. For her part, the young woman emphasised, when interviewed, that she did what she did because she was brought up to believe that all human beings are equal. She also said that she was very certain that her father would save her if needed. (HS, June 1998)

This accident was noted in the media publicity mentioning that the prize of the year, “The Flame of Life“, was awarded to the rescuer for her bravery and inventiveness. According to the report, after resting two weeks in the hospital, the rescued man phoned to the girl and thanked her for saving his life. During the phone conversation he wondered “how a young girl can jump into dirty water after this kind of a human being“. It is not very usual to jump spontaneously to rescue an unknown person in a dangerous situation. Narrative elements are dramatic enough to be told and celebrated in public.

Every time it occurs, everyday heroism is caused by a specific situation. The role of the rescuer is taken by an unexpected hero in a moment when he/she reacts to a person who needs help and *care*. This aspect was discussed extensively in the public after *Veera*, 12 years old, wrote about her experience. At a tram stop on the street at the centre of Helsinki she started to cry when she felt weak because of a diabetic attack. Everyone walked past her indifferently except for two “outcasts of fortune” who came to ask how she felt, went to buy jam and sugar, and helped her to phone her mother. *Veera* says:

Those people were the only ones who recognised my situation. It does not matter who the person is who knows how to act. The only thing which means something is that somebody can act and care. (HS, November 2003.)

Concluding remarks: To meet myself and the Other in everyday heroism

Indicators of a reflexive understanding of one's own life are increasingly

demanding for life-political purposes. This kind of understanding seems to increase the capacity of an individual to live a better life. A person who masters an emotional life course consciously also learns to narrate the life story in interpretative ways to present him-/herself as a heroic figure. It is sensible in the autobiographical genre to see the author as the principal actor on the stage. But the autobiographical process also allows the narrator to find his or her *other* as estranged from the present subject. When the author sends the narrator to the past in the process of story-telling the aim is to find the person who had meaningful experiences and to remember them as internalised. Heroism is produced in an emancipating way by processing experiences into meaningful memories in the form of episodes and narratives. The process of telling one's own story is significant to the author, who needs self-confidence to become protected from outside attacks which might hurt the fragile self. Deepening self-understanding gives an individual the capacity to interpret her/his experiences and find meaningfulness in life in order to orient towards the future with the help of consciously remembered epiphanies which are selected and differentiated from the stream of everyday happenings.

The tendency toward life-political individualisation is discussed here with the intention of understanding why autobiographical narratives fit well into the spirit of late-modern self-actualisation. Society demands reflexivity by authors in order to develop consciously programmed consultation concerning both choices of identities and reflexive solutions to serious psycho-pathological problems. As far as these problems are both caused and attempted to be solved by extra-individual steering mechanisms, tendencies toward self-estrangement may increase rather than being dealt with. Psycho-cultural models of individualisation are, in addition, necessary instruments of socialisation when a society aims at integration through seduction (Bauman 1998b: 23-24). Reflexively manipulative mechanisms tend to produce a phenomenon called by Bauman (see Cantell and Pedersen, 1992) *velvet-dependency*, which includes soft means of emotion management (Hochschild, 1983). The subjective lived-through sensations and conscious processing of symbolic aspects of everyday experiences are relevant aspects of life-political regulation, both for the individuals themselves and for the authorities, consultants and mentors who are responsible for the cultural design of life-stylistic choices.

Aspects of everyday heroism are discussed as precarious, sometimes almost invisible and unnoticed processes. In deeds that result in everyday heroism one cannot consciously operate in egocentric ways to produce a self-reflective hero. An attempt is made here to reach the precariousness of everyday heroism by contemplating difficulties in narrating such heroism. How to tell about turning unselfishly towards an Other? The moral processes of *being for* are ambivalent and embarrassing experiences for the Self as the author of an autobiography.

Self-respect in everyday heroism is resulted by altruism because in exceptionally unselfish deeds the Other is met as a person. This means, using the expression of Bauman (1997: 69-70), that "the moral party of two" is the "breeding ground of all (asymmetrical) responsibility for the Other". Phenomena like *pure relationship* or *confluent love* are interpreted by Giddens (1991; 1992) as significant aspects of life politics, related to the floating responsibility of postmodern intimacy. From this groundless basis the risk-conscious life-political expertise is reasoned in the late-modern sociality. The less this kind of politics of life is based on personally taken moral responsibility, the more it rests on egoism, narcissism, "love as passion" and pure relations. In that kind of love, following the argumentation of Luhmann (1986: 164-165), the "ego's Self is the result of self-selective processes" and love is "the validation of self-portrayal". According to this logic, the self is reinforced in intimate relations in so far as these relationships give the individual "a chance to

identify with himself and to be the Self of his ego“ (ibidem: 167). This way, even intimate relationships tend to become self-referential and aimed at egoist self-fulfilling in a reciprocal sociality (see also Seidman, 1992). As Beck (e.g. 1997) has stated, reciprocal relations are seen as guaranteeing confident commitments in social options with which we are playing increasingly in our risk society. It seems that the less people are responsive to the precarious challenges of everyday heroism, the more they aim at being egocentric life-heroes.

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Extending Hate Crime Legislation to Include Gender: Explicating an Analogical Method of Advocacy

Abstract

This paper examines expert testimony advocating the inclusion, in proposed hate-crime legislation, of crimes motivated by gender bias. The design and rhetoric of such testimony evidences formal properties. Precisely because these properties are formal properties, not limited to specific cases or issues, their explication will contribute not only to the understanding of hate crimes discourse, but to social problems research and theory more broadly. Arguments for the expansion of rights to previously unprotected categories (1) can be designed with an emphasis on generic or formal principles, which allow for the inclusion of previously unprotected groups whose victimization constitutes additional social problems not yet institutionally recognized. Such arguments (2) can emphasize parallelism between protected categories and unprotected categories, and between recognized social problems and as-yet-unrecognized social problems, making similar institutional treatment seem rational, and making disparate treatment seem unjustifiable or insensitive. And such arguments (3) can propose limits to the desired expansion of rights, as a means of pre-empting “floodgate” arguments against expanding the scope of existing protections. More generally, membership categorization analysis is employed to study social identity and inter-group relations as these are constituted in social problems discourse. Special reference is made in this case to “hate crimes” and how they might be addressed by membership categorization analysis in the context of constructionist social problems analysis and qualitative socio-legal studies.

Keywords

Hate crime, bias crime, gender, testimony, advocacy, analogy, ethnomethodology, membership categorization analysis, social problems, language in law

Introduction

A regular feature of rights discourse is the attempt to expand the coverage of existing rights or protections by suggesting that certain groups or categories of people who do not yet enjoy these rights or protections are similar in relevant respects to groups or categories of people who already do. The emphasis on similarities across groups, rather than differences, is a highly significant but understudied aspect of the pragmatic design and the cultural logic of social problems claims-making and civil rights advocacy. This emphasis is achieved partly through the use of common designations for the social problems afflicting various groups, including “discrimination” and “hate crime.”

Particular social struggles and social problems effecting minority groups are progressively being understood in the context of larger, historical and political processes of social change, as particular social movements locate themselves in a broader dialogue of civil rights advocacy. In this pluralist dialogue of civil rights and social problems, each subsequent social movement can learn from the struggles of previous movements, and invoke their achievements as standards or precedents in policy debates. These practices of learning and leveraging across social movements become most clear in the United States from the nineteen-sixties on, as the methods and successes of the African American Civil Rights movement became lessons for Hispanics, Native Americans, and others, and the methods and successes of the feminist movement, itself informed by neo-Marxist critiques of class relations, in turn informed the nascent gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender movement. All have relied more and more upon legal strategies of legislation and litigation, in which the social problems of diverse constituencies have been expressed similarly, for example in terms of discrimination or lack of equal opportunity, and all have asked for federal government recognition of and remedy for various types of inequality and victimization.

The remarkably common elements of such arguments for the expansion of rights and the recognition of neglected social problems is technically best understood by means of methods which can elucidate both the formal elements of claims-making on the part of as-yet unrepresented or unprotected categories of people suffering from as-yet unrecognized social problems, and the context-sensitivity of these formal elements in practice and in particular cases. The socio-linguistic logic and the situated practical reasoning of such claims-making can be understood by drawing upon classical principles of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. Where the pivotal issue is the inclusion of additional categories of people, the subfield of membership categorization analysis, rooted in early ethnomethodology and early Sacksian conversation analysis, is indispensable. These overlapping traditions of inquiry provide alternative windows on the social organization of social problems, in this case by elucidating a small constellation of cultural (or ethno) methods which provide for the visibility of a specific trouble, portray the trouble as a social problem, and label it in a manner conducive to official recognition and action, “all dependent on participants’ systematic use and deployment of various conversational and discourse procedures” (Maynard, 1988: 320). In this case the trouble and social problem addressed is hate crimes against women, but the methods of advocacy observable in the congressional testimony discussed below are relevant well beyond the confines of hate crimes discourse and politics.

Attending to the methodic and logical properties of legal and political arguments takes the study of hate crimes in a direction which few have attempted, but which is

nicely prefigured in the work of Jenness and Grattet in their authoritative book *Making Hate a Crime* (2001). Jenness and Grattet express interest in “understanding the definitional processes that result in the assignment of victim status to some individuals and groups but not to others” (Jenness and Grattet, *ibidem*: 9). They argue for a focus:

[...] on processes of recognition, categorization, and institutionalization through which some types of people get social recognition as victims and some types of events are deemed hate crimes. This approach to understanding victimization departs radically from conventional formulations of the victimization process insofar as it allows us to reconceptualize victimization in terms of interactional, discourse, and institutional practices. (p. 10)

Most importantly, Jenness and Grattet draw our attention to the “microlevel processes of categorization work” (Jenness and Grattet, *ibidem*: 71). Their work, however, offers a broad summary of such political processes and rhetorical categorization, rather than elucidating the pragmatic methods of categorization observable within the language of specific contributions to hate crimes discourse.

Membership categorization analysis stands to complement existing “macro” analyses of hate crimes politicking and policymaking by means of attending to just these “microlevel processes of categorization work,” evident in texts such as congressional testimony. The “macro” question of how hate crimes discourse works politically can be illuminated at the “micro” level by asking how hate crime discourse works rhetorically. Ultimately the distinction between the macro and the micro, the political and the rhetorical, collapses, as it becomes clear how political questions of inclusion and exclusion are at the same time pragmatic questions of socio-linguistic categorization.

Membership categorization analysis therefore affects a “respecification” of hate crimes, illuminating the structure of hate crime politics by elucidating the structure of hate crimes discourse. Hate crimes discourse can be shown to display a variety of structural properties which membership categorization analysis is especially suited to identify, including but not limited to: (1) the pragmatic logic by which interactions between individuals can be understood as instances of group relations such as race relations and gender relations, and social problems such as racial violence and the victimization of women; (2) the cultural methods by which social problems can be decoupled from their stereotypical victims and expanded to include new categories of victims; and (3) the sequential nature of arguments for group entitlements, in which similarities across groups and differences between groups can each be invoked, in turn, to argue for expanding legal protections or remedies and to argue for limiting such expansion.

Topic & Method: Hate Crimes and Membership Categorization Analysis

Membership categorization analysis studies the naturally occurring details and social logic of social identity in practice. The analytic focus is on membership categories, such as men and women; whites and blacks; Protestants, Catholics and Jews. More specifically, the focus is on the logic and the practice of membership categorization, speaking to how particular identities are made relevant and heard to

be relevant in talk and text, by means of cultural methods of practical reasoning and practical action, or ethnomethods. These methods are observable in different ways in different contexts, but cannot be understood as unique to specific contexts; the cultural nature of these methods suggests that in addition to being contextually sensitive, they are also context-free or context-transcendent in nature, and therefore in an important sense formal (c.f. Garfinkel and Sacks, 1990; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1978).

At the analytic core of membership categorization analysis is the observation that membership categories are conventionally and socio-logically grouped into what Harvey Sacks called membership category “devices.” Thus “women” and “men” are two membership categories collected together in the membership category device “sex,” or “gender” (as it is usually referenced in hate crime legislation). “Black” and “White” are two membership categories collected together in the membership category device “race.” “Protestant,” “Catholic,” “Jew” and “Muslim” are membership categories from the device “religion.” Clearly, individuals are members or incumbents of multiple categories; for example we can speak of one person as being a Black Muslim man, another as a White Protestant woman, etcetera, hence the “multiple category incumbency” of persons. These are perhaps merely novel analytic terms for expressing cultural truisms, but membership categorization analysis has pursued the study of membership categorization practices well beyond the obvious, resulting in a variety of sociological analysis which is singularly effective at explicating the cultural logic of social identity and group relations. Membership categorization analysis therefore has great promise for inquiries into social problems which implicate social identities and group relations, including hate crimes.

The term “hate crime” refers to crimes motivated by bias or hatred of a group, or characterized by discriminatory selection of victims. For legal purposes, a potential victim, in order to be protected or recognized under hate crime legislation, must be a member of a membership category (such as “African American”) which belongs to a membership category device (such as “race”) which is protected by law. Generally, all membership categories within a membership category device will be protected under law; such that, for example, whites and Blacks are both protected against crimes motivated by racial hatred, and Christians are protected against religious bias along with Jews and Muslims (c.f. Jenness, 2002/2003: 92). The prominence of membership category devices within membership categorization analysis (MCA) makes MCA especially relevant for the study of formal rights, where formalism suggests the applicability of a law or policy beyond specific cases or categories of victims involving, for example, African Americans, Jews, and immigrants, the groups Jenness calls the “core” groups in the history of hate crime legislation (Jenness, *ibidem*). This formal nature of hate crime legislation is captured well by Terry Diggs; responding to the argument that some laws passed to protect minorities had also been used against them, Diggs replies “The idea should be that no one gets to go hunting” (1999).

Importantly, hate crime legislation does not protect victims of crime just by virtue of the two criteria that one has been victimized by a crime and one is a member of a group from a membership category device protected by hate crime legislation. The hateful or biased motive, or the discriminatory selection of the victim, is an essential criterion for identifying a hate-crime. There is therefore something of an “intent standard” in hate crime law, as in much discrimination law (Jenness, 2002/2003: 78). A crime victim who is Black is not necessarily the victim of a racial hate crime, nor is a crime victim who is a woman necessarily the victim of a gender hate crime.

Given the multiple category incumbency of victims and offenders, and the consequent choice available in selecting from between multiple correct descriptions of social identity, it is an open question which social identity, if any, is relevant in any particular case for understanding the motive for an offense. The question of relevant identity is seen within ethnomethodological conversation analysis and membership categorization analysis as a practical interactional issue or problem for members, which members answer for themselves. The analyst's role is understood as explicating members' methods and orientations, rather than criticizing or politicizing them.

Issues of motive, action and identity are often mutually implicative and mutually constitutive, in that each can inform our understanding of the others, but in the case of hate crimes, these questions are tied together *extremely* closely. A hate crime, as a particular type of *action*, involves a hateful *motive*, where hate is understood in terms of a limited number of social *identities*. These social identities are technically best understood as membership categories drawn from the same membership category devices (co-categories), such as white/black, male/female, Christian/Muslim, etcetera.

As Watson suggests in his work on membership categorization practices relevant to victims and offenders (1976, 1983), pairings of co-categories such as white/black and straight/gay are culturally available for *mapping* onto another relational pair of co-categories: *offender/victim* (of discrimination, hate crime, etc.), providing for the intelligibility of some crimes as motivated by, for example, racism or homophobia. One method for displaying the motive of an offense, which suggests an understanding of victims and offenders in terms of alternate membership categories in this way, works through the victim's identity *as this is formulated by the offender*. Watson notes that when offenders identify their victims by such hateful terms as "faggot" or "nigger," this can be adequate in and of itself to provide for the motive as one of sexual or racial hatred (Watson, 1983: 33-34). Alternatively, the nature and motive of an offense can be displayed or achieved partly through describing the offender's identity by means of a category (such as "white"), where the victim's incumbency in a co-category (such as "black") from the same device (such as "race") is also an accountable (observable, reportable) feature of the setting.

Whether the motive is displayed through a description of the victim or the offender, or in another manner, the identities of both are relevant, and descriptions of either one can be partly constitutive of the relevant identity of the other. Either the offender's or the victim's incumbency in a co-category from a device such as race can become relevant even if it is not explicitly declared, along the logic elucidated by Sacks in his "consistency rule," by which a description of one person in terms of a membership category such as "white" can make relevant an understanding of co-present others by means of co-categories from the same category device, such as "black" (Sacks, 1972).

Similar observations have been made about the relational nature of action descriptions and identities; Watson notes that because certain activity descriptions are related to certain membership categories ("category-bound activities"), describing an activity in a certain way can supply the relevant identity of the persons involved (Watson, 1983: 40). For example, describing an activity as a hate crime against a Black invites inferences as to the racial identity of the offender as White, just as describing an activity as "gay-bashing" provides for the categorization of the offender as heterosexual. Thus descriptions of actions, motives, and identities are mutually implicative and mutually constitutive. This is true to the extent that, even in the absence of explicit formulations of certain identities, actions or motives, they may still be provided for by the logic of membership categorization practices, with reference to

such phenomena as the consistency rule, which allows the categorization of one person to provide for the relevance of understanding others by means of categories from the same category device, and with reference to actions which imply the relevance of certain categories (category-tied actions) and motives which imply the relevance of certain categories (category-tied motives).

In law also, the presence or absence of a discriminatory motive is an essential consideration in deciding whether certain social identities (such as race, religion, sexual orientation) are legally relevant to a case, and whether an action counts as an instance of “discrimination,” or a “hate crime.” If the perpetrator is not demonstrably oriented to a membership category covered by hate crime statutes, then a crime is difficult to make accountable (observable, reportable) by law as a hate crime. Similarly, if the perpetrator’s motive is hatred of a group which is not protected by hate crime legislation, we cannot speak of a hate crime in any technical sense, although such crimes are easily formulated as hate crimes in a less formal sense, leading to the present topic.

In the United States, neither women nor gender were included in the initial Federal legislation on hate crimes, the Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990, which recognizes crimes “based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity” and was later supplemented to include disability status (Streissguth, 2003: 47-48). The Federal Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act of 1994 also mentions race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity and disability status, and mentions as well color, national origin, and gender, but this law only addresses gender-motivated crimes on federal property (Jenness and Grattet, 2001: 44-45). The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 recognized gender-motivated hate crimes under its Title III, but this law only provided a civil remedy for gender-motivated hate crimes (not enhanced criminal sanctions), and Title III was declared unconstitutional by the courts in 1999 (Jenness and Grattet, *ibidem*: 44). General coverage and protection at the federal level for gender-motivated hate crimes, as well as a variety of more paradigmatic hate crimes, is waiting for the contested and delayed passage of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and it is in this context in 1999 that Professor Frederick Lawrence, a professor of law and former civil rights attorney, offered the testimony to be analyzed below, arguing for the inclusion of gender in the proposed legislation before the Committee on the Judiciary, of the U.S. House of Representatives. This Act, in its most recent form, would specifically recognize, as a national problem, “violence motivated by the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability of the victim” (U.S. Congress, 2004).

This testimony was chosen for analysis not because it is demonstrably representative in any statistical sense of all arguments for including gender among protected categories, nor because it is distinctive from other such arguments. It is a rather sustained discussion explicitly addressed to the topic of expanding hate crime legislation, but this also does not make it a unique resource for analysis. For purposes of membership categorization analysis, or ethnomethodology, or conversation analysis, almost any naturally occurring data (not hypothetical, experimental, contrived, manipulated, scripted, etc.) should prove fertile ground for analysis, if the analyst is able and willing to attend closely to what the participants are doing (whatever it might be) and how they are doing it. Almost any data will serve, because one is working backwards from speech or text to the cultural (ethno) methods of practical action and practical reasoning which inform its production and reception. Indeed, the testimony analyzed below was not even chosen because it deals with arguments for expanding hate crime legislation to include women. Rather, the data were selected for a different research project having nothing to do with hate crime legislation or social problems advocacy, but it quickly became clear that the

data were organized in such a way as to answer a question which had not been asked of the data: how does one advocate the expansion of legislation to protect an additional category of victims? Although this question had been addressed in the hate crimes literature, and could be addressed in a theoretical fashion, the approach taken here was to allow the data to generate the question as well as the answer; the hate crimes literature is discussed at times to add additional intellectual context to the data analysis, and at times as data itself, but not as the primary framework or standard for the analysis. The analytic method and goal is therefore to work with instances of speech or text, and “to tear them apart in such a way as to find rules, techniques, procedures, methods, maxims... that can be used to generate the orderly features we find” in the data. These rules “will handle those singular features, and also, necessarily, handle lots of other events” (Sacks, 1984: 411, quoted in ten Have, 1999: 135). These rules, methods, etcetera, can therefore be characterized as formal and context-transcendent.

Not only are the cultural methods analyzed here context-transcendent, but in an important sense the discourse addressed here is also context-transcendent, and this has a bearing on the selection of data and how the data is reported below. The specific context of writing testimony or offering testimony before a particular committee at a particular time was not addressed, because the interest here is rather broader. Texts and textual analysis are legitimate objects and methods for analysis in their own right, even without reference to their initial production and reception. Texts are massively relevant for understanding many social and especially institutional phenomena, and they are by their nature more context-transcendent than talk-in-interaction. The early work of both Harold Garfinkel and Sacks includes considerations of texts as well as speech and social interaction. Several subsequent works have argued for or illustrated the ability of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis to contribute to the social sciences through the analysis of textual data (see e.g. Smith, 1990; Green, 1983; McHoul, 1982; Silverman, 1998). Eglin and Hester analyze the Montreal Massacre, to be discussed below, almost exclusively through textual analysis of news reportage and news commentary (see esp. 2003: 8), and with great success.

In light of the importance of texts such as prepared testimony, and given the specific topic addressed here, argument concerning the inclusion of women in hate-crime legislation, the most relevant context is not any particular setting, but is a legal/political debate which spans many places and times, and is carried out largely by textual argumentation and testimony. Moreover, this debate necessarily overlaps with American civil rights discourse and American discrimination law, in which many experts and authors on hate crimes are also participants. It is the mutual participation in this context-transcendent debate which allows us to understand the remarkable similarities across the many arguments for including women and gender in hate crime legislation, offered by different people, before different committees or appearing in different media, over a period spanning more than two decades now. Ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts can take it upon themselves to test to what extent their methods and insights will explicate the structures of such context-transcendent discourses, as Nekvapil and Leudar have started to do with respect to “dialogical networks” in media coverage of immigration issues (see, e.g., 2002).

Even though the analysis to be offered here is less tied to the local and sequential production of particular turns-at-talk than much work found in membership categorization analysis, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, the traditional concern with the sequential and contextual nature of talk is not ignored, but informs the analysis of data at a different level. Therefore the data chosen for analysis is not so much entire transcripts understood with reference to the local context of

production, but contributions constituting moves in a policy discourse transcending all local contexts in which it may be engaged. One can understand, for example, arguments for including gender among protected categories in hate crime legislation much better if one considers that arguments for including gender open up an opportunity space (c.f. Coulter, 1990), or make conditionally relevant, counterarguments for excluding gender. Such counterarguments, and even the possibility of counter-argument, can inform the design of an argument, whether the counterarguments follow immediately in context, or whether they follow somewhere else at some other time, or even if they don't follow. Advocates of including gender are often quite aware of a number of counterarguments, and their arguments for including gender can often be understood as designed to pre-empt predictable counterarguments, as will be illustrated below. In terms of explicating the logic of the policy discourse, these discursive moves can be identified and analyzed without reference to much of what else is said and done in particular contexts, and without reference to much of what goes on between relevant speeches or publications, or even between relevant passages within particular dialogue or texts. Data are therefore selected for their relevance to discourse on a particular issue, and analyzed in terms of what they contribute to the relevant dialogue and how.

As the analysis below suggests, the ambition is to identify elements of logic relevant to understanding hate crimes discourse, without raising or needing to raise questions such as the statistical frequency or correlates of particular arguments (see, for example, Benson and Hughes, 1991: 131; Psathas, 1995: 3). The selected data are treated not as typical of what most advocates say and how they say it, but as exemplary of some of the methods and logic which can inform such advocacy (compare ten Have, 1999: 43). Data are used not primarily as materials for inductive analysis, but to identify, illustrate and explicate the practical logic of speech and interaction in different domains of practice and discourse. This methodological orientation is informed by Wittgensteinian as well as ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic sensibilities, and draws particularly on previous work by scholars including Coulter (e.g. 1991; 1990; 1983) and Jayyusi (e.g. 1984) (see also ten Have, 1999: 40).

Despite the emphasis below on one particular piece of testimony, the discussion will go beyond what could be called a single case or extended case analysis, at times referring to other talk and texts on hate crimes which suggest that the design and logic of several key elements in this testimony are observable elsewhere as well. These other instances are in a sense selected for their topical relevance to issues raised in the analysis of the testimony, perhaps constituting a variety of theoretical sampling (c.f. ten Have, 1999: 40, 132-33). Once it is appreciated how multiple examples illustrate similar methods and logics, despite differences in wording and context, readers should be able to find many additional examples, not only in hate crimes discourse, but in many discourses featuring advocacy for expanding rights or protections to include previously unprotected categories of persons.

Analysis of Arguments for Extending Hate Crime Legislation

Defining Hate Crimes by Means of Formal Principles

One of the central questions which Professor Lawrence addresses in his testimony simply involves defining hate crimes, or bias crimes. He repeatedly emphasizes that bias or prejudice is the essential element in a bias crime: "A bias

crime is a crime committed as an act of prejudice,” and “Bias crimes are distinguished from “parallel crimes” (similar crimes lacking bias motivation) by the bias motivation of the perpetrator” (Lawrence, 1999a). This may seem to go without saying, but two observations can be noted. First, Lawrence need not have offered any sort of definition at all. Second, note that bias crimes are not defined ostensibly, by giving specific, uncontroversial examples of bias crimes, or by listing the specific biases or the specific groups currently recognized in bias-crime law. Ostensive definition by example or by enumeration of protected categories would seem to preclude the expansion of the protected categories, because no general rule for generating or justifying additional categories would be available. Instead, bias crimes are defined in generic terms, leaving it open what variety of bias is involved, and thus formulating hate-crimes as an open-ended category, capable of expansion consistent with formal features identified in a definition. It is rather easy to multiply examples from different speakers/authors, and different contexts. Wolfe and Copeland (1994), for example, in their characterization of violence against women as bias-motivated hate crime, define hate crimes by different terms, but in a similarly formal fashion, as:

[...] acts of terrorism directed not only at the individual victims but at their entire community. It is violence directed toward groups of people who generally are not valued by the majority of society, who suffer discrimination in other areas... (p. 201)

Another feature of bias crimes is simply that the paradigmatic or stereo-typical victim is a member of a group which is conventionally understood as liable to victimization. Lawrence (1999a) argues:

The chief factor in bias crimes is that the victim is attacked because he[*she*] possesses the group characteristic. From this chief factor, two things follow: (i) victims are interchangeable, so long as they share the same characteristic; and (ii) victims generally have little or no pre-existing relationship with the perpetrator that might give rise to some motive for the crime other than bias toward the group.

Both (i) the interchangeability of victims, and (ii) the anonymity of the offender-victim-relationship, suggest that the victim is victimized for impersonal reasons such as incumbency in a membership category. The interchangeability of victims illustrates this by suggesting that all other characteristics of the victim are contingent as far as the motive for the crime is concerned. The anonymity of the relation between offender and victim illustrates this by reminding us that in hate crimes, generally speaking, many more conventional motives for crimes are lacking, especially the more conventional motives for expressive crimes of violence, because perpetrators of bias crimes typically do not have the social relationships with their victims which would more likely lead to personal animosity or violent reactions in the course of ongoing social interaction.

As with the discussion of the bias motive above, the emphasis on the interchangeability of victims and the anonymity of the offender-victim relationship both suggest formal or generic principles for defining bias crimes, independent of the social identity of the offender and independent of bias against particular groups and independent of the victimization of certain groups. These formal or generic principles allow for subsequent extension of hate crime legislation to cover crimes of this general nature against members of categories or groups which have not previously been recognized and protected. Such extension is referred to in the hate crime

literature as the “domain expansion” of the hate crime construct (Jenness and Grattet, 2001; Phillips and Grattet, 2000). But it is a special type of expansion, which can be formulated as a “clarification” of the ideal scope of the original rule (Jenness and Grattet, 2001), rather than a political attempt to alter the rule, as is suggested by Jacobs’ and Potter’s emphasis on the role of identity politics in hate crime legislation (1998).

Expanding the Number of Protected Categories by Means of Analogical Reasoning

Jenness and Grattet note that initially, federal hate crime measures protected groups based on race, ethnicity, and religion, and that these protections provided a foundation for later expansion (2001), especially to sexual orientation and gender categories (c.f. Sunstein 1993), and also disability. Jenness distinguishes between “core groups,” namely Blacks, Jews and immigrants, and groups which inspired a “second wave” of civil rights activism, especially the gay/lesbian movement, women’s movement, and disability movement (Jenness, 2002/2003: 84).

Jenness and Grattet also note that social movement representatives “rendered the meaning of sexual orientation, as a protected status, similar to the meanings already attached to race, religion, and ethnicity” (Jenness and Grattet, 2001: 160). Such testimony accomplishes an “equivalence” between different targeted groups and between motives for targeting different groups (c.f. McPhail, 2002: 128). This equivalence is further accomplished in arguments that many different minorities are liable to be targeted by the same type of hate criminal (cf. Jenness and Grattet, 2001), often understood as young working or lower class white Christian males experiencing economic or status insecurity.

The formulation of hate crimes by means of an open-ended class of motives therefore allows subsequent elaboration of hate crime legislation to protect additional groups. This possibility for domain expansion provides the foothold for one variety of argument, in particular, namely advocacy by *analogical reasoning*. An analogical method of advocacy is understood here as one of the topics of analysis, as one of the members’ methods of practical action and practical reasoning observable in hate crimes discourse, rather than as a resource or method for carrying out the analysis. Analogical reasoning has received some attention in legal theory, but to date very little attention in sociology. The legal theorist Cass Sunstein offers a very topical treatment of the variety of analogical reasoning which we can note as being involved in the elaboration of the hate crime category. Sunstein (1993) suggests:

[...] we can get a sense of the characteristic form of analogical thought in law. The process appears to work in four simple steps: (1) Some fact pattern A has a certain characteristic X, or characteristics X, Y, and Z; (2) Fact pattern B differs from A in some respects, but shares characteristics X or characteristics X, Y, and Z; (3) The law treats A in a certain way; (4) Because B shares certain characteristics with A, the law should treat B the same way.” (p. 745)

Edward Levi in a classic treatise on legal reasoning argues that “[a] working legal system must therefore be willing to pick out key similarities and to reason from them to the justice of applying a common classification. The existence of some facts in common brings into play the general rule” (1949: 3). This process of determining similarity and difference is done in the course of arguing the applicability and scope of a rule. Attempts to expand the scope of an existing rule frequently identify similarities between cases clearly covered and cases at the margins or “penumbra” (Hart) of the category in question.

It might be especially clear, given Sunstein's and Levi's formal treatments of the logic of analogical reasoning (c.f. Brewer, 1996; MacCormick, 1978), that analogical reasoning in the service of political-legal argumentation can be analyzed as one of many "formal structures of practical action" (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1990).

Lawrence suggests a variety of similarities between crimes motivated by gender hatred and more widely recognized hate crimes motivated by racial, ethnic, or religious hatred. References to hate crimes against African Americans and Jews are interwoven throughout his testimony, providing an implicit but recurring and essential point of comparison. Some of the similarities are suggested when Lawrence argues, "Gender and sexual orientation ought to be included in a federal bias crime law... The violence involved in each case arises from a social context of animus... Sex is generally an immutable characteristic, and no one seriously argues that women are not victimized as a result of their gender" (Lawrence, 1999a). Some of these criteria, such as the social context of animus and the fact that women share an immutable characteristic, are mentioned only briefly. But also included among the similarities are the three criteria of hate crimes mentioned by Lawrence in his general descriptions; the criteria of the bias motive, the interchangeability of victims (c.f. Jacobs and Potter 1998), and the anonymity of the offender-victim relationship. Such parallelism across categories of victims allows Lawrence to argue, for example, that "Gender-motivated violence and crimes targeting victims on the basis of sexual orientation are as much bias crimes as racially- and ethnically-motivated crimes" (Lawrence, 1999a). More generally, we can also speak of the category "women" as a protected category in American discrimination law and civil rights discourse (c.f. Jenness and Grattet 2001), and as a category which has received protection in many states' hate crime legislation (see e.g. Pendo 1994; Shaw, 2001; Jenness, 2002/2003).

If we were interested in mapping Lawrence's arguments onto the formal model of analogical reasoning supplied by Sunstein, we would simply replace the formal place-holders in Sunstein's model with the substantive concerns of Lawrence's testimony, resulting in something like the following: (1) Bias crimes against, for example, racial minorities are characterized by the offender's bias against a group represented by the victim(s), by the interchangeability of victims, and by the anonymity of the offender-victim relationship. (2) Some crimes against women are also characterized by the offender's bias against a group represented by the victim(s), by the interchangeability of victims, and by the anonymity of the offender-victim relationship. (3) Legislation recognizes and protects victims of race-motivated bias crimes. (4) Because some crimes against women share essential characteristics with race-motivated bias crimes, legislation should also recognize such crimes against women. The point here is not to remove or remedy the substantive and informal properties of legal and political argument by means of formalization, but to suggest the presence of a formal logic at work in substantive, contextually-embedded discourse.

Given the similarities between crimes motivated by gender discrimination or bias, and paradigmatic hate crimes targeting race, ethnicity, and religion, and also given the inclusion of gender in much discrimination law and indeed in many hate crime statutes at the state level and weaker hate crime legislation at the federal level, the refusal to include gender in broader federal legislation can be formulated as a failure of the legal system to recognize hate crimes against women. This is true even though technically it is only the legislature which has the authority to criminalize such offenses, and thus constitute them as hate crimes in any official sense.

In this vein, Jacobs and Potter suggest that groups not protected by hate crime legislation face a "selective depreciation of their victimization" (Jacobs and Potter, 1998: 8; cf. p. 133). Jenness objects that gender is "a second class citizen in larger

legal efforts to respond to bias-motivated violence” (Jenness, 2002/2003: 86). Pendo employs a number of relevant arguments; she suggests that resistance to the inclusion of gender reflects the institutionalized nature of gender inequality (Pendo, 1994: 158). She also argues that the lack of coverage for certain groups constitutes a “gap” in the law (Pendo, *ibidem*: 163). These objections are illustrated very well in Pendo’s criticism of the Hate Crimes Statistics Act (HCSA); she writes, “Under the HCSA... if a man is beaten or killed *because* he is black, that counts as a hate crime; but if a woman is beaten, raped or killed *because* she is a woman, that doesn’t count as a hate crime (Pendo, *ibidem*: 163). Wolfe and Copeland argue that “acts of violence based on gender – like acts of violence based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, and sexual identity – are not random, isolated crimes against persons who happen to be female” (Pendo, *ibidem*: 200). The logic of the arguments is clear – women can be victimized by hate crimes just as incumbents of racial, ethnic and religious categories are victimized, so the law should include women in hate crime legislation. As Wolfe and Copeland suggest, these crimes “are not necessarily identical but – as bias-motivated hate crimes – they share certain essential characteristics in common” (Pendo, *ibidem*: 206).

Illustrative Case: The Montreal Massacre

No one should doubt the potential importance in social problems discourse of illustrative cases, used to exemplify the clearest cases, the worst cases, and also the cases chosen by advocates for expanding the domain of the social problem. The dragging death of James Byrd in Texas 1998 reminded the United States as a nation of the ugliness of hate crimes against African Americans and fueled the nascent interest in hate crime legislation. The murder of Mathew Shepard in Wyoming because of his sexual orientation was widely invoked by advocates for including sexual orientation in hate crime legislation as a protected category; indeed, the Shepard murder has been a “poster case” for lobbyists (see, for example, Dunn, 2000). Before Byrd and Shepard, forming the first of a trio of contemporary “poster cases,” there was the Montreal Massacre, targeting women. It is this case which Professor Lawrence (1999a) invokes in his testimony.

Gender-motivated violence... should be included in bias crime statutes. This is not to say that all crimes where the perpetrator is a man and the victim is a woman are bias crimes. But where the violence is motivated by gender, this is a classic bias crime... The case of Marc Lepine makes the point powerfully. Lepine was a 25-year old unemployed Canadian man who killed fourteen women with a semi-automatic hunting rifle at the engineering school of the University of Montreal on December 7, 1989... The killings were clearly gender-motivated. Lepine killed six women in a crowded classroom after separating the men and sending them out into the corridor. Before shooting, he told the women students ‘you’re all a bunch of feminists.’ He left behind a three page statement in which he blamed feminists for spoiling his life. He listed the names of fifteen publicly-known women as the apparent objects of his anger. Lepine’s crime plainly fits the model of classic bias crimes: his victims were shot solely because they were women and, from his point of view, could well have been a different group of individuals, so long as they were women...

This excerpt is of interest for a variety of reasons, as it employs a number of membership categorization practices in the course of developing the argument-by-example. The general purpose of the speaker's argument is to provide an illustration of gender-motivated violence that supports the contention that bias crime law should encompass such violence. It is therefore fair to expect that the example might be selected and designed so as to display the formal, generic properties of a *bias* crime economically and persuasively. How can this example be elucidated as selected and designedⁱ for achieving this purpose?

First, the speaker chooses for his example a case in which the perpetrator has control over a group, the membership of which is over-inclusive with respect to his selection criterion. That is to say, the perpetrator has control over a number of potential victims, and *overtly* specifies which people could go and which people had to stay. This case therefore avoids all kinds of questions as to whether all or some of the victims were chosen randomly. In this case there is every reason to believe that the perpetrator was acting on some sort of selection criterion, and that this criterion was absent in all those he let go and present in all those he retained.

Second, those who are let go are characterized by the category "men," and those who are kept are described by the membership category "women." Notice that both categories fall within the membership category device "sex" (or "gender"), providing us with the characterization of "gender-motivated" crime. Gender is accomplished through the description of the murders as the relevant, operative criterion in the selection of the victims. It is important that we do not hear the use of gender categories as merely correct predicates of the persons involved, but as *relevantly correct* predicates; that is, we hear the speaker to be saying that the perpetrator sent the men out *because they were men*, and kept the women *because they were women*, providing for an understanding of the offender's *motive* as one of gender bias.

Third, the speaker identifies the offender as male: "Lepine was a 25-year old unemployed *man...*" (emphasis added), and employs the male pronouns "he" and "his." The relevance of the offender's identity as male is also implied in a number of ways; the speaker's description of the victims by means of the alternate gender category "women," the description of the victims by the offender as "feminists" (an ideological/political category which is tied to "women" as a gender category), the description of the action by the speaker as "gender-motivated," all of this indirectly provides for the relevance of the offender's incumbency in the category "male," and provides for the accountability (observability, reportability) of the crime as a crime of gender bias.

Fourth, note that the speaker does not provide the listener with any reason to believe that the perpetrator and the victims had any prior acquaintance (e.g. he does not describe any as the perpetrator's ex-girlfriend, former teacher, step-sister, etc.) and note also that in this case, the number of victims is fairly large (six women from the discussed classroom, fourteen women total). Both features of the case are designed such as to undercut alternative characterizations of the crime, in that both the (implied) anonymity and the large number of female victims and the absence of any mention of male victims speak against the possibility that the victims were random (chosen without any selection criterion whatsoever), or chosen by means of a selection criterion other than that of gender. The fact that the perpetrator is described as having listed only women, and many women, as the "apparent objects of his anger" in his note further establishes that it was the victims' incumbencies in the category "women" that was the basis for their selection as victims.

In this illustration, then, the motive is presented as one of bias, the victims are presented as interchangeable, and the victim-offender relationship is presented as

anonymous, in the sense suggested by the prior formal criteria of hate crimes, which Lawrence refers to collectively as comprising a “model” of hate crimes, in a clear indication of the formal logic at work.

The Montreal Massacre committed by Lepine has actually been used with some regularity in arguments to expand hate crime coverage to include women or gender, and it is instructive that this illustration is designed in much the same way by different speakers or authors, for different audiences. The “facts” of the case clearly allow for such illustrations, but it is the illustrations which select and speak for the “facts,” and display their relevance to political and legal discourse. Eglin and Hester, who have used membership categorization analysis to great effect in a study of the Montreal Massacre, note, for example, that “the emergent phenomena constituting the Montreal Massacre, notably the “problem of violence against women,” were dependent on the categories and category predicates used by parties to the event to describe who was involved, what they were doing, and why they were doing it” (Eglin, Hester, 2003: 4). Given the problem of multiple correct descriptions of persons, one can ask, as Eglin and Hester do, “Who then is he killing?” (Eglin, Hester, *ibidem*: 54). Reporters, commentators and scholars answer this question partly by referring to how Lepine himself answered this question for them, preemptively, by testifying to his motive in writing, and also in front of witnesses who were spared in his massacre.

Pendo, writing in the *Harvard Women’s Law Journal*, offers a very similar formulation of the incident, referencing the gender of the perpetrator, the fact that the perpetrator separated the women out from the men, the fact that he cursed them as feminists, the number of women killed, and the note blaming women for the problems in his life (Pendo, 1994). McPhail, writing in the journal of *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, introduces the details of this killing by quoting previous authors, who also mention the gender of the perpetrator, the purposeful separation of women from men, the perpetrator’s denunciation of the victims as feminists, the number of women killed, and the note scapegoating women for his problems.ⁱⁱ McPhail then observes, “This horrific crime is almost unanimously agreed to be a hate crime and opened the door for viewing other violence against women as gender-bias hate crime” (McPhail, 2002: 135). Wolfe and Copeland (1994) discuss the Montreal Massacre as one of two events motivating their analysis of violence against women as a bias-motivated hate crime, and their description similarly includes Lepine’s gender (through mention of his first name), the gender of his victims, and Lepine’s denunciation of the victims as feminists (1994). These examples, like those from Congressional testimony, constitute data revealing how an action or situation can be formulated as an instance of a social problem such as a hate crime. Although many of the participants in hate crime discourse are scholars who can and do offer their own insightful analysis, in this context they figure primarily as members rather than analysts, using cultural methods of practical reasoning and practical action to contribute to social problems discourse and advocate for particular policies, more than explicating the methods and logic used to do so.

It may seem curious that Lawrence seems to be concerned to emphasize that not all crimes against women would be covered under the proposed expansion of hate-crime legislation, and therefore seems to be concerned to limit as well as expand the protection offered. Specifically, he says “Bias crimes should include only gender-motivated violence... not all crimes that happen to have female victims” (Lawrence 1999a). This is in addition to the beginning of the excerpt above, stating “This is not to say that all crimes where the perpetrator is a man and the victim is a woman are bias crimes” (Lawrence, *ibidem*). This may seem to show the speaker working at cross-purposes, but viewed another way this concern to delimit the social problem and delimit the expansion of rights may be seen as part of the design of the

argument for a limited expansion of legislation, in that it pre-empts a potentially powerful objection known as the “floodgate argument.”

Opening the Dam without Creating a Flood

The floodgate argument, as a generic policy objection, suggests that no addition or exception should be made to existing law or policy, because the same principle which justifies one addition or exception could be used as a precedent to press for further additions or exceptions, until the system is flooded by types and numbers of claims it has no intention or ability to consider. The floodgate argument can be difficult to counter, because it allows objectors to seem sensitive to the concerns of the immediate group(s) seeking expanded coverage, but to prevent any innovation by invoking principles of realism and responsibility within existing institutional arrangements, inevitably marked by limited resources (personnel, infrastructure, funding, etc.). Jenness and Grattet, in their discussion of the resistance to the inclusion of gender in federal hate crime legislation, begin their discussion by noting this concern: “Some suggested that the inclusion of gender in hate crime legislation would open the door to demands for provisions based on age, disability, position in a labor dispute, party affiliation, and membership in the armed forces” (Jenness, Grattet, 2001: 66). The sheer number of women victimized by crime has also been raised as an objection to including gender among protected categories (Jenness, Grattet, *ibidem*). McPhail notes that this type of floodgate argument was voiced within minority social movements (2002), not just by social conservatives.

Professor Lawrence in his testimony, by specifically mentioning that the inclusion of women would not include all women victimized by crimes, but only women victimized by crimes driven by gender-hatred, is proposing a delimitation which goes a good way towards undercutting the relevance of the floodgate argument, as a possible and expectable sequential response to his arguments. The analytic observation here does *not* concern what the speaker was knowingly and purposefully doing in his testimony (was that the aim, the interview format would have been used). Rather, and regardless of whether the speaker was *intending* to preempt floodgate arguments or not, the argument offered *does* pre-empt floodgate arguments as a feature of its design, and the potential relevance and potential consequentiality of such pre-emption is provided for by a minimal contextual understanding of the speaker’s testimony as involving advocacy for the inclusion of categories towards which there has been significant skepticism or resistance. In addition, it is a category-tied responsibility of members of the Committee on the Judiciary to evaluate congressional testimony as to the feasibility of legislation proposed or supported in expert testimony, and it is a category-bound interest of an expert providing such testimony that powerful, predictable objections be pre-empted. This is especially true given considerations such as the expert’s inability to guarantee himself a chance to answer objections *after* delivering testimony, and the fact that any elaborations or defenses offered subsequent to the delivery of prepared testimony would not be seen by subsequent parties looking only at prepared testimony.

Taking a broader view, it is relevant to consider that Lawrence himself, as well as many others in favor of including women or gender in federal hate crime legislation, do at times demonstrate knowledge of the objections they face. In Lawrence’s book *Punishing Hate* (1999b), which prefigures much of his congressional testimony, he writes:

First, the arguments against including gender in bias crimes share a common proposition: that bias crimes should include only gender-motivated violence and not all crimes that happen to have female victims... some crimes against women are bias crimes and some are not. A prime example of the subset that are bias crimes is random violence clearly motivated by hatred of women, such as the Lepine shootings in Montreal. None of the arguments against including gender as a protected category applies to this sort of crime. (p. 17)

It would seem, then, that Lawrence knows his limited focus on gender-*motivated* violence will avoid or answer what he presents as the first, common argument against the inclusion of gender. The use of the Montreal Massacre as an illustration of a gender-motivated hate crime seems *also* to have been selected in light of pragmatic considerations such as anticipating and pre-empting objections to including women.

Many contributors to the political discourse on hate crimes can be heard or read to address this issue, even using specific phrases such as “opening the floodgate” or “opening the door” (see for example Wolfe and Copeland, 1994: 205). Laurence Tribe, a constitutional law expert, can be heard as pre-empting the floodgate argument in his congressional testimony in 1992, arguing “Nothing in the U.S. Constitution prevents the Government from penalizing with added severity those crimes directed against people or their property because of their race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, and *nothing in the Constitution requires that this list be infinitely expanded* [emphasis added].”ⁱⁱⁱ Similarly, the attorney Millicent Shaw devotes the final section of her article in the *Domestic Violence Report* to noting the overlap between proposed gender-bias crimes and existing crimes, observing that such an overlap means that prosecutors would not need to pursue many crimes against women as hate crimes in order to convict, even if the crimes qualify under expanded hate crime legislation (Shaw, 2001). She concludes her article on the note that “the majority of rape, domestic violence, and stalking cases will not fall within the parameters of a hate crime statute,” but noting also that “having the statute available for certain gender-bias cases will aide prosecutors in making appropriate charging decisions” (Shaw, *ibidem*: 80). Her closing argument, then, can be read/heard as undercutting the floodgate argument, and suggesting that instead of creating a flood, the inclusion of gender in hate crime statutes would be an institutional resource for prosecutors that they could draw upon selectively, rather than an institutional burden. Again, these illustrations are not invoked as corroborative *analysis*, but as *data* displaying a particular type of discursive “move,” in this case defensive or pre-emptive, in the advocacy of expanding the domain of a social problem.

The necessity to preempt floodgate arguments was recently illustrated well by the Supreme Court of Georgia, which unanimously struck down state hate crime legislation as unconstitutionally vague, arguing that the statute “leaves open... the widest conceivable inquiry, the scope of which no one can foresee and the result of which no one can foreshadow or adequately guard against” (*Botts v. The State / Pisciotta v. The State*, 2004, p. 6, quoting *United States v. L. Cohen Grocery Co.*^{iv}). Consistent with the discussion of formal definitions above, Georgia’s hate crime statute covered crimes motivated by bias or prejudice, without specifying which particular groups would be protected. With respect to the categories covered by the law, it was indeed vague, and in such a manner as made the legislation potentially very *inclusive*. Congressional records, media coverage, and the hate crimes literature all suggest widespread disagreement about who should and should not be covered by hate crime statutes, consistent with the concerns of the court. If the Georgia

Supreme Court has struck upon a seminal judicial response to the question of the scope of hate crime statutes, then there may be no alternative for legislative bodies but to delimit the scopes of their hate crime statutes by specifically mentioning all protected categories. And it is precisely the question of *which* categories should be included in legislation, and why or why not, which is the practical question addressed in the discourse discussed above. The analytic question addressed has concerned, not *why* certain groups should be included or excluded from the scope of hate crime legislation, but *how* the arguments are often structured.

Conclusion

What seems to be involved in the advocacy analyzed above is a variety of analogical reasoning, involving argumentation on the basis of similarities and differences between different groups and different crimes. The similarities between recognized hate crimes and some crimes against women are used to justify the expansion of hate crime legislation to include women, but the victimization of women by hate crimes is also suggested to be different from many other types of victimization, including many crimes against women which would not fall under the scope of expanded hate crime legislation. Advocacy for expanded rights can therefore be seen to involve a “rule of relevance” (c.f. Schauer, 1993: 184), or “analogy warranting rules” (Sherwin, 1999: 1195), according to which limited expansion is portrayed as the moral evolution of existing law (c.f. Sunstein 1993), but which also precludes a flood of new cases, and preserves the symbolic meaning of granting legal recognition only to special categories of victims.

To summarize, the following pragmatic features are illustrated in this case, as formal, logical features of the design of an argument to expand legislation to include additional membership categories, or to maintain the inclusive properties of pending legislation.

(1) The foundation or spirit of the current law is characterized by formal, generic principles or rules, rather than delimiting a specific scope by enumerating the groups covered by hate crime statutes. This *generic* characterization of the law subsequently facilitates a second feature of the design evident in this testimony.

(2) Unprotected categories can be compared to protected categories, and categories whose inclusion is controversial can be portrayed as similar in relevant respects to more paradigmatic, less controversial or uncontroversial categories. By means of analogical reasoning, a parallelism or equivalence is achieved between recognized, paradigmatic categories and unrecognized or controversial categories, which make different coverage, seem arbitrary or insensitive. Inclusion of controversial groups or expanding coverage can then be advocated as required or appropriate in order to respect and preserve the *coherence* of the domain of law in question (cf. MacCormack 1978). Parallelism can also be established between the motives involved in currently covered offenses and the motives involved in the offenses which would be covered under proposed extension of the law, and parallelism can be established between the offenders stereotypically associated with covered crimes and the offenders stereotypically associated with the violations or crimes which would be covered under the proposed expansion of the law. The proposed expansion then makes sequentially relevant assurances that the proposed expansion can be limited and workable.

(3) The testimony analyzed here also illustrates a pre-emption of floodgate arguments. A distinction is made between those complaints which would be covered under an expanded law and other complaints which would not be covered under the expanded law. Whether intentionally or not, this implies an evidentiary burden which many victims can't meet, in this case distinguishing within the large set of female victims of crime a special subset of females victimized by hate-crimes (against women), the latter of which will be afforded a new variety of protection or redress not available to the rest.

These three elements are discussed here as constituting an *analogical* method of advocacy because the first and third elements here function *in combination with* analogical reasoning, although each of the three elements can also function independently. The first element, a formal definition, *sets up* an analogy by allowing the extension of an existing rule to new cases and categories which share some arguably essential feature(s). *After* one has suggested expanding an existing rule, for example by means of analogical reasoning, it then becomes relevant to pre-empt counter-arguments such as floodgate arguments, by means which can include suggesting limits on further advocacy by analogy. Of the three elements, analogical reasoning is not only the locus of the advocacy, but also links the other two elements together sequentially and logically.

Not only the one instance of testimony analyzed here, but many arguments in favor of expanding hate crime legislation to include women or gender, have such features as observable elements in their pragmatic design, as do arguments in other policy domains. Indeed, it even seems promising to understand the *restriction* of rights by means of an *inverse* formal logic, one similarly emphasizing generic principles (such as national security), drawing analogies between groups with more rights to groups with less (such as likening Japanese Americans to resident Japanese aliens, to Japanese in Japan; likening Muslim Americans to resident Muslim aliens, to Muslims abroad), and reassuring that restrictions won't extend so far as to inconvenience the general public.

The rhetorical emphasis observed above on the *similarities* of hate-crimes across types of victim would be difficult to capture by conventional social-scientific approaches to minority groups. Conventional social science and especially social theory on inequalities and group relations has largely been shaped by the identity politics which Jacobs and Potter, among many others, criticize in their study of hate crimes. There is often an emphasis on the uniqueness of each minority group and the uniqueness of the historical and social relations between particular minority groups and their respective, alternate dominant or majority groups. Membership categorization analysis is different in that it does not see empirical research as a means of identity politics, and is concerned not only with analyzing case-specific or group-specific details, but also with explicating formal structures of practical action and context-transcendent methods of practical reasoning which can be illustrated *through* the discussion of particular groups and specific issues. It is these formal properties of membership category devices and practices, along with a variety of other ethno methods of practical action and practical reasoning, which provide for the cultural and legal intelligibility of including women in a category device of protected categories including African Americans, Hispanics, Jews, Muslims, immigrants and refugees, homosexuals, amputees, and the blind. The domain expansion of a social problem to include a new category of victims can therefore be illuminated by analyzing arguments not only on their merits, but also on their methods, including methods of membership categorization and analogical reasoning.

Endnotes

- i In conversation analysis, the “design” of an utterance is not necessarily purposefully or strategically chosen; utterance design often evidences *tacit* socio-linguistic competence.
- ii J. Caputi and D.E.H. Russell. 1992. “Femicide: Sexist Terrorism against Women.” In J. Radford and D.E.H. Russell (ed.), *Femicide: The Politics of Women Killing*, pp. 13-21. New York: Twayne, p. 13, quoted in McPhail (2002: 135).
- iii Quoted by Jenness and Grattet (2001: 43), from “Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act of 1992” Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992, p. 7.
- iv 255 U.S. 81, 89 (41 SC 298, 65 LE2d 516) (1921).

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Cypriot Gay Men's Accounts of Negotiating Cultural and Sexual Identity: A Qualitative Study

Abstract

This paper examines some of the key cultural concepts and relevant historical factors that may shape the development of Anglo-Cypriot gay identity. Accounts of sexual identity experiences provided by second generation Greek and Turkish Cypriot gay men in London are examined in the light of this analysis to explore how these men negotiate Anglo-Cypriot and gay identity. Twenty-eight self-identified second generation Greek and Turkish gay men living in London were recruited by advertising in the gay press, by writing to community groups, and gay groups and organizations and by "snowballing." In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with those men recruited through these channels. Data were subjected to interpretative phenomenological analysis. The personal accounts of these men demonstrate that their sexual identity does not always become their primary identity and that different identities are constructed by individuals at different places and times. Most men indicated that the translation of their sexual desires and behaviors into the "political statement" of gay identity is not only difficult but is strongly resisted. Instead they chose to construct their identity in terms of their relationships with their families, their peers at work and other members of their community. The findings of this research may help develop an understanding of the complexities surrounding the "sexual and cultural" identities of Anglo-Cypriot gay men, thereby reinforcing the notion that identity is multiple, contested and contextual.

Keywords

Ethnic minorities, Homosexuality, Qualitative Research, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Introduction

The study of identity development among ethnic minority lesbians and gay men has tended to draw upon models of ethnic minority identity or lesbian and gay identity (Morales, 1983; Chan, 1992; Espin, 1987). However, each model presents a means of understanding the development of either lesbian/gay identity or ethnic minority identity. How does an individual who is lesbian or gay and a member of an ethnic minority group come to terms with identity issues? Morales (1983) proposed an identity formation model for ethnic minority lesbians and gay men that incorporates the dimension of dual minority status centered around five different identity states.

Each state is said to be accompanied by decreasing anxiety and tension through the management of the associated tensions and differences. As cognitive and lifestyle changes emerge, the multiple identities are said to become integrated, leading toward a greater sense of understanding of one's self and toward the development of a "multi-cultural" perspective.

The life of an ethnic minority lesbian or gay person is often lived within three communities: the lesbian or gay community, their ethnic community and the predominantly White, heterosexual mainstream society. Each context has its sets of norms, values and beliefs, some of which-in the case of lesbian and gay communities and ethnic minority communities-may be seen as characterizing these contexts but may also be fundamentally in opposition to each other. Some individuals choose to keep each community separate (using a strategy which Breakwell, 1986, termed "compartmentalism") while others vary the degree to which they integrate the communities and lifestyles in which they are involved. Each community offers important resources that support lifestyles and identities. The lesbian or gay community can offer support in the expression of one's sexual identity; the ethnic community can offer emotional and familial bonding as well as cultural identity; and mainstream society can offer a national identity as well as a mainstream culture and multidimensional social system.

In an ideal world, an ethnic minority lesbian or gay person of colour would have drawn resources from and maintain associations with each of these contexts. Yet, as Carballo-Dieguez (1989), Espin (1987) and Morales (1990) have suggested, such associations carry negative consequences. Ethnic minority communities may well be characterised by homophobic and negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men; lesbian and gay communities are a reflection of the mainstream White society and may mirror the racist attitudes toward lesbian and gay people of colour through discrimination and prejudice; the mainstream White heterosexual society is the crucible of homophobic and racist attitudes and practices. As a result, ethnic minority lesbians and gay men find themselves weighing options in their interactions and managing the tensions and conflicts that arise as they move between contexts (de Monteflores, 1986).

Where do ethnic minority lesbians and gay men turn for support? Although a possible source is provided by individuals in lesbian and gay communities, discriminatory treatment in lesbian and gay bars, clubs and social and political gatherings, and from individuals within lesbian and gay communities (Dyne, 1980; Cochran, 1988; Morales, 1989; Garnets and Kimmel, 1991; Chan, 1992; Gutierrez and Dworkin, 1992; Greene, 1994; Coyle & Rafalin, 2000). They describe feeling an intense sense of conflicting loyalties to two communities, in both of which they are marginalized by the requirement to conceal or minimize important aspects of their identities in order to be accepted. Ethnic minority lesbians and gay men frequently experience a sense of never being part of any group completely, leaving them at risk of experiencing isolation, feelings of estrangement and increased psychological vulnerability.

My focus in this paper is specifically on Anglo-Cypriot men resident in Londonⁱ (who have sex with men) because they have received very limited attention in the sociologicalⁱⁱ and psychological literature (for more on the study upon which this paper draws, see Phellas, 2002). For the most part, empirical investigations and scholarly work on ethnic minority gay men devote little time or attention to the specific issues relevant to Anglo-Cypriot men and the ways that ethnicity and racism "colour" the experience of heterosexism (Williams, 1986). This paper first examines some of the key cultural concepts and relevant historical factors that may shape the development of gay identity among Anglo-Cypriot men. Accounts of sexual identity

experiences provided by second-generation Cypriot gay men living in London are examined in the light of this analysis to explore how these men negotiate their Cypriot and gay identities. It is hoped that the findings from this research may help develop an understanding of the complexities surrounding the sexual and cultural identities of these men.

Sexuality in Greek-Cypriot Culture

Some people might argue that people of Greek-Cypriot background living in the UK present different social characteristics from those living in Cyprus. My own personal experience (as a Greek-Cypriot man born and raised in Cyprus) and the various conversations and meetings I have had with Diaspora Cypriots show a lot of similarities in terms of cultural and ethnic dynamics. The same beliefs and values, traditions, motivations, religious practices, principles and moral codes and, to a large extent, psychosocial dynamics exist. Indeed, it is true to say that, if anything, the Greek-Cypriot communities living outside Cyprus tend to show greater conservatism and adherence to “old-fashioned” ideas than those in Cyprus.

The concept of sexual behaviour in Greek-Cypriot culture is closely tied up with the “honour and shame” value system. As Lazarides (1994), argues:

This system predetermines the way Greek-Cypriot women and men view themselves in relation to issues concerning sexual and moral codes and the way they are viewed by others in relation to these matters. Women are seen as passive but also as a source of danger. Their supposed capacity to control their sexual urges and, at the same time, the belief that men’s sexual drive is ‘natural’ but uncontrollable renders women responsible for maintaining the moral code. (p.11)

A husband’s infidelity is more or less accepted amongst Greek-Cypriots. As long as he does not neglect his family duties and does not “overdo” it, he is forgiven. He has to show the necessary respect to his wife and his family and, if that is undermined by his extra-marital affairs, then he will be criticized by both men and women.

The main categories that have dominated Western literature on “homosexualities” – i.e., “heterosexuality”, “homosexuality” and “bisexuality”- are clearly present in Greek-Cypriot culture. Nonetheless, the notion of a single gay/homosexual identity or a distinct gay/homosexual community is a notion that is fairly new to the Cypriot community. The structure of sexual life in Cyprus- and, as a result, the way Cypriots perceive the concept of sexuality-has traditionally been conceived in terms of a model focused on the relationship between sexual practices and gender roles, with the distinction between masculine (activity) and feminine (passivity) being central to the order of the sexual universe. As a result, the societal definition of male homosexuality in Cyprus “originates around the schema of penetration and, in this conceptualization, the ‘homosexual’ label is attributed to any individual who is being penetrated or is thought to be penetrated. The penetrator remains free of this label, regardless of the fact that he is engaged in homosexual sex as well” (Tapinct, 1992:42). It is along the lines of such perceptions that the distinctions between male and female, masculinity and femininity have traditionally been organized in Greek-Cypriot culture. A Greek-Cypriot male’s gender identity is not threatened by homosexual acts provided that he plays the insertor role in sex. Men should always penetrate and should never allow themselves to be penetrated. Therefore, the ‘active’ homosexual is still entirely and unambiguously a ‘man’. He

may transgress against religious prohibitions but he does not place his masculinity in doubt. As long as he is competent husband and householder, as long as he is manly and keeps his dalliances private, he is allowed by society to be a “sinner”. The above observations highlight a major difference between the “Western” and Greek-Cypriot cultural setting for male bisexuality, i.e., the lack of stigmatization amongst Cypriots of the active insertor participant in homosexual encounters. As a result of the above, many Greek-Cypriots do not believe that ‘one drop of homosexuality’ makes one totally homosexual, provided that the appropriate sexual role is played.

Methodological Challenges in Interviewing Cypriot Gay Men

Participants’ Selection

Attempts were made to recruit self-identified gay Cypriot men resident in London who have sex with men. Twenty-eight participants were recruited through advertisements in the gay press and the Cypriot press (Greek & Turkish), through an appeal in the newsletter of the Cypriot Gay & Lesbian Group, through GUM clinics based in North and South London where the majority of the Cypriot community resides, through gay organisations that happen to have any Cypriot members and by “snowballing” from those who volunteered through these channels, with the aim of accessing men who were less involved in gay affirmative Greek contexts. When describing the study to potential participants, care was taken not to convey the hypothesis about identity conflict because of the risk of failing to attract participants who had not experienced conflict. Therefore the study was simply described as being interested in the experience of “growing up Cypriot and gay”.

The Interview Protocol

Twenty-eight men were interviewed face-to-face about their experiences of constructing and managing Cypriot and gay identities. When it comes to the studying of gay men’s sexual behaviour and lifestyle, quantitative methods have not given us a body of theory to guide the interpretation of either the behavioural patterns or of the empirically identified predictors of such patterns. Instead, they have given us descriptions of gay men’s sexual behaviour over time, and also they have been used to identify some of the predictors of non-maintenance of safer sex.

The interview schedule began with demographic questions, which were followed by questions on their Cypriot socialisation; the construction of sexual identity and their reactions to this process; the relationship between Cypriot and sexual identities and the management of any difficulties which arose; the disclosure of sexual identity to parents and within Cypriot communities; and conceptualisations of their current identities. The interviews lasted between an hour and two and a half hours and all were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Qualitative Method of Data Analysis

The objective of this study was to provide an understanding of some of the key cultural concepts and relevant historical factors that shape the development of Anglo-Cypriot gay identity: what is the experience of being an Anglo-Cypriot gay man living in Britain today? An interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) was adopted to guide both research methodology and analysis, as it allowed both for a rich and detailed account of each individual's perspective to be examined, together with the processes involved in the construction of Cypriot gay identity to be explored.

Essentially IPA provides a systematic framework for conducting and analyzing qualitative data and exploring the meaning participants attribute to their experiences and cognitions. It is not concerned with objectifying or measuring experiences or events (Smith, Flowers and Osborn, 1997). At the same time IPA recognizes that meaning is constructed within the interaction between participants' accounts and the researcher's interpretative framework. This takes place within the interview itself and also during data analysis and interpretation. An assumption of IPA is that meaningful interpretations can be made about an individual's cognitions but not that these thoughts are necessarily transparent within an individual's verbal reports (Smith et al., 1997).

Smith (1996b) argues for transparency in the analysis of qualitative research and the analytic procedure used is outlined. (For a comprehensive account of this procedure see Smith, 1995a and also Smith, Osborn and Jarman, 1998). IPA analysis is an iterative process and involves examining and revisiting data at all stages of analysis. Repeated readings of the transcripts were carried out noting key phrases and processes. Content summaries, connections between aspects of the transcript e.g. issues regarding content and process, and initial interpretations were included in the initial note taking. A number of preliminary themes were elicited within each transcript from these notes, ensuring that these themes remained faithful to the data. This process was repeated for each transcript in turn.

Next, the initial themes obtained from all transcripts were examined and attempts made to identify patterns and formulate meanings from these groupings in order to produce a final set of over-arching themes. Relationships between themes and data were assessed again. The themes identified were not necessarily present in the accounts of all respondents; indeed themes may be produced both from similarities and differences in individuals' accounts. In addition, some higher order and sub-themes arose from analysis of the data while others resulted from the steer of the interview schedule.

IPA aims to produce a rich in-depth account of the nature and range of experiences within a particular area of study and draws on prior knowledge and theory. It is not concerned with the quantification of data. Indeed while establishing commonalities across the data was important, specific individual insights and experiences often provided greater depth of understanding of complex themes and underlying processes.

It has been persuasively argued that the traditional criteria for evaluating research quality e.g. reliability, are inappropriate in assessing studies of this nature (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). IPA acknowledges the inherent subjectivity of the researcher, the interpretative framework within which the researcher is working and their engagement with analysis, rather than aiming for researcher objectivity during analysis. Alternative criteria for gauging research quality has been suggested (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999; Smith, 1996b), notably the criterion of persuasiveness, by 'grounding examples' applied through an inspection of interpretations and data. Here interpretations are illustrated by extracts from the data, thus enabling readers to determine how persuasive the analysis is for themselves. In the quotations cited,

empty brackets denote the omission of verbatim material; information within square brackets indicates classificatory notes and ellipsis points - (...), mark a pause in the flow of a participant's comments.

Rather than following the traditional headings of results and discussion and in line with the narrative presentation of IPA analysis, this paper presents the main themes within an analysis section followed by a conclusion, in which the implications of the research for sociological analysis are discussed.

Data Analysis

Demographic Information

Participants' mean age was 30 - 36 years (range 21-42; SD 5.31). In terms of their highest educational qualifications, seven participants had a postgraduate degree or diploma, eleven had a degree, seven had qualifications equivalent to GCEs/O-levels, and three had A-levels (or equivalent qualifications). Using the International Standard Classification of Occupations (International Labour Office, 1990), sixteen participants were classified as holding professional jobs; four were senior managers or officials; and eight were located in the category of service, shop and sale workers. At the time of the study, all the participants lived in or around the London area.

In terms of their ethnicity twenty participants described themselves as Greek Cypriots and eight as Turkish Cypriots.

Initially by way of introduction and central to the analysis the theme of negotiating the two distinct identities (Cypriot identity and gay identity) is discussed. This is done by examining the various techniques the respondents employed in controlling how much information they disclose (about their sexual orientation) to their families, friends and work colleagues. This is followed by examining the implications that such a decision might have upon their family relationships. The last two themes examine the respondents' self-definition of identity (Cypriot versus gay) and their choice of community (Cypriot versus gay) in which the respondents felt more comfortable.

Negotiation of Two Worlds

The central hypothesis in this study was that simultaneously holding a Cypriot and gay identity places an individual in a situation of potential identity conflict. The question now arises of the relative prevalence of the "exclusive" versus the "paired" double life against that of those men who are "fully integrated". All of the respondents admitted either disguising their orientation or passing at some time in their lives. It has already been noted that several of the respondents were employing passing or disguising techniques and most of them were living exclusive double lives within their families. However, these men have made regular visits to the gay scene and were open to other gay men about their sexual orientation. The few participants who expressed their dislike of the gay scene preferred to socialise in straight social circles. Since it has already been noted that the majority of the respondents who were systematic disguisers to their families, and since there were no instances of exclusive double lives in the homosexual realm (that is, no Cypriot man was out in the family whilst still disguising on the scene), it can be seen that those respondents who were systematic disguisers within the family were always disguisers within the community.

I will offer two examples here:

I lived with my partner in the same house for the last ten years. My parents see him as my lodger and they're fine about it. However, they still ask me, 'When are you going to get married?' 'How long are you going to stay with that man?' (Andreas, aged 27)

I don't think I'll ever tell them [the parents] ...I just like things as they are...It's something that we don't discuss. Last time she [mother] asked me 'Well aren't you ever going to get married?' I said 'Maybe after I'm forty or never' (Kadir, aged 21)

The Control of Information Disclosureⁱⁱⁱ

The following is intended to briefly identify some of the alternatives open to the Cypriot gay man who passes in all contexts and there is an attempt to either verify or exemplify these from the respondents' interviews. In total six alternatives will be examined: Counterfeit Roles; Heterosexual Courting/Marriage; "Keeping Mum"; Disavowal; Covering and Remoteness.

(i) Counterfeit Roles

This method allows the individual to tender the manifestations of one's real stigma as evidence of a lesser taint.

My mum asked me the other day [] about girlfriends and getting married [] I told her jokingly that I want to enjoy life [] I am too young to settle down [] that's the usual excuse I give her (Kadir, aged 21)

(ii) Heterosexual Courting/Marriage

Most "discreditable" people believe that if they appear to be courting a member of the opposite sex then the people around them would perceive them as heterosexuals. Furthermore, some Cypriot gay men might go one step further and they get engaged or married in order to avoid the stigma of homosexuality. For example George told me:

The point is that I enjoy the company of women [] they make me feel comfortable and relaxed [] I enjoy being in a non-gay environment [] Sometimes I tell them [his parents] white lies [] It's a diplomatic way of keeping them happy and keeping myself happy [] I do go out with girls but I don't sleep with girls. (George aged 38)

(iii) "Keeping Mum"

By far the most popular method of passing that came up during a lot of the interviews by those respondents who were not open about their sexuality. The reason why this is so popular lies with its passive nature. Andrew who works for a Cypriot company in London said:

If people at work ask me [whether he has a girlfriend or not] I would usually try and change the conversation. My workplace is a typical Greek environment and I don't want any problems there (Andrew aged 35)

George aged 34, however, thinks that a little diplomacy wouldn't harm anybody. He argues that by employing the "keeping mum" technique the family relations are kept in balance. He said:

I think my Mum suspects [] I don't think I will ever tell them about my sexuality as that would hurt them very much. I guess I have to accept the fact that as a Cypriot gay man I have to protect my family [] My father has heart problems [] I couldn't never do this to him [] They adore me and I adore them [] I try to avoid conversations about girlfriends and usually I keep quiet about my whereabouts.

(iv) Disavowal

Here the individual completely denies his sexual orientation. He may also, denounce of others who are open about their (homo) sexuality in order not to arouse suspicions.

Mike said:

Well up until a few years ago, I used to call myself bisexual and I tried to stay away from gay people. For a while I dated a woman to convince myself and the people around me that I was heterosexual. If I was with friends and homosexuality was brought up I would be the first one to criticize gay people (Mike aged 31)

(v) Covering

This strategy is distinct from passing and it combines techniques of the stigma management and information control.

In the case of Fotis:

If my parents or any members of my family make any homophobic remark I would try and keep quiet [] sometimes I may join in [] I hate doing this [] the only way to keep them from suspecting (Fotis aged 27)

(vi) Remoteness

This method is more concerned with the management of social networks than with face-to-face encounters.

Yannis said:

Once I accepted my sexuality and started going out I deliberately avoided places where I would bump into people I knew [] tried to divide my friends into people who knew and people who didn't [] was stressful as at times I caught myself feeling tired of all the lies [] feeling mentally tired from trying to keep the two groups [of friends] separate (Yannis aged 42)

Implications for Family Relationships

In Greek-Cypriot culture, the individual man is merged with the family and the community. It could be said that he does not have a discrete, individual identity as his private affairs are shared with the rest of the family. It can be very difficult for a man to develop his own personality and character, as he often lives with his family until he marries. Should he decide to break away from the family and set up his own home without getting married, he is seen as acting against the family. To a large extent, individuals are not allowed to have any secrets or to have private lives. If they do, this is seen as signifying that there is something wrong that ought to be shared and resolved within the family itself. Decisions regarding financial, emotional, or business

affairs are taken jointly with the rest of the family. From an early age, children learn that their actions reflect upon the whole family's social status.

Note that I am not suggesting that this state of affairs is necessarily a "bad thing"; the tightly-knit Greek-Cypriot social context carries many benefits that have been lost within more individualized, atomized, fragmented Western societies. However, for Greek-Cypriot men whose emotional and sexual investments are directed towards other men, their cultural context may well present them with significant difficulties. In specific terms, how can one talk about a

"Gay identity" within a culture in which the Western concept of individual identity is problematic? How can Greek-Cypriot men (gay identified or not) start addressing their sexual needs when they cannot even address their needs as individuals? How can a man accept and act on his sexuality when the family and society denies him the right to be himself?

Disclosure to the Family

Gay identity emerges when people are free to make choices and decisions about their lives and lifestyles. However, in a culture where the individual is firmly embedded within the community, such a definition becomes unrealistic. As Ioannis (aged 31) said in my study:

The main reason I haven't come out is my mother [] cannot do that to her [] she has sacrificed her life for me [] she was the one who was getting beaten up by my dad, she was the one who had to go out to work to feed us [] she is homophobic, like most of the Greek people. [My mum} is a typical Greek person [] who would laugh and criticize at anything which would not fit the bill [] it's my duty to look after her and make sure she is provided for... That's the way it is'

Coming out in the family and making one's sexuality public knowledge may be considered an act of treason against the family and the culture. It may be seen as a form of rejection and abandonment of all the things their parents and culture represent. As Espin (1984, 1987) and Hidalgo (1984) have noted, a gay or lesbian family member may maintain a place in the family and be quietly tolerated but this does not constitute acceptance of a gay or lesbian sexuality. Rather, it constitutes the denial of it. The gay son is very much welcomed within the family, as long as he does not disclose or declare his sexuality. As a result, Greek-Cypriot gay men internalize negative attitudes that have been conveyed by loved and trusted figures, which have a detrimental effect on the possibility of developing self-acceptance and a positively-evaluated perspective on one's sexuality.

Another respondent Kenan aged 24 realises as he grows older that his family does matter to him and he tries very hard to keep a balance between the two worlds. He said:

The older I get I've started to become more sensitive towards my family's feelings [] I've just told my sisters that I'm gay and that didn't go down too well. I used to think what I'll do as a young person is to run away from my family and never see them again [] I don't want to do that because I actually do love my family [] I'm considering coming out to my parents but I don't know what will happen [] I want to do it very much [] If they don't know that I'm gay there is a lot of me they don't know.

On the other hand, Lou aged 24, is quite happy with the status quo of the situation as long as his mother doesn't bring up the subject. He said:

I don't think I will ever tell my parents [] if you do that it's fifty percent they are going to accept you and fifty percentage they are going to reject you [] you lose all that loving, caring thing [] If I lose them I don't know what is going to happen. If things are running smoothly right now and I don't have any problems with them why change them? Stupid isn't it?

In some instances, little white lies seem to be the only solution. Michael aged 34 told me:

I often lie to my parents... I've got no hang ups about it... It's obviously better, just small lies like who I'm going out with or where I'm staying for the night... You see, my family is very important to me and I do love them.

Self-definition of Identity

To determine whether respondents differentiate between feeling a part of a community and acknowledging their own personal identity, respondents were asked which terms they used to identify themselves and which part of their identity (Anglo-Cypriot or gay) they more strongly identified. Results indicated that the two concepts (community identification and personal identification) are similar for the respondents.

Sexual Identities

The majority of the respondents who used the term "Anglo-Cypriot gay man" to identify themselves answered that they identified more strongly with the gay part of their identity:

I also have this terrible fear, and it comes from my childhood, that my family is going to swallow me up [] where they [Greek Cypriots] want to know what you're doing and who you're doing it with [] when I was very young I managed to break away, because I got involved in Theatre, which was something none of them knew about [] it was like my refuge and it's remained my refuge [] I think I have a very, very negative view of my ethnicity, actually if I'm honest. (Nick aged 33)

Cypriot Cultural Identities

In contrast, the few participants who said that they identified themselves by the terms gay Anglo-Cypriot and reported that they identified more strongly as Anglo-Cypriots made statements such as the following:

I identify as a Cypriot man first because similar backgrounds and experiences are stronger bonds for me than my sexual identity... Sex comes and goes...to have a solid ethnic identity is important. (Costas aged 37)

I would say that my Greekness defines who I am... I am first Greek and then a gay man... My sexuality may change one day but my Greekness still remains intact. (Georgis aged 33)

Yes. I would say that I am proud of being Greek and gay... want to socialize with other gay Greek men as we understand each other much better than any other English gay man would... If I have to choose I would say I am Greek first and then gay. (Fotis aged 29)

Combining Sexual & Cultural Identities

However, very few of my respondents refused to choose between the two identities. They reflect the reality that most Cypriot gay men feel most complete when they can be accepted as being both gay and Cypriot, as the following comments indicate:

I identify as being both. Why can't we marry the two [being gay and Greek-Cypriot] [] both my culture, my family and my sexuality are equally important to me (Stephen aged 32)

Both communities are not mutually excluded... I think one complements the other... The Greek community supports my Greekness while the gay community supports my being a gay man. (Kostas aged 28)

I believe both identities are important to me. I love the Greek music, the theatre and the arts. I love anything that is Greek. But at the same time I love men. For me there is no distinction (Tonis aged 38)

These results suggest that, when a choice of identification is required, more respondents identified themselves as gay than as Anglo-Cypriot but that others refused to choose because it would mean denying an important part of their identity. It is likely that each person determines for himself depending upon the stage of identity development he is in, whether it is more comfortable to be Cypriot among gay men or gay man around Cypriots or whether both are intolerable and he must be acknowledged as both Cypriot and gay by everyone. The above supports the argument that identity development can be a fluid and ever-changing process and as a result of that an individual may choose to identify and ally more closely with being gay or Anglo-Cypriot at different times depending on need and situational factors.

Choice of Community

We now turn our attention to coming out in the community. When asked about their social networks, the majority of the research participants replied that they socialised mostly with non-Greek gays. When asked if they were out to any Greek people other than family, only a few said they were, but none of these men were out only to other Greek gays.

Furthermore, when asked, "In which community do you feel more comfortable (Anglo-Cypriot or gay)" most of the respondents who chose the gay community gave the following reasons:

Gay Community

Double standards basically... They help you to succeed but when you succeed they [community] going to back stab you. (Lou aged 24)

I have more in common with gay men than with straight Cypriots. (Kadir aged 21)

All I want to be happy is somewhere nice to live... a boyfriend and a job that I enjoy. (Michael aged 34)

So, I never had too much contact with my own culture... When I did have contact with it, I disliked it [] I would love to learn my own language, love to

learn my culture [] mixing in with people that are like that [, I'd rather not. (Mike aged 28)

The Greek Cypriots think are far better than anyone else [] they look down on me because I don't have a house and I'm not married [] they are close minded... they think there is only one way to live a life...an unwillingness to be open minded.' (Stephen aged 32)

I'm proud of the women in my family [] I despise the men [] I don't want anything to do with Greek-Cypriot people who have got this kind of peasant mentality... can't bear it [] it's almost like connected to a class thing. (Nick aged 33)

Cypriot society works on gossip [] basically there is my family and everybody is very jealous [] my sisters are aware of the fact [that I am gay] and are just waiting for a slip up and that worries me (Kenan aged 24)

Cypriot Community

Those few participants who felt more comfortable in the Anglo-Cypriot community explained:

The closeness of the family and the support you may be getting if you are in trouble... I relate to myself as a Greek person first (Georgis aged 34)

The hospitality and the way we perceive life and people... My cultural beliefs are indeed Greek (George aged 33)

I suppose knowing what they want in life... Being ambitious, hard working...having a set of values... I think they (Cypriots) would be more faithful than maybe an Englishman would be (Stephen aged 32)

Yes, a lot of my thinking is influenced by my upbringing. The competitiveness is still there. The fact that I show a lot more initiative than English lads in a work environment comes from being Cypriot. I'm very glad, in many respects that my background is Cypriot, because a lot of English attitudes make me cringe (Tasos aged 42)

However, it is interesting that although these men remain closeted within the Greek community, this does not seem to extend to the gay community. In fact, most of the men were involved in gay rights activism as self-defined by participation in gay pride marches, participating in several charity functions and being involved with AIDS hospices and organisations. Considering the degree of media coverage such events often bring, this is far greater visibility than one might expect from Greek gay men living in London. All participants' families live in London. Regardless, several noted that although they worried over being "found out", either by a parent to whom they were not out or by a family acquaintance who might be watching the news and feel compelled to gossip, all felt it was important to follow through.

As Fassinger (1991) notes, most of the existing models of gay identity development, such as Cass's (1979) widely cited model, have a:

Linear and prescriptive flavour implying that developmental maturity rests on an immutable homoerotic identification as well as a positive public (and often political) identity. The models are insensitive to diversity in terms of race/ethnicity...The unfortunate implication is that non-political acceptance of one's gay identity is seen as a form of developmental acceptance (p.168).

Thus I would propose that it is indeed an interesting juxtaposition that occurs when one tries to apply Western models of coming out to beliefs surrounding the development of a positive gay identity of a Greek man living in London. On the one hand, an argument could be made that as a group, the 28 gay men in this study still possess a fair degree of internalised homophobia and shame, as some are not out to one or both of their parents, six are out in the Greek community, and most worried about being shunned or that their families would be exposed to hurtful gossip. Yet, by another measure, many appear to have gone beyond merely "accepting" themselves and are on the far end of the continuum of "outness, advocacy, and celebration", even by Western standards.

Conclusion

This study points to some of the difficulties that may be experienced by Cypriot men who are trying to construct a gay identity and who are trying to find ways of reconciling Cypriot and gay identity and managing information about their gay identity within Cypriot contexts in Britain. As the above examples demonstrate for the majority of the respondents identity did not seem to have crystallized around their sexuality so as to render sexual identity a primary identity dimension. They appeared to have accepted that constructing an all-embracing gay lifestyle might not be feasible for them without abandoning or at least challenging and unsettling their family and cultural contexts. It was clear from the interviews that, despite the anti-gay sentiments embodied and expressed in the Greek-Cypriot community and in their families, the men retained a deep attachment to their Greek culture and inhabited a frame of reference that most frequently claimed ethnic identity and community as more primary concerns than sexual identity. Rather than defining themselves primarily in terms of sexual identity, they chose to see themselves in terms of other personal relationships with their families, their peers at work and with other members of their community. What came across clearly in the interviews was the men's fear of becoming outcasts in their own cultural community.

The ways of coping and dealing with their sexuality varied from person to person. Many had tried to incorporate their sexuality into their everyday lives, sometimes by juxtaposing it with other aspects of their lives and sense of self. The main aim in all the coping mechanisms was to minimize psychological and social strain by finding a happy and workable balance between their sexuality and their familial and social lives. Ioannis aged 37 spoke for a lot of the interviewees when he pointed to the difficulties of integrating (rather than simply juxtaposing) aspects of his different worlds:

The thing that I dislike is not being able to come out to my family [] being a real gay and fulfilled person. Once you've come out to the family and they can accept it [] you can bring a partner home to meet the family [] even if he does not understand my culture, at least I'll be with him in a surrounding that I feel comfortable with [] the only annoyance that I've got [] not to be able to share my partner with my parents [] my own culture and community-that's the problem

As a result, a lot of my interviewees had expended considerable energy in devising ways of balancing the two worlds. These men existed as minorities within minorities, with the multiple oppression and discrimination that accompanies such status (see Bennett & Coyle, 2001, for another example of gay men who occupy this

position). Dimitrios (aged 43) spoke frankly of the imbalance between the worlds of his culture and his sexuality and the difficulty he experienced in finding a place for himself:

The time I missed the Greek-Cypriot connection was last year when I went to a Jewish bar mitzvah [] a sense of deep sadness because there isn't a community that I belong to [] when I hear Greek music being played it triggers off a sense of loss or a sense of not belonging [] it's the connection I miss most with my Greek culture

The results from this research indicate that the self-identification of gay Anglo-Cypriots is reflected in several factors: choice of community identification, choice of terms (Anglo-Cypriot gay man versus gay Anglo-Cypriot), situational factors such as whether they had disclosed their gay identity to their families and the Anglo-Cypriot community, and their own perceptions of how they are perceived by the gay community. Results also indicate that the majority of respondents identified more strongly with their gay identity than with their Anglo-Cypriot identity, although there were several respondents who insisted on acknowledging both aspects of their identity as Anglo-Cypriots and as gay men.

Because this study was carried out with a small sample of gay Cypriot men living in Britain today, the accounts of those taking part may not be representative of the experiences of gay Cypriot men negotiating sexual identity issues, either in the diaspora or Cyprus itself. It must also be noted that theirs are retrospective, contemporary accounts, which may therefore reflect biases in invoking the historical, social contexts of being a gay Cypriot man. However, it has been suggested that retrospective reports and autobiographical memory are not necessarily and inevitably inaccurate and unstable (e.g., Blance, 1996; Brewin, Andrews, & Gotlib, 1993; Neisser, 1994; Ross & Conway, 1986; Rubin, Wetzler, & Nebes, 1986; Wagenaar, 1986). It should be observed that the participants were drawn from a wide age range and a mix of Greek and Turkish ethnicities was included. Furthermore the commonality found in some themes and constructs suggests that the issues identified would be worth investigating with a larger sample. Further studies might include a more random sampling of gay Anglo-Cypriots, as well as the use of extensive quantitative analysis methods, more comprehensive interviews with a larger sample, or both.

Additionally, in this paper I have attempted to convey something of the multi-faceted reality of doing research with people of the same or partially shared ethnic and sexual background. As a researcher I was surprised to see the extent to which my sexual and cultural identity was directly or indirectly questioned or commented upon by the respondents. More attention needs to be paid to the assumptions that interviewees make about the sexual and cultural identity of the interviewer and examine how and in what ways these assumptions affect the unfolding of the interview: the interviewees may disclose certain kinds of information based on their assumptions about the researcher (social desirability effect); they might decide to give their personal accounts and describe their life stories and identities in terms which compare themselves to assumptions about the researcher. Personally, I wonder how the data collected would differ if I appeared to be heterosexual.

Finally, from this study, it was clear that any attempt to globalize all gay men into a homogeneous group based on a "Western" model of homosexualities can be misleading and inappropriate. Not only can important differences between gay men be hidden but local and national differences of culture, traditions and political strategies will not be properly addressed. The personal accounts that arose from this research reinforce the notion that identity is multiple, contested and contextual. For a

lot of the Cypriot men in this study, the translation of their sexual desires and behaviours into a political statement of gay identity was not only difficult but was also resisted. Sexual identity –although relevant–was not a primary identity dimension to them. Many men had developed more or less effective coping mechanisms to manage the conflicts they faced. Most importantly, though, the men I spoke to were united in their struggle for acceptance by the Cypriot community.

Endnotes

- i Some of the issues raised in this paper may be equally applied to Anglo-Cypriot lesbian women resident in London. However, due to the complexity of the challenges these women face it was felt that it would be inappropriate to discuss them in this paper
- ii So far very little research (with the exception of Anthias's book (1992)) has been published on the socio-cultural and economic position of Cypriots in British Society and their development from colonial migrants to a settler population. Furthermore, very little research is also available in the sociological and psychological literature on how non-heterosexual Cypriot men and women living in England form their sexual identity in a cultural context. The central tenet of Anthias' work is to examine and understand the dynamic interactions and experiences of the settler population of Cypriots within the host country of Britain. Rather than consider ethnicity as a concept, which can be uniformly applied to any given ethnic group, she argues that to understand ethnicity, the internalised socio-cultural characteristics of the group need to be considered within the structural and political processes of the host country. Ethnicity is thus not a unitary concept but is constrained by the divisions of class, gender and ethnic identity and is situationally dependent. This would have implications for the construction of sexual identities within ethnic minority groups and more specifically the effect that cultural diversity has on the coming-out process. Disclosing one's sexual orientation is also thought to be ubiquitously positive experience that creates self-acceptance and confidence through repeated practice. In fact, for gay men and lesbians, not making public pronouncements about their sexual orientation is presumed to be negative and less than healthy psychologically and is characterised by negative terms, such as living double lives, hiding, being in the closet, and being closeted. Living double lives or being closeted is presumed to indicate shame, denial, and self-hatred. In various forms, these assumptions have found their way into the conceptualisations of research on coming out, development of sexual identities, and homosexualities. Most of these assumptions, however, are based on clinical and empirical studies conducted with white lesbians and gay men. Lesbians and gay men of ethnic minority backgrounds have received scant attention in the sociological and psychological literature on homosexualities and development of sexual identities. This paper attempts to explore some issues and raise some questions about accepting one's homosexuality and subsequently developing a sexual identity as a process that is always embedded in a cultural context that can profoundly shape the experience of that process for individuals.
- iii Sexual stigma is different from the stigma attached to race as unlike skin colour, sexual preference is not visible. Goffman (1963) described a process individuals experience as a function of their known identity as minority. He

used the concept “discredited” for those who were of a racial or ethnic minority group and a “discreditable” for those who required disclosure in order to be identified as a minority. For the ‘discredited’ the issue is managing the tension generated during social contacts (e.g. deformity), whereas the “discreditable” the issue is managing information about the potential tensions that could be generated if their minority status was disclosed or revealed (e.g. one’s sexual preference). Following the above, the stigma carried by most non-heterosexuals is, in a sense, optional and many elect to conceal their deviance and “pass” (Goffman, 1963) as heterosexuals. This strategy (i.e. of passing) gives the chance to the “discreditable” to find out how others feel about the issue of homosexuality and how they would have reacted should they (“the discreditable”) disclosed their sexual preferences to them. The problem in each case is “to display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; and in each case, to whom, how, when and where” (Goffman, 1963, p.129).

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The intersection between systems theory and grounded theory: the emergence of the grounded systems observer

The aim of this paper is to outline how a theoretical intersection between systems theory and grounded theory could be articulated. The paper proceeds by marking that the important difference between systems theory and grounded theory is primarily reflected in the distinction between a revision of social theory on the one hand and the generation of theory for the social world on the other. It then explores figures of thought in philosophy that relate closely to aspects of Luhmann's theory of social systems. An effectual intersection, an operational intersection, an intersection based on the concept of primary redundancy and a global/transcendental intersection between systems theory and grounded theory are proposed. The paper then goes on to briefly outline several methodological consequences of the intersection for a grounded systems methodology. It concludes by discussing the sort of knowledge for the social world that is likely to emerge from this mode of observation.

Keywords:

Systems theory, Luhmann, grounded systems theory, grounded theory

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Precariousness of everyday heroism. A biographical approach to life politics

It is a special challenge for an individual to be the hero of his/her own life in the social conditions of reflexive modernisation. Autobiographies are not only descriptions of what happened during the life course, but they also reflect individual capacity to construct cultural identities in reflexive and reflective ways. To reflect on one's own success, personal gains and losses have to be compared with the competitive capacities of other community members of the hierarchically structured society. Reflexive capacity is the demand to become a conscious self and culturally identified member of a social group. Self-identity is reconstructed and coped with in light of meaningful others during certain transition periods in the life course. Life-political meaningfulness is checked by overcoming personal difficulties in order to manage life-challenges further. Self-respect gives the resources needed for overcoming alienating experiences, for controlling the risk of social exclusion and for mastering one's own life successfully. Narrative identification of self tends to produce life-heroes. But the problem considered relevant here starts from reflecting altruism

with reflexive monitoring of the self. The question is whether heroic episodes of life can be narrated so that heroic everyday deeds are emphasised in autobiographies. Or is everyday heroism present only in precarious moments which escape egocentrism because this kind of heroism can be placed only at the social margin, where surviving a difficult situation obliges one to turn unselfishly toward another?

Keywords:

Everyday hero, autobiography, reflexive self-identification, life politics, altruism

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Extending Hate Crime Legislation to Include Gender: Explicating an Analogical Method of Advocacy

This paper examines expert testimony advocating the inclusion, in proposed hate-crime legislation, of crimes motivated by gender bias. The design and rhetoric of such testimony evidences formal properties. Precisely because these properties are formal properties, not limited to specific cases or issues, their explication will contribute not only to the understanding of hate crimes discourse, but to social problems research and theory more broadly. Arguments for the expansion of rights to previously unprotected categories (1) can be designed with an emphasis on generic or formal principles, which allow for the inclusion of previously unprotected groups whose victimization constitutes additional social problems not yet institutionally recognized. Such arguments (2) can emphasize parallelism between protected categories and unprotected categories, and between recognized social problems and as-yet-unrecognized social problems, making similar institutional treatment seem rational, and making disparate treatment seem unjustifiable or insensitive. And such arguments (3) can propose limits to the desired expansion of rights, as a means of pre-empting “floodgate” arguments against expanding the scope of existing protections. More generally, membership categorization analysis is employed to study social identity and inter-group relations as these are constituted in social problems discourse. Special reference is made in this case to “hate crimes” and how they might be addressed by membership categorization analysis in the context of constructionist social problems analysis and qualitative socio-legal studies.

Keywords:

Hate crime, bias crime, gender, testimony, advocacy, analogy, ethnomethodology, membership categorization analysis, social problems, language in law

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Cypriot Gay Men's Accounts of Negotiating Cultural and Sexual Identity: A Qualitative Study

This paper examines some of the key cultural concepts and relevant historical factors that may shape the development of Anglo-Cypriot gay identity. Accounts of sexual identity experiences provided by second generation Greek and Turkish Cypriot gay men in London are examined in the light of this analysis to explore how these men negotiate Anglo-Cypriot and gay identity. Twenty-eight self-identified second generation Greek and Turkish gay men living in London were recruited by advertising in the gay press, by writing to community groups, and gay groups and organizations and by "snowballing." In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with those men recruited through these channels. Data were subjected to interpretative phenomenological analysis. The personal accounts of these men demonstrate that their sexual identity does not always become their primary identity and that different identities are constructed by individuals at different places and times. Most men indicated that the translation of their sexual desires and behaviors into the "political statement" of gay identity is not only difficult but is strongly resisted. Instead they chose to construct their identity in terms of their relationships with their families, their peers at work and other members of their community. The findings of this research may help develop an understanding of the complexities surrounding the "sexual and cultural" identities of Anglo-Cypriot gay men, thereby reinforcing the notion that identity is multiple, contested and contextual.

Keywords:

Ethnic minorities, Homosexuality, Qualitative Research, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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